From Anzac Cove To Villers Bretonneux

The Story of a Soldier in the Fifteenth Battalion, 1st A.I.F.

as told by
1204 Pte Walter S. Kennedy

Dedicated to Alf Stein Killed at Gallipoli 02 May 1915

Dedicated to the memory of my best pal. Alf Stein.
Killed at Gallipoli May 2nd 1915.

(Enlistment)
One morning at our work my pal and self had a quiet talk about the war, etc; and decided there and then to enlist. Down we went to the doctor
.....
.....to
proceed to camp. We enlisted at Queenstown on the West Coast of Tasmania, so Claremont Camp was the nearest for us. It was situated about eight miles from Hobart.
The journey to this place was several hundred miles, so we broke our journey at a place named "Burney" a seaside resort and spent a very pleasant day, eventually arriving at our destination full of hope for our new adventure.
After reporting at the camp and giving full particulars we were given two blankets, then a Sergeant escorted us to a tent already occupied by eight men, but after much squeezing and turning we managed to pass away a sleepless night.
The first bugle call Reveille early next morning.....
.....
(Recruit Training)
About 9 am we assembled on the parade ground, of course all still attired in our civilian clothes, and a funnier looking crowd I never saw, all heights, sizes and shapes, country and city mixed together, we were then formed into sections, and issued with a rifle, drill was begun, and the feats that were performed by most of us who had never handled a rifle still linger in my memory.
We were given every encouragement to become satisfied with our new surroundings, special trains were run twice a week to Hobart, an passes issued to go on leave, only a certain number of passes being issued, we had to do our best to get there if not in possession of one. Those who had passes would assist those less fortunate, they would climb up on the luggage racks and be covered with overcoats; the train would be held up at a station en route, and the military police would go through the carriages, but they would not have much success.
Drill and marches every day were beginning to make us look like dinkum

soldiers, especially a few days later when a few days later we were issued with Khaki uniform.
Nevertheless we made our own fun in camp, two-up schools were popular, and the boozers were frequent visitors to the canteen.
A few fights occurred amongst the boys, but all were friendly and happy.
There was a strike against the rough food on one occasion but it was soon rectified, and we found who were the real men among our Officers.
The first three brigades had mow left Australia, for the theatre of war, and we were becoming restless, and looking to the day when we would be following in their wake.
A few more weeks of foot-slogging around the hills and humping a heavy pack, then we packed up and received orders to proceed to Melbourne, much excitement prevailed the morning we entrained, and a merrier lot of young recruits would have been hard to find.
(Departure to Melbourne)
On our arrival at Launceston we were met by the city band, which headed our two companies through the principal streets, amid the deafening cheers from the crowds of people who lined the pavements.
A little lunch, and a speech, then we embarked on the good ship S.S. "Loongana", a ship which was noted for its speed.
After a good send-off we were soon out of sight of dear old "Tassie". The sea was fairly calm, so we passed a rather uneventful voyage eventually arriving a Port Melbourne, from there to Broadmeadows camp, it had been raining, and we were introduced to a sea of mud. We were givenW a good reception by the troops already there, and a few days later the 15th Infantry battalion was formed, which consisted of Queenslanders and our two Tasmanian Companies completed same.
The fourth brigade was formed namely, 13th New South Wales, 14th Victoria, 15th Queensland and Tasmania, 16th South and Western Australia, so the whole of the states were represented in the one brigade.
It was now early in December 1914 and we were all eager to leave dear old Aussie and get to grips with the "Huns", a feeling which was soon satisfied before we had been away many months.
(Departure from Melbourne)
A few more weeks of the daily grind of training, route marches, drilling, rifle shooting, etc, then a farewell march through the streets of Melbourne. The early contingents consisted of a fine body of men, and a stirring sight was witnessed as we paraded through the crowded city.
On 22nd December 1914 we embarked on ships, the 15th and 16th battalions being allotted to the flagship of the fleet the S.S. "Ceramic" a white Star liner of 18,000 tons.
An anxious crowd gathered on the quayside consisting mostly of women who had come to bid farewell to their bravest and best.
Streamers of all colours were held by relatives and the soldiers on board ship, it was a glorious day, and a splendid God-speed was wished to us all, as a soldier has many friends, but little did we dream that a large percentage of us never return to our native shore.

(The Trip to Egypt)
After all the excitement had ceased the gangways were withdrawn and off we sailed, a few hours and we could just get a glimpse of the fast fading shore.
We were then allotted our sleeping quarters, hammocks being in great demand, the deck space for sports was limited, so the chief exercise indulged in was boxing, and some good scraps were witnessed amongst the lads.
Then the games were started, we played "Housie", "Three Trays", "Two-Up", "Crown & Anchor", anything to pass away the idle hours.
You would have a roll of notes as big as a blanket one day, and be broke the next, money was of no value to us, we were just off on the big adventure.
On several occasions we enclosed a note in a bottle and threw it overboard, and I often wondered if they ever reached the rocky shores of Australia.
A few more days at sea , and we arrived at Albany, W.A., where we patiently awaited the arrival if the other ships.
Whist anchored in the bay, one of the ships caught fire, which prevented it from proceeding on its journey.
Next morning five more troopships came steaming up the harbour, which to be laden with New Zealand troops.
After a few hours the fleet weighed anchor, a wonderful sight when the seventeen ships crowded with soldiers were formed into three lines, several of them were German Prize ships.
A short distance from land and we were facing a strong headwind, causing the ships to toss heavily, most of the bad sailors were already busily feeding the fishes.
Once settled down to our long voyage we were all vaccinated and enoculated, the after effects keeping us quiet for a few days.
A paper was printed on board ship called the "Honk", and all the latest news was dished out. An occasional death on board, which is expected among a large body of men, robbed us of some sterling mates, my friend with whom I had enlisted was still my staunchest pal.
Lectures were given us concerning the customs of the Eastern countries, and of course a little advice as to the immorality that exists in such places.
During the voyage our only escort in sight, was the Australian submarine A.E.2, which made a record voyage for that particular class of craft, also later on doing some good work at the Dardanelles, finally been captured by the Turks.
A few more days steaming and we passed the "Cocos Islands", a group of islands where the historic battle between the German cruiser "Emden", and HMAS "Sydney"
took place, the enemy ship been finally driven ashore and destroyed by gunfire.
We were now being blessed with beautiful weather, and calm seas, we played rope quoits, cards, anything at all to wile away the hours. Most of us slept on deck when conditions permitted. Every morning at 5 am we were wakened by a big man, with a much bigger hose, he was one of the crew, and the hosing of the deck was his masterpiece.
The cold water been sprayed in all directions, soon had us scampering below

decks, one could here his melodious voice shouting, "rise and shine for the White Star Line".
Whilst in mid-ocean the fleet of ships separated, most of them heading for "Colombo", the four largest ships going straight ahead to "Aden". This town of "Aden" is situated on the Arabian Arabian coast, the chief inhabitants were "Arabs", British troops Garrison the place to keep order.
A death having occurred on board our ship the previous day, the battalion band and our company, to which the dead soldier belonged, went ashore to pay a last tribute to our comrade.
Several miles to the cemetery had to be covered, the quaintness of the houses, the customs of these queer looking people were very interesting, by the way they gaped and stared at us, it appears we looked as queer as they.
Few clothes were worn by either sex, dirty and filth they seemed to be accustomed to, on our return to the ship we were rowed over in small boats by the natives.
A sale of the dead soldier's kit then took place, a good sum being raised, which would be sent, to his next of kin.

Then the coaling of the ship was a feast of fun for us all, the natives taking part in free fights, over food and clothing thrown to them. One of our boys threw a large tin of salmon, down onto the head of a native with a thud, but he only grinned at the effect it had on him.
Other would be Arab merchants were trying to dispose of all manner of articles, dates, silks, pineapples, puppies, canaries, the natives imitating the whistling of a songster when selling a non- whistler.
Two days here in this strange part of the world, and we were off again, heading for an unknown destination.

Good weather was sticking to us, and we soon found ourselves entering the" Red Sea", on a hot day the haze appears to give it a red appearance. On this occasion the atmosphere was stifling. Several passenger ships passed us, and then an escort arrived, consisting of a French and a Japanese warship, name of which have long since been forgotten by me.
Nothing exciting followed just the usual routine of a troopship, we then put into "Port Said", which is at the extreme end of the Suez Canal, a rather dirty looking City judging by its appearance from abroad ship, unfortunately we were not allowed to go ashore at this port.
The natives diving for coins caused a stir among us, and articles of every description were bought and sent to friends in Aussie.
A few days previous to this the Turks had made an attack on the Suez Canal, so we were busy sand bagging and making a protection for the Captain's quarters on the bridge.
Our ship the "Ceramic", being the largest ship in the southern waters and drawing 30 odd feet of water, good seamanship had to be used to manoeuvre it through the canal, but luckily no disaster befell us, the banks at that time were being manned by some Australian troops.

