Buttes Collin.

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A.W.M.

1917 Jan - To 2 Accs agles Messines Ridgo taken 2,300 cases dels with in 19 hours - majoring aprealing. July, Krop. bumbed at 10 p. in 2 patients, 2 orderers Welled, 15 other wounded. Dug mi built for serlen working hard all day, in dry and all mylis - damy and miserable, sider working

The Official War Historian of the Commonwealth Government (Dr. C. E. W. Bean), after his study of the collection of private war records preserved in the Australian War Memorial Library, wrote:

Experiences during Messines Hidge Battle, and the 9 months dating from 4th Jenuary 1917, to October 4th 1917, in The 2nd Australian Casualty Clearing Station.

On the 4th of January I was sent to the 2nd Aust.C.C.S. stationed at Trois Arbers, between Nieppe and Bailloul. I am efraid my idea of a C.O.S. at that time was rather vague. Se I was surprised to find n 0.0%, at that time was rather vague. Se I was supprised to find that it consisted of quite an up-to-date hospital, in many wars, with excellent applicances and X ray plant. The building consisted principally of anacks. Missen huts and tents all connected by duckboards to keep out, if possible, the mud and slouch so well known in Northern France. There was little excitements the first three months, after that the excitement never finished for a very long time, and while it lasted,

so did the hard work.

The oatients in the wards often told us what was going to happen "when we take Messines Ridge" We had heard of that ridge so often, and the time it was going to be taken, that we only laughed when they spoke of it, and decided the day had not yet dawned for "that ridge". However, when the Ridge was really to be taken, we heard very little about it. Carpenters arrived one morning and immediately commenced working in various places. Our dressing room where patients had their wounds attended to, on admission was enlarged to accommodate 10 tables wounds attended to, on admission was enlarged to accommend to tables where it had previously held teo. Our operating thatter was also made espable of running six different operating tables. Tents sprang up on all available space, with ducktoorsis leading to them. All necessary equipment was installed in them. Friums were issued, often an additional one in ones of accident. Them splints, bandages, pylamas, bald much one in one of accident. Them splints, bandages, pylamas, bald much the hundred and one small things necessary energy to be taken. All receipers, until we have the necessary of the table has leading us with a second of the table. patients able to travel were sent to the base, leaving us with practically an empty hospital with the exception of a few convalescents kept for light duty. Doctors, Orderlies and strecher Bearers arrived

large numbers and our staff of sisters was made up to 20, including 5 sisters attached to surgical reams.

Of course, we were used to Bombardment, that the noise which preceded Messines flage Battle was little noticed. For the bombardment had seemed perpetual for weeks and weeks. Shells had been bursting above

use in the daytime, and with the noise of bombs a short distance away, and anti air craft thus, we had little to learn of noise.

I was sleeping in a tent at this time, and it was from here, I heard the noise of the mires blowing up, and felt the concussion of the earth which preceded the Messimes Battle. We could not sleep after this wondering how the Australians and other troops were faring. Tondering if they had won the hill, or were being slangstered, and knowing which layer may it happened, we were bound to have hundreds of wounded conting in shortly. About 7 a.m. we heard the Ridge had been taken with light casualties, and shortly after the first wounded started to arrive. I could'nt see where the light casualties same in, as all those strong healthy men came in dead, dying, unconscious and mosming. We had a large marque er marque created near the entrance much line a circus tent in its \$120. There the wrounded were received, examined by an \$1.0, who credered their further disposal. After he had examined their condition, they were stripped of their bloodstained dusty Makir - parts of which had often been slit up or out saws to allow the doctors in the forward areas to dress their wounds and give them injections of Anti Telemic scrums. Their worked with the consistency of the same bearing their makes and renk. The son served were the forward and the same served to the same and renk. The son served in more and not conserved to the tenth of the same served to the same serve carried on stretchers to the dressing room and put on one of the ten tables, which were constantly kept going during the days which succeeded the battle.

the battle. Again they were seen by another Med.Off. who ordered their special dressing and often dressed them if time permitted, and sent them to different wards I may say the wards were many and varied. Forhaps it was straight to the Operating Theatre - in case of haemmorphage or abdominal wounds. Many of the boys coming in with a leg blown off. I then dressed in the Aid root, a Tourniquet applied to stop bleeding, and sent murricely to the C.C.S. in charge of an A.M.C. man, for immediate operation. Sometimes they died off the way, and never reache the hospital alive. Then we had a post operative ward, a tre-operative ward, resusitation, chest, abdominal, jaw, multiple wound, and lastly a moribund or dying ward.