Wherever one looked it seemed to be nothing but a vast desert, the weather being very hot during the day, and cold at night, at intervals aeroplanes hovered overhead, disclosing the fact that we were nearing that part of the globe where the grim business of war was being carried on.
Passing several warships of the allied powers we entered the harbour of Alexandria, very little delay, and we were all disembarked, nothing unusual happened, or at least we were too excited to notice it.
We were then entrained and a fairly comfortable journey was experienced, as the Egyptian Railways are at a high standard. It was midnight when we arrived at the place chosen for our camp, no blankets being available we spent a pretty cold night lying on the sand of the desert with only an overcoat for covering.
After much unnecessary shifting about some official decided we were to make our camp just outside a place called "Heliopolis". Will this town is rather a fashionable part of Egypt, situated about 8 miles from "Cairo" the capital.
A clean up to date town, naturally the lower class quarters were in a dilapidated state. Flies seemed to be the chief pest to us all during the day, and mosquitoes by night, the mosquitoes seemed to be a special breed with huge legs, they would alight on their business end and commence operations straight away.
The natives paid little heed to the flies, the children would have their eyes continually filled with them. As in the olden days plagues of locusts would pass over the country almost bringing darkness and completely hiding the Sun, and it was rather amusing to see a whole family marching up and down among the crops beating kerosene tins with a stick their firm belief being that the noise would frighten the pest away.
Well this land of Egypt is a wonderful place, it is a land for heroes and engineers, also the land of mystery.
It is the land for a brave soldier, or a tourist in search of history, the cities are alive with alien murderers, white slavers, and legal twisters, but to England it is worth holding, not so much for any riches it may possess, but for the "Suez Canal" which links it to the Indian Empire.
The Egyptians on a whole are an industrious race and a harmless people.
For centuries they have been slaves to Greeks, Romans, Persians, and Turks, and others from many lands, they appeared to me to be without the ability to lead or control, and naturally quite contented to serve whilst justice exists.
While the world awaited the fall of Egypt, which was undermined with spies and agents of "Austria" and "Germany", a large body of Australian troops quietly landed on its shores.
Men who were fearless, tireless, and ready for any kind of adventure.
Perhaps a little rough and ready, but with hearts of gold, they were of splendid physique. There can be no rebellion, the Australians are too big, too powerful, they are white men, not black muttered one, as the Aussies marched through "Cairo", like many of the natives he had thought we would be of the nigger type.
Many days later a merry party of us hired an old four-wheeled cab, and were driven along the Sun baked road to "Mena", to see the historic "Sphinx" and

the "pyramids", the first three Aussie brigades were camped there, these ancient things and the general surroundings, made us all open our eyes in wonder, and feel that there were plenty of interesting places, besides our own little cabbage patch.
Let me take you through this gay and immoral city of "Cairo", the wide streets, oriental buildings, the bazaars, gaily lit cafes, veiled women, made one feel wonderful and strange.
We sample the cheap wines in the cafes, try the bottles pyramid beer, great pals the diggers, when one had money we all helped to spend it, for what did it matter, of what use was money, we lived for the present, it was only a matter of time and a lot of us would be under the sod.
The Greek wines that were drank soon let the devil loose, and so the Aussies fell an easy prey to the pretty women on Cairo, many being doped and robbed.
Egyptian money presented a bit of a problem for us, if you changed a pound, you would have enough to fill your pockets, so when purchasing goods, we had to trust to luck how many coins to give.
The brands of cigarettes were in thousands, one puff from some, and you would feel your head whirling at a terrific rate, I think they were made expressly for soldiers. Much has been written and spoken of the riot the boys had in Cairo, called the "Wasser Riot", and will live long in our memory for many years to come.
It was on one of the streets of bad repute, and an injustice had been done to one of our boys, I don't think the exact reason has ever been told, but Cairo was soon in an uproar, a gathering crowd was enough to make the diggers appear from all angles, for we did stick together in those times of stress.
With the shrieks of women, the shout of fire, and the galloping of mounted police, through the smoke I could see an army of diggers seeking revenge, windows were smashed, a piano was hurled from above to the ground, doors were torn from their hinges, crockery lay broken on the floors, our Officers were running appealing frantically for them to cease.
Many of the natives were fleeing away from the scene, crying on their God "Allah" to protect them. "The Mad Australians, the Mad Australians", cried the niggers as they fled.
Things were now livening up, nobody appeared anxious to stop the lads, and they were in there glory, one house was burning, wrecking was going on in full swing when the "Gippo", fire brigade arrived on the scene, with a wild yell the diggers captured the engines, cut the hoses, and gave the native firemen the fright of they're lives.
Things looked ugly, but what an occasion, the authorities became panic-stricken, they rushed armed soldiers, from English regiments to restore order, eventually peace was restored and all became quiet, and no hate was shown by the people of Cairo.
I remember an Egyptian officials remark to one of our officers, he said that this particular quarter of Cairo was a curse, and it would have been good to have burned the whole filthy place down, it was cursed with the vilest things made.

Of course most Egyptians are honest, one may have a harem and the world knows it, not like we Britishers who do it all under a cloak, there appears to be little virtue in these Eastern climates.
Well a funeral goes past, what a queer turn out, the mourners sing and make merry, then go home finishing up with a feast, a wedding is the opposite, much wailing and crying.
Well we done some funny things in this land of sin, sand, and sorrow.
I know for a fact many of the boys went at night to the old tombs and cemeteries, digging up the ancient niggers bones, and I have seen a good collection of old coins, rings, bracelets, and family heirlooms brought back to camp, they would be eventually be sold for a mere song when in need of cash.
One of these principal treasure hunting grounds, was situated behind the citadel on the outskirts of Cairo, the route to this particular spot lay through narrow streets, the native quarters were lined with dirty looking shops, selling everything from mouldy turkish delight, to poisonous looking native wines, in this part everybody seemed to be in business on their own little way.
There are merchants in bottles, fagends, manure, rags and bones, egg shells, cabbage stalks, and native conjurers with live pigeons, biting the heads off the birds and mysteriously replacing them. Card sharps and women of every nationality under the sun.
The niggers have an objection to hard work, they leave that for their women and oxen.
The higher class natives are intelligent, clean and well educated, possessing some beautiful homes, the rugs and carpets in some places were a treat to see.
Many of the people can converse in several tongues, at times speaking perfect English, a home I entered by invitation at Heliopolis, gave my pal and I a wonderful time.
The family had a good word for our lads, and seemed to be proud to entertain us who had come so far to fight, they realised it was a mistake to judge us all by the few who played up, boozing and fighting, and don't forget there were some very rough diamonds among the troops.
Perhaps we all had faults, but we were prepared to do the right thing by all if we were ably led and not driven.
How I remember the religious services held in camp on Sunday mornings, after the services we would be free for the day, except a few who were detailed to guard the camp.
Whichever denomination held their service earliest, was always well patronised, I have attended the Catholic faith one Sunday and line up the following Sunday with the protestant faith.
I will never forget the tiring days of our training in the sweltering heat, with a 60lb pack on my back; we would do forced marches of 20 miles across the desert, with strict orders not to use our water bottle, only when ordered to do so, the breaking of rules meant a spell in a military prison ("The Clink").
But war had no respects for feelings or conditions, I was in the infantry, I chose my lot, so had to grin and bear it, gravel crushers our units were termed. I had often wished I had joined a camel corps, or anything where

there would be a ride attached to it.
I had often cursed the long weary roads of the desert, but grumbling was the privilege of a soldier; some of the marches were a little too severe, as many men collapsed by the roadside with fatigue and blistered feet, it was a gruelling test, but most of us came through with flying colours.
Plenty of work and drilling, and a few more trips into Cairo, and the good news arrived, that within a few weeks we would be in the field of war.
Everybody was jumping with glee, anything for a change, so the fateful day arrived.
We left camp in the early hours of the morning, and arrived at Alexandria embarking on troopships, the voyage on board was a similar routine as on the previous trip, so will not bore you with details.
We eventually dropped anchor in the harbour of Mundros somewhere near "Greece". Here the whole of the convoy of ships had mobilised, the first day was a sizzling hot one, I obtained permission to have a swim, so over the side of the ship and into the harbour I went, then the procession started, they dived overboard from all ships, and there were hundreds of us swimming about the harbour, as naked as the day we were born, it brought back memories of Coogee, Manly, and Bondi on a hot day, we did not know if sharks existed here, in fact we did not care.
On the Saturday night April 24th we left Mudros, with all lights on board extinguished.

-----*The Landing April 25th 1915* -----

Sunday April 25th had been chosen for the suprise landing, I think Britain has chosen a Sunday on many previous occasions for her big events.
Below decks officers were moving about quietly among us, creating confidence, and giving instructions, we could not sleep too much on our mind, before daylight we were ploughing through the waters which surround the "Gallipoli" Peninsula, the ships were laden with Australian and New Zealand troops, it was to be our baptism of fire, and the British navy were to give us every assistance in our daring mission, all lights were out and strict silence was ordered, and then came that creepy feeling we could not shake off, nearer and nearer the ships approached the shore, and at last reached a point which had been alloted by the staff, a quiet signal was given and destroyers, pinnaces, and life boats, were placed at the sides of the transports, rough gangways were thrown down, also rope ladders.
We were then given the command to move quietly along, I had often thought and wondered how I would behave when a crisis like this came to me, the next few moments are hard to explain to a civilian, or to make them understand, perhaps it was fear, but all the while their was that strange feeling, that peculiar something, which I believe only a soldier knows.
When each boat was packed with troops, we were all towed towards the shore, it was still dark just before the dawn.
It was here that a strange thing happened which was not realised till some

time later, we met with a strong current, which pressed the boats away from the intended landing place, and carried them into a safer one, I began to realise the danger of an equipment and pack strapped on me, if our small boat should be hit and sink.
I released my shoulder straps and buckles of equipment, I thought at least I would put up a decent swim if it came to a pinch.
The current was the means of the saving of a lot of lives, as we landed in a safer spot.
Not too much doing said the officer in charge of our boat, in fact it seemed, as though the enemy had left this part of the coast un-guarded, but the Turks were wily soldiers, they allowed the boats to near the shore, they then opened up a murderous rifle and machine gun fire.
I am hit exclaimed a mate next to me, and immediately his tunic showed red, another moment and we were grating on the shore. Jump shouted an officer, there was no need to show the lead, we dashed across the beach, some were killed, some fell wounded on the way.
On reaching the hillside we waited while a few collected, then the Turks firing at us we dashed at them, our blood was up we had seen red and felt reckless. Throwing off our heavy packs we charged forward again, the sight of our dead and wounded comrades spurred us on, and many a terrible oath were the last words uttered from dying men's lips.
"Bearers", "Stretcher Bearers", water for "Gods sake" were the cries that could be heard above the din.
By this time most units had become mixed, many officer's had been killed, there was confusion everywhere, the roughest and most daring took charge of small groups, and with these the cheered, cursed and leapt into the enemy trenches.
The very men who were punished and condemned by our officers for breaches of discipline, not saluting, etc whilst in camp, were now showing their real worth, they took charge and led us on, the senior officers who were so much to the fore on the parade grounds during our training, were now conspicuous by their absence.
A charge seems a terrible thing when reading it at ones fireside, folks shiver and ask, how can they do it, don't they feel afraid, perhaps we did a little at the beginning, the order to charge is the height of a soldier's ambition, this is the moment that we have waited for since the day of our enlisting.
What follows is to kill as quickly and as many as possible, and at the same time be careful of your own life.
But the noise, the sight of blood makes us for the time a savage, we were blind to the perils of wounds and death, pride of race seems to urge you on.
Without waiting for support, we wriggled our way up the hillside, it was now daylight, the Turks had an advantage over us, they knew every inch of the ground, they remained on the hill tops, and poured lead into us from above.
We reach the top where we were greeted with terrific bursts of shrapnel and common shells, a sharp crack, a white puff of smoke, then the balls of lead scattering everywhere, some as big as marbles.
To take cover was almost impossible, the scrub was low and their were few

trees, country much similar to Latiause on any Australian coastline, perhaps we were too proud to duck or hide in a hole, this was a recklessness for which we had to pay, yet it was useful, it taught us that to take advantage of all cover was the modern soldier's game.
Everything seemed to be confused, but we tried to form a rough line.
What a terrible sight when one looked back, the ground was dotted with dead and dying, wounded men crawled or limped to the rear their clothes soaked with blood, men with limbs shattered to pulp lay moaning and pleading for death.
Others slightly wounded poured water down the throats of the suffering, yet the touch of humanity was not absent.
Doctors and stretcher bearers defied death tending the wounded and dying, under a terrible fire orderlies carried patients down to the beach below, many were killed at the job, a private named "Murphy" carried on through it, all, carrying wounded on the back of an old donkey, this man was admired and praised by all, and he did not receive a decoration.
The heroism of the Red Cross was wonderful.
It had now developed into a real battle, there was no regular line, little units were here and there, it was the day for a born leader.
Having no information as to how far we should push on, many went on with a courage that was amazing, one group were caught in a gully and wiped out by machine gun fire, a machine gun spurts bullets at the rate of 600 a minute.
Others pushed almost across the peninsular, but were either killed or taken prisoner. The remainder of us realising the importance of taking up a position, got to work with our entrenching tools and dug holes in the ground, banking the earth in front of us, and from behind these little mounds, we kept up a steady fire, without food, without water, and at times without ammunition we patiently hung on, many of us crawling up to the dead bodies to get their cartridges and water.
All of this was going on in a terrible heat, it was heartbreaking for us, all day long we were either charging or beating off the enemy attacks, until the fall of gave ease to the wounded and dying, and allowed us who were living to snatch a drink and a bite.
The landing was complete, the first day had finished, we had achieved all that had been asked of us, in fact more, as this place was recognised by military expects as impregnable.
As we carried on from day to day, our little band of men gradually getting less, we used to look back .....for some help, we often thought we had been deserted by all.
The Turkish army lay in front of us, and the sea behind us, so we decided there and then to make a fight of which the world would hear about,
Surely they will send help were the words used by many of the men.
During these dreadful days snipers were playing havoc with us, one in particular seemed to be behind our own lines; after he had shot several of the lads near me, a party of us decided to investigate his whereabouts, we left instructions for the remainder to show their hats above the trench on a rifle, thereby encouraging the sniper to keep on shooting.

We circled the scrub from the direction the bullets appeared to come from, eventually a small tree appeared as though to rise up and walk away, two of us raised our rifles and fired, there was a cry, then silence; we cautiously crept up as the Turk is a heady soldier.
We came across a sniper shot through the head and dead, his body had branches of bushes attached, giving him the appearance of the surrounding scrub, beside him lay hundreds of rounds of empty cartridges, enough rations and water to last him several weeks. Attached to the muzzle of his rifle was a silencer, here was a specialist and a pest we were well rid of. Snipers did not play the clean game of war, so he got his desserts.

"QUINN'S POST."

It was here I experienced the roughest six weeks of my soldiering, such is trench life, death at every corner, and every moment of the day, bullets plunk against the parapet with a monotonous regularity, others crack like a whip, some whizz past the ear like the hum of a bee.
At odd intervals a good dose of shrapnel heightens the nerves, whilst the never to be forgotten high explosive comes crashing with a terrible boom.
A trench is the place for a blunt, hard, and active man, in fact the nearer one is to the brute creation, the better he is suited for the game.
Trench life reveals the best and shows the worst, of our nature stands out like a statue, you cannot hide it, you need the stomach of a horse, and the strength of a lion, and absolutely no nerves. A bayonet charge is simple, it takes a brave man to live in a trench month after month, your nostrils are filled with the stench of the fallen, and the trenches are built up with the dead.
The tea you drink is made with water filled with germs, and the bully beef is usually soaked in dust and sand. I have seen men quietly go some yards away, then the report of a shot and another poor devil had taken his own life. Who could blame him, the casualty list would show him as just another soldier killed in action.
At times I felt myself as if I were not taken away form this hell I would become insane.
But the flies they were the worst pest of all, the dead bodies attracted them in millions, and they would crawl in yourmouth whilst eating your food, they spread disease among us, and fever was everywhere, I served many months in France later on, but it could not be compared with Gallipoli for hardships. In France we got bread, meat, coffee, papers etc; here we had bully beef and biscuits from one month's end to the other, and a pint of water a day when lucky, if shells did not sink the barges bringing our supplies. Well I am getting away from the heading "Quinn's Post".
This was situated almost on the left of the Australian line, and only fifteen yards away from the Turks, it was the most advanced position of our thinly held line.
Many had died in defending this place, but it was worth it, and practically the key of the whole position, to move your head above the level of the ground was almost certain death, the enemy were making it hot for us, he had a good

supply of bombs, all we had were jam and condensed milk tins, filled with stones and old iron etc. so close were our trenches that it was no trouble for him to throw his bombs in among us.
We kept half filled bags of sand handy, and as the bombs rolled into the trench we would smother them, this was a cause of a lot of casualties, and I had a couple of very narrow shaves. Water and rations had to brought to us under risk of fire, it all helped to make us sickened.
All sorts of tricks were played on the Turks, we used to run along the trench firing every few yards thereby giving the impression our trench was filled with troops, but we did not have it all our own way as johnny the Turk was game and good soldier.
The New Zealanders on our left were doing good work, he was of a different type than the Aussie, more like the English or Scotch more cautious.
The Aussie resembles the Irishman, desparate and often reckless. Well I have again run away from my account of "Quinn's Post". When I commenced these few lines I wondered if I should remember enough to fill a few paltry pages, but I find that my pen runs away with me, so if my thoughts are not so fully expressed as you would find in a printed book, please remember that I have no literary talent, and this is my first serious attempt in such a matter.
The sun had now set it was May 1st 1915, we had been ashore six days and nights, practically no sleep, and little to eat or drink, in fact the darkness was welcomed.
It brought a certain amount of rest and coolness, to the thousands of sun-baked and weary men.
For a week we had slaved like niggers, digging, sandbagging, improving trenches and communications, also bringing up supplies and ammunition.
Our battallion the 15th was taken out of the line, and promised a weeks spell, but another surprise awaited us before we had been releived many hours.
It was about 3am on May 2nd, the line at "Quinn's Post" was being held by the 13th battalion when suddenly we were all awakened by a terrific explosion.
"Stand to" "Fix Bayonets" and up the hill to their assistance were the orders given before we had time to rub the sleep from our eyes. On our reaching the top we found the trenches had been mined and blown into the air, the Turks were swarming into them in large numbers, bombs were given to us, and a terrible fight took place. In this battle Major Quinn was killed and the position named after him.
The casualties were terrible on both sides, I saw more killed in a small area, than I ever saw on the blood soaked fields of France, we frantically jumped in amongst the Turks, and a real Donnybrook took place, eventually we killled or captured them, and held the trench once again.
The noise was deafening, the enemy sent waves of men over in another attack, we trampled on piles of dead bodies, at times picking them up and rolling them out at the rear of the trench to make more room, we crouched hard against the front of the trench.
Shells burst right on our sandbags and destroyed them, tossing men in all directions, or burying some under the hail of bags, shrapnel shells burst above sending the bullets down on to the backs of the troops, machine-guns

rattled out a hail of lead, and rifles squirted bullets in every corner where a living soul was likely to be found , it was absolute butchery, my pal with whom I had enlisted was where the fighting was thickest, he received a terrible wound, I rushed to his aid and did all humanly possible for him but it was of no avail, he died of wounds, I felt a little distressed, but such is fate, he had lasted but one week, and I was destined to survive for years.
Our field guns were firing shells at the enemy, they were just skimming our trenches, and playing havoc among the Turks, they shortened their range, and about five shells landed right in amongst us, men were blown in all directions, we lost our heads in the excitement, and leapt from the trench and laid a few yards behind, what a mess, shelled by your own artillery, and battered from the front by the enemy, how we managed to survive is beyond me, we again occupied the trench. "Hell" was the only word for this place.
It gradually became quiet, the Turks abandoned hope of regaining it.
We sit down and look about us, one young man's hair had become grey in a day, the look of despair in our faces made us look aged. We sit calm even cool and then a flicker of a smile, the wounded bore their wounds with a wonderful patience and few complained, we ripped out our field dressings to stop the flow of blood, doctors paying little heed to whizzing shells and bullets, crept from patient to patient, stretcher bearers manfully did their job.
Anongst all this danger men found time to praise the deeds of the Red Cross men, the name of the A.M.C. should be printed in letters of gold on St.Pauls.
My mate who was killed was later mentioned in despatches for bravery.
The unthankful job of burying the dead had to be done. When things got a little quiet, long graves were dug, and as you rolled a body in, a familiar face would make you turn away with a wretched feeling, as many as twenty in one grave would be laid to rest, some were so mutilated that their remains would be collected in a waterproof sheet.
During the next few weeks we spent most of our time in the front line, taking part in several night raids, an occasional day or two at rest as it was termed, was spent in carrying ammunition and stores, while at regular intervals during the day we were pestred with large shells from the Turkish Warship "Goeben".
By the middle of May we received some reinforcements, but not near the number required to make up for the losses we had sustained.
I would like to state that during these weeks of hard fighting in the scorching sun, we never saw a sign of bread or fresh meat, bully beef, biscuits and cheese were our daily rations, thanks to the hard training we went through in Egypt, which no doubt were the means of us enduring the hardships.
In a lot of cases the biggest and those who appeared strongest would go down first under these terrible conditions, men who appeared nothing to look at physically were seeing it out longer than some of the others.
At the end of May we received word, that we were to be relieved for a spell, if I remember rightly this took placea on June 2nd, we were taken back to a gully near the beach at "Anzac Cove", next morning a muster parade was ordered, and a roll call, of the 1,025 men in my battalion who took part in the landing on April 25, 173 of us answered the roll after six weeks of fighting. When I