Each patient was sent to a ward, sorted according to his wound and all necessary treatment and dressing done. We had no time to think of the hundreds of assualties. We only have that work was waiting to be done everywhere, and men were suffering - waiting to be dressed, or to have an injection of morphia, strychnine or other stimulant, and that many of them had not had a drink or food for howes. Everybody worked many hours at a stretch. We had a day and night staff, but how could anyone go off duty with dying and wounded men all

waiting for their turn to be next, and you have that it would be for hours, before the night or day staff as it happened to be, sould cope with the crowded wards. Everybody tried to have enough sleep to keep them going, without interfering with the way they did their work, realizing the best work could not be done without some sleep. But how could anyone sleep, with our big guns firing a short distance from us. could anyone sleep, with our big guns firing a snort distance from us. Shells bursting everhead, anti air craft and maching guns going continually with the noise of the general bombardment and the screech of shells overhead on their way to saileul, or Neuve Egilse. Colonel received great praise, aftewards, for putting through 2,500 cases in 19 hours—the greater part of whom were operated on, and the foreign bodies removed. Everything must have been well planned. We had all we wanted and everything went very smoothly. All working every cheerfully together, from the Fadre who served the patients with the tea, if we were busy, to the stretcher bearer tho looked, judging by appearances as if he were just about fit to be carried out on a stretcher himself, instead of carrying others.

Disposal of patients.

Many patients on admittance were sent to the pre Operative Ward, Early petients on admittance were some go too pro Operative mark, there to await their turn for the X Ray room and theatre. There was little time for preparation, only that which was necessary being done, limny of them were too badly wounded to know they were going to the theatre. Others less wounded were remarkedly pright, and only assemed to want a cigarette, and for you to look after someone who was warse bit than themselves, decastonally a doctor same in, and left list of names as they were to go to the theatre, or packe cake a warse laws as were sent to wards for further way serious cases were sent to wards for further mathematical and to wait till they would have recovered from shock and haemorrhage, sufficiently to go down the line to the Base. The lesser wounded we put in a tent till the effects of the anasthetic had passed off, they were then put on the train which ran beside the Col.S. When one hospital train was full, it pulled out and an empty hospital train pulled in, waiting to be filled. I worked in various parts of the hospital, sometimes in the Operating Room, Abdominal Ward or Dressing Room, or perhaps the Resusitation Ward assisting the doctors with the various methods of combating shock and hasmorrhage, and brying to help the patients over this critical time, by giving injections, and special reading, to prepare them for the operating theater, train only help reading, often we were suscessful, senstimes our best efforts failed, sometimes it was hopeless from the beginning.

For some time I had charge of the Moribund or Dying Ward. It was a hopeless hearthreaking place, Roves of dying men, mostly Australians and Res Zealmaders, nearly all hasdcases and uncodelous, send unconscious or class paying in delirfum, and publing their bandages off. Mone likely to live more than a few hours, and pronunced hopeless by the doctors. Each on a mattress on a stretcher, mostly in their Makki. They were Each on a mattress on a stretoner, mostly in their minar. Anny water the only cases not underessed in the admitting test. Every hour or so, someone dying and being taken out, only to be followed by someone clase in an hour or so. All, we could do was try and get them to take nourishment, give injections to deaden pain, undress them and make them comfortable. Many of them wore discs with their rank and unit on one side and their next-of-kin's address on the other, seemingly asking for some one to write to their people and tell them how and when they

German Prisoners (Wounded).

In a tent next to these were German prisoners, mostly wounded, and needing quick operative attentions if they were to live. Our own men were attended to first, unless the germans were very seriously wounded.

Some of them had been lying out some time, and gas gangrene had been download very quickly, where otherwise the wound was hot very serious. They were operated on as quickly as possible and sent in down the line to make room for others. Very fee sould apeak a word of English, but as I had an orderly who could speak German it did not matter much. Our own men were wonderfully brave about their wounds, seldom complaining, now and then a groan bursting from them which told how they were suffering. The germans soldom complained, either, they were good patients only once, and officer complained to me in broken English, but it was not of his wound. It was to speak of the degradation of the officers being put as he expressed it "to lie withthe common soldiers". The officers were afterwards screened of and their stretchers put on trestl Shelling and Bombing of the Cas. Clearing Station.