looked at the faces of some who were mere boys when we left Aussie, and see them now, how different they were, years had been added to their faces, and our clothes were torn to ribbons, boots falling to pieces, six weeks of whiskers was hiding the dirt that had accumulated on us, and we were all infested with vermin.
Many had been struck down with fever, and those of us who were left were only dodging the day when we would be pushing up the daisies.
After such a battering we were used as a Reserve brigade, next day we all went for a swim, and what a shock to the system, after not even washing our faces for many weeks, no bathing costumes were needed, and we defied the shells which came over at intervals, sweeping the beach and scattering the stores everywhere.
The gun that regularly shelled the beach we christened "Beachy Bill", our job was to unload all rations and stores from the barges as they reached the beach, this job was dreaded by all, unfortunately we could not get the sack, so carried on with the good work.
Sailors who brought these barges ashore towed by naval pinnaces, took the wounded away with them, they showed wonderful courage, and were a credit to the Silent Navy. We had several weeks of this work during which time we laboured on, digging trenches and all manner of communications.
Excitement prevailed one day when on the extreme left of the position, a white horse appeared, carrying a Turkish officer waving a white flag, he was allowed to our lines, he was then blindfolded and taken to headquarters, where he asked for a truce to be made for one day, to bury the dead in front of the trenches, the burial party wore masks, and the sights were gruesome, bodies were buried where found, some would fall to pieces when moved, and the smell was unbearable, after all had been buried fighting resumed as usual.
We were then ordered to cut out long benches and dug-outs on the hillside, enough to accommodate 40,000 troops. Lord Kitchener had visited the place, and advised an attack on a large scale, this gave us plenty of encouragement in our work.
Our mode of dress was pair of shorts and a pair of boots, our bodies were becoming blacker every day under the boiling sun, we had a colour equal to any we had in the school days on our beaches in Sydney.
We were now able to write letters home and were also receiving better rations. The british Warship "Triumph", with a French cruiser came and stood off shore every day and gave the Turks some big frights, with their naval guns, a Turkish submarine came and rorpedoed hem both, and it was an inspiring sight to see the "Triumph" heel over and plunge to her doom.
The snipers were causing heavy losses among our officers, so they removed all badges of rank, dressing so as to appear as privates.
We were instructed not to salute them, or draw attention in any way to the snipers, what a different attitude to the camp days, when they fined and punished men for this breach of Discipline, but on the whole they were game and ably carried out their duties.
The food had now shown a marked improvement, we were getting bread, jam, bacon, condensed milk, meat, and "pork and beans".

I would like to meet the man who put the pork in the tins of beans he surely was an economist of the first order. We would light a fire and toast bread, using our bayonet for a toasting fork, and spread ever so lightly with jam, as one tin had to do for 12 men for several days, one day some tins of butter arrived, but there was not sufficient for all, we had to be content to hear about this luxury.
Water was scarce, a pint a day per man for washing and drinking purposes, so the "Aegean" sea was our bath, even although we risked shellfire for it.
In the next gully to us were a regiment of "Ghurkas", little brown men from the far away hills in India, I became very interesting in these little fellows, and studied their customs and language, they always preferred to cook their own food, and were as brave as any troops, many a pleasant hour I spent among them, and they simply adored us Aussies, what wonderful stories they will have to tell their people of us.
"Galllipoli", what a God forsaken place, barren hills and scrub, and dreadful heat, we had some fresh water stored in a tank nearby, one day an aeroplane flew over very low some time later shells fell on the tank and nearby, we sat watching the water pour away as if it was gold, and felt as though I would never forgive the gunner who fired those shots.
The big attack was being carefully planned, 40,000 of Kitchener's army had arrived from England, and we were all eager to take part in it. Being kept stationery for months on end soon became monotonous. I became ill and paraded before the doctor, who ordered me several days no duty, with the good old army No.9 pill, some of the boys who had been wounded earlier in the campaign were recovered and returned back to us again, but a few of us had been so far without a scratch.
Aaugust 6th had been fixed for the new attack, it was to take place on the extreme left of our lines, at a place known as "Suvla Bay".
I was now becoming weaker from illness, and was advised by the doctor to remain behind for a few days, but when the lads packed up and prepared to move on it was too much for me.
How could I stay after going through with them, from the bitter days which followed the "Landing", so I joined my company and went. Late on the night of August 5th we were issued with extra ammunition, rations, and water, and under the cover of darkness, we made our way along the beach, crawling most of the time.
Strict silence was ordered, and to prevent any discharging of rifles, we were allowed no cartridges in the magazines, it was planned as a surprise attack and no shots were to be fired, if we encountered any of the enemy, we were instructed to overcome them with the bayonet.
We went our way along the waters edge, the silence and suspense being hard to bear, on reaching the extreme left of the position we met a Turkish outpost of about 150 strong, capturing some of them, others who fled were followed, and the cold steel was soon given to them.
During this time part of Kitchener"s army were making an assault on a position 'Chunuk Bair", and the landing of others at "Suvla Bay".
It was now evident that the water problem was going to be serious, we had

emptied our bottles, and the weather was frightfully hot, we were not very hopeful of finding any water waiting for us on the high ridges of "Sari Bair". Two water carts arrived drawn by mules, and whilst waiting to refill our bottles, I saw men licking the tanks of the carts as the water trickled out, a dreadful feeling is thirst, your tongue seems to swell and fill your mouth. Arrangements were then made to pump the water inland to us, and to be stored in tanks.

There appeared great optimism among the higher officials and Constantinople was spoken of as our objective, off we go again during the early hours of the morning and advance several miles, suffering only a few casualties.

When dawn came my brigade the 4th were holding a line on a ridge called Asma Bere, on the right of our position a battalion of New Zealanders were having an uphill fight. I think they were the Canterbury Infantry battalion. We go ahead a little and wend our way through the pitfalls, forcing a passage through the scrub, where we met with fierce opposition.

It is now about 7 a.m., the 5th and 6th Indian "Khurkas" regiment were on our right, these soldiers carry a large knife (Bowie) in their teeth, and when in the heat of battle become so excited and throw away their rifles, relying on their knife, and how deadly they use it, I was thankful to know they were on our side.

A battalion of "Sikhs" move up among us, dressed with turbans on their heads, this was their first fight, and they stuck to us well. Our brigade received orders to leave one half behind, the remainder to attack hill 305, it looked more like a mountain to me;

By now the enemy had all his reserves moved up, we tried to advance but were checked, we hung on grimly – a water shed awaiting a fresh attack, but he turned his attention to the New Zealanders holding a ridge on our right. Constant attacks were beaten off by them, and although nearly exhausted they held the position, this place meant a lot to us, and if we could capture hill 305, we could look down on the plains, and the Dardenelles beyond, and the roads leading northwards to Constantinople. So near and yet so far, it was not to be.

Whilst all this was taking place, some of the Aussies on the right had made an attack on "Lone Pine", named after one solitary tree which had defied the gunfire, I believe the first brigade was now reduced from 2,900 to less than 1,000, and the total casualties up to about 8 p.m. on the ninth on all sections must have been nearly 10,000, but in spite of this we were all in good spirits, this looked as if something definite was being done, a case of a real fight to a finish.

But our turn came again, the enemy had brought up more reserves, successive lines of Turks came at us over the ridge, the warships and artillery poured the shells into them, gaps were torn in their ranks, they tried to reform, a sort of iron rain fell on them, but on more of them came, daetermined to regain all they had lost.

They were paying dearly for it, for once they were over the crest of the ridge, they became exposed not only to the full blast of the big guns, naval and

military, but a battery of machine guns from my company played on them till the barrels were red hot, one gunner stood on the trench holding a machine gun on his hip, spraying bullets as you would water from a hose, terrible losses were inflicted on them but still they came, as they came closer we got restless and extremely excited, a real hand to hand fight looked certain, we lept the trenches to meet them, they faltered, we then rushed at them cheering wildly, and of the swarms who crossed the hill a mere handful struggled back to their own lines.

Things had become quiet, I had survived another battle, their wounded and killed in thousands, a shell burst some yards away, I received my issue at last a wound in the back.

Stretcher bearers carried me back through the gullies to the beach, I was now in a bad way, what splendid fellows these, they put me down to rest their weary limbs, then rush on again.

Fever had undermined my frame during the past few days and at last I gave way to it all, it seemed a miracle that I had survived so long, they told me many hard struggles took place there later on, but of these I can give no account.

I lay on the beach at "Anzac Cove" for two days, the enormous amount of wounded took time to be removed, as all had to be put on barges and towed to a hospital ship, a little later on the Gallipoli campaign came to a close and the glorious failure cost our forces 33,000 killed and about 60,000 wounded, before leaving the beach I could not help but think of the wonderful courage of all the boys and the never-to-be forgotten 29th English and Scottish division, so I was to bid farewell to this wretched place, where I had served right through from the first day.

It was the afternoon of August 11th 1915, after serving four months on Gallipoli, I was one of a party of wounded that were carried to a barge, lying at "Watson's Pier", named after a naval Officer killed there, a small naval pinnace took us in tow, when about a mile from the shore, a battery of Turkish guns opened fire on us with six inch shells.

Imagine yourself in the same plight as we were, a helpless stretcher case, with shells falling in the water close by, I lay awaiting the shell that would send us to our doom.

Thoughts flashed through my mind, I had survived all the other, and looked like meeting the end here, but fate was good to me and decided otherwise, we emerged from this hail of shells unscathed, eventually getting out of reach of the enemies guns.

Then the sound of many voices,and the noise of cheering, we realized that assistance was at hand, we are towed alongside a huge liner, I read the name "Acquitania", a little manouvering and we were soon carried on board? But what a ship, I think its tonnage is about 50,000 tons, a sister ship to the ill-fated "Lusitania" torpedoed by a Hun submarine.

It appeared to me as a huge floating palace, or a large up to date hotel.

Doctors, orderlies, and nurses rushed about attending us, doctors performed operations, but alas many of the lads were too far gone that they were beyond recovery.

The re-action of all I had been through, wounded and stricken with fever I collapsed and remained delirious for 30 hours, on recovering I found our ship in mid-ocean, and was thankful to think I was leaving Gallipoli behind, for had I not had my share of it all.
One of the nurses breaks the news that we were bound for England, the idea was a good one, I wanted to live and see this place of my ancestors, but I was in a rather serious condition.
There was a shortage of medical staff on board, and the terrible sights that I witnessed will always linger in my memory. Men absolutely helpless, lay in their own dysentry, other poor blood-soaked victims with limbs shattered lay awaiting the end. It was a common occurrence to wake up from a sleep to find the man next to you had passed away.
There was always a number of deaths on board every day and the burials were frequent. A corpse would be sewn in a canvas with some lead enclosed, the Chaplain would read a short burial service, the liner would reduce her speed, a schute arrangement, was used by which the victim would be sent to a watery grave.
I was putting up a great fight against nature, a few days later we called at "Naples" Italy, rather a good city judging by appearances from the ship, but my condition was low, and nothing was of much interest to me.
I remember the streets on the side of the mountain, terrace, after terrace, with historic Mount Vesuvius as a background, in the harbour lay a few allied warships, revealing a little of the secrets of Britains mighty sea power.
A short stay in port to replenish our supplies, and we were off again, of course we had to sail in complete darkness, owing to the submarine menace, so there was still only a rough chance of us reaching England safely.
At Gibraltar we buried a few soldiers who had died the previous day, among them being an Officer of my battalion, who was liked by all, he had proved himself to be a fine fellow in action. There were about 4,000 patients on board and the deaths amounted to several hundreds.
After leaving England's greatest fortress we arrived at Southampton, where a red cross train awaited at the quayside, a ticket was pinned on my tunic denoting the nature of my wound and my destination.
Once on board the train we were given a good bowl of hot soup and every attention was at hand, a few hours journey in a beautifully equipped and comfortable first class carriage, we passed by scores of towns and villages, the good old Aussie gum trees were missing, and it brought back visions of that old familiar railway sign, "20 miles to Griffith Bros".
At last we arrived at one of London's largest railway stations, "Waterloo". I will never forget the scenes that I witnessed here. The dense crowds of people anxious to get a glimpse of the wounded was amazing.
It was August 22nd 1915, conscription had not been passed in England, recruiting meetings were being held, it was still early in the war, patriotism was at a high pitch. Whilst being carried along the platform on the stretcher from train to a Red Cross motor, we were thrown flowers, cigarettes, and sweets, many who were excited even threw us coins.
What a God-send it seemed after such a place as Gallipoli, in fact it was as a

dream to us all, a heaven on earth it could be termed.
After a quick ride in the ambulance I arrived at the 3rd London General Hospital Wandsworth, one of London's largest hospitals which is surrounded by large grounds.
Orderlies hurriedly carried us to different wards, where we were soon made comfortable.
I was well treated by the hospital staff, the nurses patient and untiring work no doubt saved many a war worn soldiers life, to these splendid women I will be always grateful, if it had not been for them "Your's truly" would not have penned these lines.
Visitors could not do enough for us, concerts were arranged several nights a week, motor drives, theatre parties, and every kind of amusement was available. I spent ten weeks in this place amid every comfort and care that one could wish for.
Being still in a week condition the doctor would not allow me on leave, but sent me to a convalescent home, at Epsom Downs, a racecourse where the world renowned English Derby is run.
Hundreds of huts had been built which accommodated 1,500 men, invitation to wealthy private homes were much appreciated, and the hospitality of the English people was astonishing. I was gradually regaining my health and strength, it was necessary to get a pass to go into town, at 9 pm nightly an officer made his rounds of the huts checking the absentees, we had all kinds of ruses to overcome this difficulty if out minus a pass, we would put pillows under the blankets, giving the appearance of a sleeping soldier, to complete the general appearance, a soft broom would have the hair showing from under the blankets.
I leave this place and proceed to Headquarters Horseferry Road London. We draw the money due in our pay book, a new uniform is issued and off we go.
First day out we visited such places as Buckingham Palace Tower of London, Westminster Abbey, St.Pauls Cathedral, zoo, museum, Madame Tassauds of waxworks fame;, and numerous other places of interest including Dirty Dicks of the Wedding Breakfast fame. Then petticoat lane on a Sunday morning.
The East end of London is remarkable, we made our way through the crowded streets, streams of people crossing the busy road-ways, diving into lanes and alleys, all intent on going somewhere, and heedless of the motor buses and heavy traffic, if we walked slowly we would be jostled along by the crowd.
Out of this quarter we came towards London bridge, the stream of people was amazing, we wondered how so many got a living, if my old pal could have only seen this, but fate had decided otherwise, we pass along a narrow thoroughfare, we enter the parlor of a public house, which is full of men and women, drunken men were singing some war-time song, they have good greetings for us and offer us liquor, we soon become popular, too popular in fact so leave this place and wander outside, along the narrow street are lined barrows and stalls, pretty women lingered about the footpaths with a glad eye and a smile for the diggers.
There appeared to be thousands of kiddies in this quarter, some crawling on

the footpaths. I looked and wondered, so this is London, what a city, Sydney was a village compared to this, I linger around studying the characters of the people although of the poorer class there is something about them which is not seen in the wealthy, and the ties which link these people seem of a truer nature. If some of our leaders would only see these wretched dwellings and conditions they could not turn aside.

Further along we come to some jewish quarters, bargaining and doing a brisk business, we stand quietely on the corner studying the faces as they hurried past.

It was foggy and cold our Army coats would not keep it out, the constant walking had made us weary so we made our way to Hyde park it is much the same as our domain on a Sunday afternoon.

I took notice of the English ways and they seemed reserved, we have a yarn to a London bobby and he seems full of information.

Let me take you pass the houses of parliament to Westminster Bridge, barges area coming down the Thames, the river itself looks dirty and muddy. We had a free pass for a show so we wander back to the West End, we do the Strand, go down the coal hole for a drink, then in to Dalys theatre at Drury lane, see a good show and make our way back towards the Anzac Buffet. It is late nearly midnight we stop at a coffee stall and order a feed, Big Ben on Westminster booms out the hour, here was a sight to thrill, a drunk was devouring hard-boiled eggs shell and all, another was swallowing prawns with the heads and tails on, motors raced past carrying society home, and the numbers of taxi cabs was a revelation, what a vast amount of money is needed in a city like this, the greatest city in the world.

We get temporarily sick of London so decided to have a look at Bonnie Scotland, we travelled to Edinburgh on the Flying Scotchman some train believe me.

On arriving here I found the freshness of the air, and the people all looked so healthy and well, a little snow was falling which made the place looked picturesque, Edinburgh Castle on the hill was the first place to visit, immediately up from the Railway station, it was garrisoned by a regiment of Royal Scots in kilts, and a royal time they gave us, then to Holyrood Palace, and several other places which for the moment I cannot recollect.

Then out to Queensberry on the Forth river over which spans one of the finest bridges in the world. Anchored in the bay were H.M.A.S. Sydney, and New Zealand warships coaling, they had just returned from a long vigil in the north sea.

Feeling in a roaming mood, we catch a train to Glascow, we see Loch Lomond and bonnie Dundee. Back again to Edinburgh where we spent a great week, then off back to London.

We still had not escaped the risks of the war, the Zeppelin raids had commenced on England and were fast becoming a menace. Anti-aircraft guns were erected on the tall buildings, and numerous searchlights installed, from dusk to daylight these lights searched the heavens continually, the German raiders would leave Germany at night, arriving about midnight.

When they crossed the English Channel, news would be flashed through to

London of their approach. The city would be then plunged into darkness, warning sirens would sound, and the population would seek shelter, in cellars, or down into the underground railways, the drone of the Zeppelins engines could be heard, then London's defences would open fire. In the streets the risk of the falling shells from the guns was great, then the Zepps would unload tons of huge bombs, houses would fall like a pack of cards, one raid in particular took place in a locality where I was quartered at Brixton. The raiders followed the main road dropping bombs en route, some fell on houses, others in front gardens, blowing in front of buildings, and tearing up roadways, I was less than 100 yards from this scene when it occurred, another raid dropped bombs in the Strand at West End and on the newspaper offices of John Bull, families were sheltered in the cellar of this building, and a huge bomb made a direct hit, burying them under tons of masonry, down the underground railways women are huddled together with children crying.
To those of us who had been through the mill at the front these raids did not trouble us much, but the women and children suffered great hardships.
Well all good things come to an end, my leave had expired, so I had to report to camp at a place called Abby wood, situated close to the great munition factories at Woolwich. There was a real thrill one night, when the raiders passed over and dropped bombs close by, it was horrible to think of the result if they had landed them on the Arsenal amongst the thousands of tons of ammunition.
Well this camp was really a training ground for wounded and sick troops who had recovered, but needed the necessary physical training to become fit to take the field again.
This preparation took some months and we enjoyed the lighter side of soldiering, spending the week-ends in London, and by the end of 1916 I was married to an English bride. I had now regained my health, and a few weeks later I was ordered to proceed to France to rejoin my battalion. My equipment and dress was now a little different than when on Galllipoli.
I now had a steel helmet and a gas mask, a special train took us to Folkstone then the English Channel was crossed with two British Destroyers as escort.
We arrived at Calais, France, then entrained for a base depot at Etaples, where we spent a few days preparing for the real business of war.
Then for four long days we passed through green fields, well kept roads, through large towns and small villages, the contrast between Gallipoli and this fair land was quickly noticed by me. "Albert" was our first real stopping place, here was the huge figure of the "Virgin Mary" hanging from the steeple of a partly demolished Cathedral, the locals had the superstition that when it fell the war would end, their dreams were not realized as some time later this place was shelled again and it collapsed.
Off again gradually getting nearer the firing line, the people en route gave us cigarettes and coffee, for some had still remained in the battered villages, as the French are a very patriotic race.
We were soon on good terms with the civilian population, when the diggers first arrived in France, champagne was two shillings a bottle, but it had now gone up to ten, our free and easy manner, and happy go-lucky ways, and