During all this time of severe work and for weeks after Mesaines the C.C.S. had been receiving shells, parts of shells or shrapnel. Sometimes directed at a balloon between us and the boshe. Sometimes the germans were shelling the Railway Line and brucks hoping to find the germans were shelling the Hellway Line and brucks hoping to find a lcin gun which was kept on a line very close to us, canouflaged as a truck, and was generally sent up the line at night, at other times it seemed to be just the shelling of back areas. The staff and patients had sometimes an anxious time, Numerous narrow sceapes coursed, but no one was seriously nounded. For three days and nights after lessings the night staff worked hours, later than their usual hours and were kept waske by the noise, until they got so tired they would have slept three anything. Bombs were continually being dropped on different campe, and on the Beilbull-Misper road. No one bothered much about them. We all had the idea that we were safe, because we were a hospital.

Rowever in July 1917 a taube dropped several bombs just outside a tent, killing two patients, two orderlies, and wounding 14 or 15 other men. This happened about 10 o'clock at night.

On the afternoon of this same day, the Germans had been shelling the balloon pretty frequently and pieces were falling in different parts of the camp. One large piece came down and buried it self in a tent between two patients, who were side by side on stretchers. It missed both and one of the patients was an elderly man, and was very much terrified, and practically suffered from shelshook all the aftermoon. This luck was further out however, as he was one of the patients

After this the sisters peace was at an end, a dugout was built for a. It did not matter where we were working, if a taube appeared them. we had to leave our task and go to a dugout, and perhaps remain hours there. At the time I speak of, the taubes were kept out of the sky by our maching guns and anti sir-craft guns during the day, but always came over us at night, generally on their way to bomb Mazebrouck and Bailleul. So we spent most of the day working, and spent most of the night in the dugout - not sleeping. It was underground, and pretty damp and miserable - until a new one was built above ground for us. We arose at 5 a.m. to dress the patients to leave by the hospital train

at 8 a.m. To give some idea of the uncertainty of life surrounding the C.C.S. One evening a man was admitted, badly wounded by a shell which exploded in a motor transport waggon on the Bailleul Armentiers Road. The Triends in his with hearing he was wounded, rode 14 miles to see him, on horseback, arriving at 10 p.m. at night just as lights were to be put out. I apoke to the two men, and told them they need not hurry away, as their friend was to m down on the hospital train, and they would not see him again. I left the too men with him and went to supper. I was not away as n hour, shen I returned to another wand. As I entered the stretcher Bearers were taking another man out of a red cross waggon, I went up to have a look at the patient, as I did so, he Waggon, I went up to make a took at the patterns, as I had not not contained why, we must be in the same houghtal, this is the sister we were talking to'. They were the two men I left talking to their faces, rote a few hundred yards from the camp. A bomb fell betwee them, killing both horses and wounding pretty budly the two men - one having his foot blown off. They were son dazed they did not recognise that it was the same hospital,

they had just left, till they saw me. All three went down on the train the next morning.

(Sgd)A.N.Smith, N.S. No.1 Aust.Gen.Hospital, Sutton Veny. Experiences during Messines Ridge Battle, and the 9 months dating from 4th January 1917, to October 4th 1917, in The 2nd Australian Casualty Clearing Station.

on the 4th of January I was sent to the End Aust. C.C.S. stationed throis Arbors, between Nieppe and Sallieut. I am afraid my idea of a C.C.S. at that time was rether vague. Se I was surprised to find that it consisted of quite an up-to-date hospital, in many ways, with excellent applicances and X ray plant. The building consisted principally of shacks. Missen huts and tents all connected by duckboards spatty of Smaller, resulting the mad and slotted so well known in Northern transce. There was little excitements the first three months, after that the authent area falland for a very long time, and while it lasted,

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and anti air craft gams, we had little to learn of noise.

I was sleeping in a tent at this time, and it was from here, I heard the noise of the mines blowing up, and felt the concussion of the earth which preceded the Messines Battle. We could not sleep after this wilds preceded the Messines Battle. We could not sleep after this messine the Australians and other troops were faring, Wendering for the Australians and other troops were faring, Wendering at they had won the hill, or were being aleapatered, and housing which from any it happened, we were bound to have hundreds of wounded coming it, Stortly, About 7 a.m. we heard the Hight an abunding, and shortly after the first wounded started to errive. I consulting an abunding the service the light casualties same in, as all those strong beautiful man case in test, tying unconscious and somning. We had a large marque erected near the entrance much like a circus tent in its size, There the wounded were received, examined by an M.O., who ordered their further disposal. After he had examined their condition, they were a stripped of their bloodstained dusty bladi - parts of which had often been slit up or cut away to allow the doctors in the forward areas to dress their wounds and give them injections of Anti Telamic Serum. Their various private belongings were collected into a Dorothy bag bearing their name and rank. The sen were dressed in Red Gross Fylamas and carried on stretchers to the dressing room and put on one of the tentables, which were constantly kept going during the days which succeeded

Again they were seen by another Med. Off. who ordered their special dressing and often dressed them if time permitted, and sent them to

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of combating about and hasmorrhage, and trying to help the patients over this critical time, by giving injections, and special feeding, to prepare them for the operating theatre, their only hope.

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times it was hopeless from the beginning.

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the balloon pretty frequently and pieces were falling in different parts of the camp. One large piece came down and buried it self in a tent between two patients, who were side by side on stretchers. It missed both and one of the patients was an elderly man, and was very much terrified, and practically suffered from shellshock all the aftermoon. This luck was further out however, as he was one of the patients killed by the bomb that night.

After this the sisters peace was at an end, a dugout was built for them. It did not matter where we were working, if a taube appeared we had to leave our tesh and go to a digout, and perhaps remain hours there. At the time I speak of, the taubes were topp out mediting guns and anti air-orarl guns during the day, but always came over us at hight, generally on their way to bomb inserrouck and Ballieut. So we speak nost of the day working, and speak mast or the night in the dugout - not sleeping. It was underground, and pretty damp and miserable - until a new one was built above ground for us. We arose at 5 a.m. to dress the patients to leave by the hospital train

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Some of them had been lying out some time, and gas gangrome had been accepted very crickly, where otherwise the wound has hot very sentous. They were operated on as cuickly as possible and sent in down the hime to make moon for others. Very few could spack a wood of suplish, but as I had an ordarly wing could spack as the standard of the could be supported by the standard of the could be supported to be the votern partially and officer complained, but her word partially only one, and officer complained to be the votern partially the standard of the could be supported by the could be su

During all this time of severe work and for weeks after Messines the 4.05. had been receiving shells, puris of shalls or simpned. Sometimes directed at a belicon between us and the boshe. Sometimes the commans were shelling the failury like and trucks hoping to Sind a like year and trucks hoping to Sind a like year of the same struck, and was penerally sent up the line at night, at other times it meamed to be just the shelling of back areas. The staff and patients had sometimes an aminous time, "Rumerous narrow scapes occurred, but no one was seriously wounded. For these days and nights after seeking the might staff worked hours, later than their usual hours and masse keep the staff worked hours, later than their usual hours and masse keep water to the sight of the seeking the seek of the seeking dropped or different chings, and on the failleul-Rieppe road. No one bothered much about them, we all had the idea that we were seff, because or were a

However in July 1917 a taube dropped several bombs just outside

a tent, killing two patients, two orderites, and we

on the aftermoor of title case day, the Germans had been shalling the calloon pretty frequently and risecs were felling in different parts of the camp. One large piece came down and turied & self in a tent between two patients, who were side by side on stretchere. It missed both and one of the patients was an elderly fan, and was very much terriffied, and practically suffered from size limits all the aftermoon. This lunk was further out however, as he was one of the patients filled by the book that night.

After this the sisters peace was at an end, a dugout was built for them. It did not nature where we were working, if a tauke appeared we had to leave our task and go to e dugout, and perhaps resain howe there. At the time I speak of, the taubes were kept out of the sky by our macking gums and anti air-craft guns during the day, but always came over us at night, perseally on their way to book Maschrouck and hailtedl. So me spent most of the day working, and spent most of the align in the dugout not sleeping. It was the proving and spent most of the align and allowed the unit sleeping. It was the proving an expense.

at 6 a.m.

To give some idea of the uncertainty of life surrounding the 0.0.8.

To give in a man was admitted, headly sounded by a skell windle of the control of the contr

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they had just left, till they saw me. All three went down on the train the next morning.

(Sgd)A.N.Smith, N.S. No.1 Aust.Gen.Hospital, Sutton Veny.