fondness for children soon made us firm favourites. By this time Fritz had got to know the Aussie troops and many a lively scrap had taken place.
We had now settled down to life on French soil, or rather sometimes on it, and oft times under it, we were living in holes in the ground much the same as rabbits.
Off again to pastures new, through the rain, mud, ice and snow, it is all churned up together, in places it is several feet deep.
We struggle wearily along through the rain, which never seemed to cease since we started our long march, the roads area crowded with traffic of all descriptions, and a wait of two hours is a common occurrence when a block occurs, overturned waggons, dead horses and mules, smashed motor bikes, big guns, and motor cars line the road, and among these obstacles we wearily pick our way.
At last we leave the road, then turn down a gully for a few hours, then we come to a halt at a camp, it is still raining harder than ever, everything is wet, it was impossible to dry out, we walk about till daylight, frozen with the cold when an issue of O.P.Rum warms us up a little, but we were very lad to see daylight appearing, all the old trenches and dugouts were full of waster and mud, timber and other material needed to keep the weather off was very scarce.
But the diggers have a taking when in need. The English tommies who were in charge of the timber dumps had a lot to put up with from our lads. Some of the hard doers would put three stripes on their sleeve, write out an order for so much timber etc for Colonel so and so, then march six men up to the dump, while the tommy in charge was arguing with the self appointed Sergeant, the goods would be half way to our camp.
At this camp each man was chosen as a specialist for all classes of fighting, I was chosen to become a company bomber, and had daily practice with all kinds of these deadly missiles.
Walking about with pockets full of live bombs, gave one a creepy feeling at first, but we soon became accustomed to it.
We wander into the nearest village one day, which is occupied by thousands belonging to the labour battalion. These men make and repair roads, lay railways etc. A casual visitor to the Western front would be amazed when he saw the great net-work of railways which existed. The war demanded such a quick delivery of material, that the ordinary railways could not cope with it. Of course waggons and motor lorries played their part in the vast work of supplying the armies, but the troops needed stock on a tremendous scale, here were millions of soldiers of different nations, there were plate-layers, navvies, signalmen and traffic experts of every description, their main link is the transport officer, the man whom all regard as the one who never sleeps and men go through special training for many jobs.
Engineers follow up an advance, they build new lines, and repair destroyed sections, blown up bridges, and keep up communications. Telephone wires are laid along the ground, and large lofts of carrier pigeons are used. They lay hundreds of miles of track under shell-fire, as it is simply marvellous the appetite the guns have for shells.

It is hard to convey to the reader the weight of metal which must be hurried to the fighting front, in these days of terrific bombardment, during the big offensive in 1916 on the Somme, the British alone threw over two million shells, and all these had to be transported and carried to guns, cunningly concealed on different parts of the battlefield far away from any road. Over the lines pass troops, food and clothing, trench supplies, from rat poison to barbed wire.

Closer to the front line there is a miniature railway, and from these the front line troops depend for all sorts of supplies, it is these small ones that feed the advance and clear up when it has passed.

The battlefields waste is loaded on these small trucks, old rifles, equipment and empty shell-cases, at the rear base they are dumped, there is a mountain of used material.

In time of need they carry back the wounded, men are laid on the trolleys and sent to the rear more smoothly and quickly, than by stretcher bearers, it appeared to be a cannon war, and the side that could hurl the most looked like winning.

We move on again towards the front, let me take you to such places as "Highwood", now only a few stumps, "Contalmaison", "Pozieres" where the german concrete pill-boxes still stand, then "Delville Wood", the last-named is nothing but churned up ground, what was once a village was now the same as the surrounding country, here and there a few battered trees is all that remains, to disclose the fact that here was once a wood.

Bodies of South African and English soldiers still be unburied, what a price we must have paid for this place.

Our brigade received orders to relieve another brigade in the front line. Long before reaching the trenches, we see the glare of numerous flare lights, with a crashing of large shells, fired by Fritz searching for our transports, whilst on the march stray shells burst near us, we flop on our stomachs, for most shells burst upwards, although Fritz had invented some to tear along the ground after bursting, we christened these daisy cutters.

Mules pulling guns and ammunition get heavily shelled, the mules behave wonderful under fire, but a horse is a pathetic sight. Owing to many men being found with broken necks caused by chin straps of tin hats, we are ordered to wear straps at back of necks.

Another hour and we are nearing the supports, the air is filled with the whizzing of shells, one of our observation balloons high in the air is attacked by german planes, they circle it, eventually setting it on fire, the crew escape by parachute.

We hear the whine of the big shells, as they roar towards the roads at the rear. We wend our way in and out of the small shells, as we walk the duck boards, the shrapnel bursts overhead, we cannot hide in the shell-holes, they are filled with water coated in ice, so we plug along hoping for the best.

Now and then comes the deafening roar of the large 9.2, these shells plough up the tons of earth and make huge craters, spreading death and destruction everywhere, the roar of our own shells gives us a certain amount of security, we well know by past experience, that the germans will be keeping well

down.
We spend a night in the support trenches about a mile from the line. We take round the hat for money, all who have it throw in, a canteen about two miles away is visited, here we purchase tinned puddings, biscuits, soups, dates, all the luxuries our money can buy, we return after dark and Fritz shelled the duck-boards, and through shells in our path during the whole journey.
The lads in the trenches had given up hope of devouring the tinned puddings etc, or of ever seeing us again, but we weathered the storm, and were literally worshipped with a great reception when we arrived.
An equal share of the goods was distributed, and we bogged into them, abdominal pains were the chief worry next day. We relieve a battalion in the front line, some of the men take a chance, new hands eager to have a look at the enemy risk a glance over the parapet, the artillery is working itself into a fury, but we are used to the shrieks and hiss of the shells by this, there being a certain amount of glory in the thick of it. Fritz livens up and the shells crash along our lines, where I had been used to them falling in dozens on Gallipoli, they fell in thousands here.
We crouch together, somehow you feel safer at the thought, and the feel of the warm comradeship beside us, has brought comrades unheard of till this terrible war was let loose. Here was a lesson for religion, among my staunchest pals I cherish memories of men of all brands of religion, what did it matter of your creed we were as one.
A swift sharp hiss, a dull thud, and we know the shell we have been waiting for has arrived, the fraction of a second between the thud and the burst is terrifying, it cannot be explained, it is only a second but appears a life time, you prepare to withstand the shock that will follow, our parapet and dugout seems to swell, a stomach -sickening feeling, and then you realize you are still alive.
The enemy puts a heavy barrage along our lines, shells fall in the trenches and blow men to pieces, a shell-shocked soldier leaps the parapet and rushes screaming towards the enemy only to be mowed down.
We drag the wounded along the trench, few men would desert their mates in a crisis like this, our officer's rush about inspiring us to hang on to the trench, the moans and cries are terrible, we push up the sand-bags as they are blown down, we are covered in dirt and mud, the firing ceases, we look around, unable to realize we have escaped this fury.
We move about helping some less fortunate comrade who has been stricken down. We build up our trench again bag by bag; and settle down to waiting. In this trench a body is buried, with the hand only protruding we turn away in despair. Gas shells come over we put on our masks, they hold enough oxygen for 12 hours, after a time you feel sick, even become sick with them on but dare not remove them.
The gas hangs low in the trench, a good issue of rum is given when it clears, it makes us sleepy, we lie in the dug-out while some keep watch, I crave for a good sleep in a warm bed, it is only a small hole your legs hang out in the ice and snow, when you awake your feet are frozen nearly black, men are removed with trench feet, some even have limbs amputated through frost-

bite.
I had taken a precaution against this, I wore boots many sizes too large, with numerous pairs of woollen socks, would not remove boots from one weeks end to another, afraid of being unable to again get them on. And the rats they are splendid specimens as bit as cats, whilst asleep they would awaken you by tugging at your haversack containing cheese and biscuits which we used as a pillow.
It was humourous to see one of the boys chasing a huge ran with a bayonet.
An attack has been planned, the order then comes "fix bayonets", first whistle mount fire step, we send up a blue flare to warn the artillery of our advance, they put a heavy barrage of shells in front of us, an officer blows his whistle and we charge, make no noise is the final order.
"Make no noise", think of it in this terrible din, unconsciously we talk in whispers, how absurd, although the order is funny to an extreme it has to be obeyed.
We are over the top, and the shells are bursting, our barrage of shells slowly moves forward, they seem to be just passing over us with only inches to spare, an officer gives the very unnecessary order, "keep down low", but I am well down before the order forms on his lips.
A terrible rumbling of missiles occur, we clutch our rifles hard, it is a little comfort to feel the smooth wood it is a true friend. The bombing party of which I belong go ahead of the main body, we discard our rifles, our haversack is full of bombs, also our pockets are crammed with them, we reach the enemies barbed wire, the numerous flares light up no man's land like day.
The enemy is aroused, their artillery open fire on us, we crawl through the wire making gaps with wire-cutters, the crashing of shells makes us excited and incapable of thinking properly, someone tries to raise a laugh but fails miserably, a cry of stretcher bearers, helps to gain our senses, and you naturally repeat the cry.
But all is going well, most of us are still alright, prayers seem useless here, two strong arms and a good spirit is needed now.
Thoughts of old times and the good old days in civilian life flash through your mind, we advance stealthily and slowly and try to keep in line, one man near us falls with a shattered hip, he pleads with us not to leave him, but we must go on, men stumble into old shell holes, recover themselves, then push on without a murmur.
Fritz had tied tins to his wire, they warn him we are approaching, hardly are we through his barbed wire, then "swish", a couple of men go down under the hail of lead from the enemies machine guns, just ahead of us, the shells are bursting all round us now, men fall everywhere around you, we cannot stop to help them, we cheer and make as much noise as possible, hoping to scare the germans.
What follows next seems to be hidden by a mist before your eyes, we rush the german trench, we release the pins from our deadly mills bombs, and hurl them towards the trench, then follow by jumping in amongst them, it may be ten minutes before you regain your senses, in that short period you become a raving lunatic, our bayonet men follow us in, what a scramble and a fight,

germans hold up their hands crying for mercy, others more determined to fight to the last ditch, we overpower the machine gun crew, the position is ours, the prisoners are herded to the end of the trench, we attend to our wounded, also dress the enemy wounded.

No enmity is felt against them, it seems all wrong that we should be killing one another, they fought well, we fought better; The german prisoners are sent to the rear 60 all told, this new position was held, after a few weak attacks by the enemy, we rebuild the trench and clear away the dead.
Day breaks, high up in the air you can see our planes in deadly combat with the enemy, a loud explosion one bursts into flames and comes hurtling to the ground. We fear the machine is going to fall on us, we run along the trench hoping to avoid it, the plane crashes between our front line and the germans, only a few yards away, one of the lads crawl out of the trench in the hope of succouring the pilot, the enemy open fire on him and he makes a hasty retreat.
We are supplied with rope and a big hook, after many attempts we get a hold on the machine, and drag it to our lines, the wings were smashed to pieces, jammed in the cockpit was the pilot strapped to his seat, quite dead, he looked a mere youth, what courage these airman possess. Things become a little quiet, we search the corner of our pockets for a stray cigarette end, a pal with a bottle of water divides it among us, a strange thing war, everything, you possess is equally divided.
Our officer gives a runner an important message, in our early days of training, men who showed speed, or were noted footrunners, were chosen for this job.
We shake his hand and wish him luck, away he goes across the shell swept ground, running a few yards then diving into a shell hole, off again, the enemy machine guns on our left, bark out deadly fire at him, a shell appears to burst right under him, he disappears in a cloud of smoke and dirt, have they got him, we bemoan his fate, another runner is hastily summoned to take his place, volunteers rush the opportunity, one is chosen, but is not needed , a few minutes flitter past, we see him rise, he is off again, this time he gains his objective, they will now be aware that we captured the position.
The artillery get tired of firing shells, I look around at the dead. Surely human nature plays queer pranks, it cannot be right that we should be here killing one another, have not these germans as much right to live as I, you shake the feeling of sentiment from your mind.
We sit back for a while, some men fall asleep, after the strenuous time; thoughts fly back home, one man mentions Australia, several get up and move about aimlessly, they do not wish to awaken the old longing for our native land.
Men who had previously shared our joys and sorrows lay dead around us, we rebuild the trenches and prepare for another day of fighting and toil.
Perhaps the reading of these lines make you feel sad, I have written so many words of the tradegies of war, so I will not overlook writing a few lines of the brighter side, if I left that out these memories would be false, as we tried to

forget the horrors through which we passed.
The gaiety of men, the cheerfulness, even the laughter in the ugly places in which we dwelt kept us going, in our hour of peril.
Men who came to the front for their first occasion were always astonished, they expected to see the imprint of tradegy on our faces, instead they saw men grinning at some private joke of theirs, and hear gusts of laughing coming from dug-outs, this spirit was so general, that it was often said, the nearer the front line the higher spirits everyone was in, behind the lines there always appeared gloom, and it was absolutely true in spite of heavy losses and frightful scenes.
It was really necessary for us, we knew unconciously that laughing was the best medicine for fear, so the funny man of the company always had a good audience to his pranks, the comradeship of the boys helped this spirit along.
We forgot the miseries of yesterday, and did not worry about the troubles of tomorrow, danger itself unless it was too deadly and horrible was a constant source of fun to us of strong nerve; I have often seen men laughing at tricks of shell fire, when some comrade, or group of pals had to run like rabbits from shells that came bursting behind them.
In the trenches we told yarns and funny stories, not all fit for the drawing room perhaps. Men invented games to keep merry and bright.
Even when some lay wounded they joked of the good times they would be having in London or Paris.
The folks at home cannot realize the abomination through which their men passed, so patiently and silently, for we did not tell what was happening to us, so I wish to give an idea of it all now the war is over.
In our letters home we wrote of the brighter side of things, for the sake of those who were anxious about us. And when on leave, in answer to any questions of war, we avoided them, and would say let us go to a show and have a laugh.
Those soldiers who saw nothing of the front line will do all the boasting of great battles fought and won. Behind the lines there were theatrical parties, they were attached to each division, composed of soldiers possessed of stage talent, and in times of real need, they had to shoulder a rifle with the rest of us.
They usually had their stage set in some old ruins, and displayed such signs as – The Follies, the Freaks, The Brass Hats, or Anzac Coves, and their shows were greatly appreciated by all the troops, and many a weary mile I have trudged to see them.
Many of the jokes in the front line were grim and horrible, mocking at death, and the ways of death, what did it matter they carried the right spirit which eventually won the war.
It was quite amusing to read some of the newspapers containing so much piffle about the war. If a big battle took place their report was much different than the facts especially if Fritz had a win, still I suppose the people's spirit at home had to be buoyed up.
I have listened to countless numbers of stories and yarns told, and will here

relate a few of what I recollect, they may not seem humourous here, but owing to the conditions and circumstances under which they were told, they appeared extremely funny to us.
They are as follows –
The rats in our trench were noted for their cheekiness, one day a large rat emptied portion of a jar of rum, 30 minutes later he returned, perched himself on the top of the trench, his body sodden with rum he exclaimed "Now bring out all your cats".
Two English tommies were heard criticising the Aussie soldiers, this is how one described us –
No. I chum - they be big chaps with wristlet watches, and gold in their teeth, and they call their best friends -------
Cairo newspaper boys rushing through the streets, with an early edition – "Paper, buy a Paper", good news, ten thousand Australian soldiers killed, and Lord Kitchener drowned.
English officer inspecting trenches, "What troops are holding this trench my man. Answer, "First Sussex Regiment Sir". After going further along he questions again "What soldiers are in this trench my man?" A voice from a dug-out "What the ------- has it got to do with you" Officer, oh I see this is the Australian trench here".
A digger to frenchman "Where can a bloke buy a bottle of whisky." Frenchman "Me no compree". Digger – go on, I know where there is a pond full of frogs and won't tell you.
A digger having a drink in a bar in France, three American solldiers call for drinks, one American to digger "Say guy", I guess this beer is considerably flat. I suppose so said the digger, it has been waiting here for three years for you to come and drink it.
A digger became intoxicated in a french village, making his way towards a rest camp, he passed through one of the many cemeteries en-route, in a helpless state he lay down and slept; as the sun rose next morning he awoke, looking about he espied the numerous tombstones. He exclaimed "Lor Lummy its Resurrection morn and I'm first up.

I do not wish to create the impression that we Aussies won the war on our own, along the whole of the Western front, soldiers of all nations were passing through the same heavy fighting and showing as much courage.
I am only giving first hand knowledge gained with my own battalion. It is generally conceded that the diggers saw most of the heavy fighting, I will endeavour to explain how this became their lot.
Owing to the diggers being successful in several big attacks, it was soon recognised by Haig and his Commanders that they made fine storming troops. The military meaning of the word "Storm" is a determined assault on a fortified place.
The duties of a storming party is to surprise the enemy by rushing their position, take possession, then be relieved and go elsewhere repeating the same, for this work we were continually chosen, and troops engaged in this mode of fighting suffered heavy casualties.

During the conscription campaign in Australia we soldiers were given the opportunity to vote, and it was the soldiers vote that was the cause of it being defeated, to us who were going through this hell, we would not vote to forcibly make any man do the same, according to official statements, Australia sent nearly 400,000 men overseas, of these over 60,000 lost their lives. Belgium which has a population of eight millions as compared with our five, mobilised 267,000 men of whom 20,000 were killed, and it must not be forgotten Belgium was invaded by the enemy.

Had we sent more troops, our losses must have been heavier, because it would mean more men as storm troops, Australia had done exceptionally well compared with other countries. The 4th brigade of which I belonged saw more fighting than any other brigade, if casualties count, it was certainly so, it had been also awarded more decorations, these included eight VCs, it took part in the landing at Gallipoli and engaged in almost every battle in which Australian troops took part.

Owing to being changed from one division to another we missed spells which fell to the lot of most Aussies, and I think the longest period the brigade were out of the line was about six weeks, the greatest battle being Bullecourt on the Hindenburg line.

Here the losses were the greatest for one battle; of 23 officers and 870 men who went over the top on that fateful April 11th 1917, we finished up with 3 officers and about 80 men. I was wounded at this place and will describe it later on.

Let me turn back the pages to the fighting and the winning of our new position. Our company was now reduced to a skeleton, we were taken out of the line, being relieved by the 13th N. S. W. battalion, we held the support trenches at rear awaiting drafts from the reserve depots in England. Life was very miserable in the slush and snow. I wanted adventure and had got it with a capital "A".

When a sunny day did occur, we termed it the roll call day, this was spent trying to rid ourselves of the lice and vermin.

In Gallipoli I had tolerated them owing to little clothing being worn, but here in France what wonderful specimens they were, the climate apparently suited them.

We continually turn our clothing inside out with the hope of running them off their legs, burn paper down the seams of our trousers in the hope of smoking them out, until you have to give up for fear of smothering "yourself". Our position here was on the crest of Flers Ridge near and old quarry. The 13th battalion had planned an attack, and we were to support them, it was the night Lieutenant Murray gained his V.C. , and returned the most decorated man in the A.I.F.

A new lot of troops arrived, some had only been six months away from Australia, one chap I remember being wounded on Gallipoli and dressed his wound, he had returned home, had been discharged, then re-enlisted.

I will never forget the look of amazement on his face when he saw me, one of the original battalion still going strong. Alas I helped to bury some of the new arrivals next morning arrivals next morning, their length of service on

the field was short, just one night.
Well it was a famous night for the 13th Battalion, Stormy trench was the position, and the line had to be straightened. This line lay between us and Bapaume, it was on a ridge overlooking the Somme battlefield. They were ordered to take the new position, and hold it at all costs, and Murray the officer in charge led the advancing wave.
They had gone out and lay down in no man's land, between what we called "Grease" and "Shine" trenches, and some were in them ready to hop the bags. Earlier in the evening a few had crawled out and dragged in the enemies barbed wire with a rope.
At about 20pm our artillery sent over a barrage of shells, which fell just in front of the troops lying on the ground.
To me this was something new, to watch others in a battle, the diggers rose from the snow covered ground and went forward in one long line, we were to follow and bring up supplies.
The enemy trenches were about a hundred yards away, and for about two minutes we could see them making towards the germans, the barrage of shells then lifted onto the enemy trenches, giving them a good battering, the artillery ceased fire, and the 13th swarmed into the enemy trenches, the position was captured, but holding it was another thing.
Immediately our boys sent up their flares of success, back came Fritz with a counter attack. While we brought up their ammunition they were having a real fight.
Crawling through the snow, dragging cases of bombs after us, returning for more, each trip bringing back the wounded.
It was early in 1917 and the germans had not lost their punch, for a time the Huns seem to gain a footing in Murray's portion of the trench, all through the night, they kept attacking, and we worked like trojans with ceaseless trips across no-man's land, carrying cases of live bombs was no joke under shell-fire, Murray's men hung on through hellish barrages, sometimes under showers of egg and stick bombs, the germans rushed them from all angles.
Murray was leading a charmed life, we ammunition parties would deliver the goods right up to the trench on some occasions, and there we would see him urging his men on to greater deeds.
He had no thought for himself, but headed his men in rushes against the germans. The 13th would drive them out again and again in these rushes, but it was a hopeless fight as they were outnumbered, Murray gave them back the trench, he was the last to leave carrying a wounded digger, and looking back longingly towards the lost position.
During the war many decorations were awarded if one had some influence, and for real bravery to others, the hero of the 13th battalion on that wonderful night, earned all the honours that could be bestowed on him, and before the war had finished he held the rank of Lieut.Colonel.
What a pity this position could not be held, one could see the outskirts of Bapaume, and the main road leading northwards, but for the time being it was to be only a fleeting glimpse.
A few days later a remarkable incident occurred, a group of six men, we were

seated in the front line trench in quiet conversation, a stray shell burst close by, I remarked "that one was a bit close". Yes said a digger near me, but the next one will be the one, it arrived killing him instantly, this shell did not burst but remained intact, had it done so the party of us would have suffered, this event immediately opened up in my mind strange premonitions of death. I was always puzzled as to the cause of this uncanny premonition by soldiers I knew, some a few days, others a few hours, or even seconds before the arrival of the fatal shell or bullet.

On another occasion I was wishing some of the lads good-bye before proceeding on leave to England. I remarked to an old hand, that I would be soon seeing him again, he said, not me, I will be among the slain when you return, and sure enough he was.

Then again we were packing up after a spell in billets, a mate said to me, this will be my last hop over, if any parcels arrive for me divide them among the boys, I advised him to forget such thoughts of death, but sure enough he was the first man killed when we reached the line. I heard of one digger who wrote home informing them that it would be his last letter, and it proved to be so.

I myself had the same such presentiments on several occasions, but there was always some force within me, which kept me from mentioning it to others, each time the feeling came over me, I laughed it off, and I have had a very curious superstition ever since. To this day the feeling persists with me that, had I mentioned my presentiments to others, I am sure my number would have been up.

Some of the cases I just quoted are a few that came under my notice in my own battalion, there must have been hundreds of other cases throughout the army.

I don't know if I am a Jonah to others, but it was remarkable thing that whenever I made up with a new pal, he invariably was killed. I could mention numerous instances, my wife was acquainted with some of those who were killed, in fact we had both remarked on this strange prank of fate. Perhaps after all it was only a coincidence, or did I lead a charmed life myself, after a big battle in France, and the wounded began pouring into England, my wife always became anxious as to how I fared, but I had supreme confidence that I would survive, and even talked of our future after the war.

It is the middle of winter now, all around was snow white, occasionally illuminated by a bursting shell, although all this occurred several years ago it has burnt into my memory, and at times I can recollect every detail.

Then comes the rain and sleet, it seems to freeze into small pieces of ice, and cut your fact as it pelts down. All through the night we had to bear these rotten conditions, cheerless dawns greeted us, with one bright ray of hope – the "O.P. Rum Issue", we did not see the sun for weeks, in recent days there had been heavy shelling but now and again there was uncanny silence, consequently our spirits became a little damped.

The ground became sodden and it was difficult to walk about, it would have been impossible to use our rifles, they were coated in ice and our fingers were Frozen stiff. I did not think it possible to feel so cold, we all looked haggard

and worn, with our blood-shot eyes. Then came a heavy shelling by the enemy guns, I was never so scared in my life and I think my companions were the same. It came at a time when our morale was very low, all around seemed to be like a furnace and bent on our destruction, the ground became churned up, our trench disappeared, men were blown into the air. We appeared to be alone in the midst of this fury, on either side of us was quiet and peaceful, owing to the roar of the shells we could hear nothing else. I think I touched the extreme of human fear, panic was very near to me and I almost lost my head, I felt a desire to escape from it all, in fact even run away from my pals. We seemed to be like rats in a trap, self preservation grips you, I became terrified and dazed with fear. To add to our fears our ammunition was low, and if Fritz attacked we were lost.

I shook off this horrible feeling of cowardice and have often since laughed over my weakness at the time, but it was a bad omen my nerves were failing. This brings to my mind that the effects of fear had a far-reaching effect in the lives of many men, and it is the holding back of fear, and the continual fighting against it that sometimes made a mental wreck of soldiers, for during the war there was a large number of mental wrecks or so-called shell-shock cases.

The general idea of shell-shock to my mind is wrong, though the condition is real, and a dreadful one, and the above incident which I have related, is an example where I myself was on the verge of shell-shock.

More often than not, the man who is blown up with a shell does not suffer from shell-shock. I know of cases where men behind the lines suffered, and even one case where a differ coming from Australia on a troopship became a helpless case, he apparently anticipated what he would be going through, and it eventually developed into fear of it. I do not know of a single soldier who was badly wounded and also suffered from shell-shock.

I have repeatedly noticed that after a spell behind the lines in comparative safety, I showed more fear than when continually in the fighting line. In fact the French Army did not allow their shell-shock cases to be evacuated, but kept them within the fire zone, and they claimed that in this way they obtained more cures than any other Army.

For was it not a well known fact that if an airman crashed or was brought down by the enemy, and of course if he was not injured, he was immediately sent up again in another plane, so as to prevent him from developing fear. Of course, there are the fortunate class, and they are few, they are the ones who do not experience the sensation of fear.

I remember Australia's bravest V.C. L.Cpl. Jacka of Victoria, later promoted to Major, he belonged to my brigade, in one battle he received six wounds and refused to leave his battalion until the position was safe, when asked if the wounds had not created fear to carry on, he replied that he did not know what they meant. I honestly believe he was speaking the truth and did not understand the meaning of fear.

After a few more days on Flers Ridge we were relieved for a long earned spell. We went back behind the lines for about ten miles to a camp called Becourt. Bath houses had been built, and some new clothing was issued to us,

for months our clothes had not been changed, not even our boots had been removed, we were put through a change room first, and it was humourous when we all disrobed.
Numerous shirts, socks and flannels came off, it had been our practice to add a new one over the old, and our feet were hardly so white as marble
Then through the steaming room, we were shut in a cubicle and steamed like a pudding, much similar to a Turkish bath, then off came our months growth of whiskers, such a change was made that it was hard to recognise your best pal.
Then back to huts we went, with a fire and decent food, what a gulf between this and the wretchedness we had just left behind.
We pass away the hours writing letters and playing cards, the weather was becoming better, Spring was at hand, two-up was favourite againn. The Prince of Wales once had a game with the boys, he was a good sport and many anxious hours were spent by the Chief of Staff when he was missing for a few days, he was often seen doing the sights in gay Paris.
London double decker buses were now being used to transfer men from one sector to another, and it was a common sight to see them go by laden with troops.
We play football with other battalions, then some parcels arrive for us, those who have none we share alike, to me this looked like a job for life unable to get the sack if wanted to. We wander around to the prisoners camp, a huge barb-wire enclosure, we exchange coins with the Germans and have a yarn, some speak English well, and had known Sydney well in pre-war days, they seemed satisfied with their lot, they were used for road repairs and other jobs behind the lines.
An observation balloon is attacked by a red german plane with the familiar iron cross markings on the wings, he swoops and the balloon bursts in flames, the crew can be seen jumping out, they land safely with parachutes. We visit different battalions enquiring for pre-war mates and talk over old time times, but there was no rest for the wicked, a few days later some head decided we would be better with drilling and rifle exercise.
To us who had been through the mill, this was irksome and of no earthly use, one did not have much time to form fours when a big attack was on.
In our spare time we visit nearby villages and mix with the French people, after much waving of arms and rough French we usually made them understand our wants.
Several of us would pool our money and buy all manner of luxuries. Well this was too good to last, reinforcements had arrived and our battalion was nearly full strength again, a few of us who left Aussie in 1914 were now looked upon as relics and old soldiers, of course old soldiers become shell-wise.
I have repeatedly entered the front line trenches with a few old hands and a number of new arrivals who had never been in action before, they would look to us for advice, or follow our example, and in most cases in a battle, a bigger percentage of the old birds would survive, whilst the recruits would go under. I have heard French soldiers say that shells glance off old soldiers

owing to their toughness caused through the elements through which we had passed.
But the whole secret of this is that, a soldier who has experienced a lot of fighting, and is familiar to the surroundings, keeps cool and generally evades points where the enemy will direct his fire as matter of habit, or scientific gunnery, and the enemy cannot afford to sow shells all over the battlefield, it is not an uncommon thing to feel comparatively safe within a hundred yards of a bombardment. The corner of a village may be dangerous, a turn in the road, any kind of a trench is safe from shrapnel, if in the open it is wise to lie flat, as most explosives burst upwards.
Being in the open is not risky providing you are not too close to the enemy, especially if there are only a few of you, a lot of others are also on the battlefield, and the enemy will not waste shells for one or two.
Most recruits keep in a bunch under fire thinking union is strength but it is often fatal, of course experience teaches these golden rules, and if properly obeyed there is perhaps a rough chance of surviving.
Heavy shell-fire is very deadly, but I had a bigger dread of machine-guns than any other machine of war.
A good machine gunner if he is game can mow down an entire regiment, if he is fortunate enough to survive himself.
In the midst of shells and trench mortars, bullets buzzing around him, if he keeps calm and makes every bullet count against the wave of men coming towards him, who are at his mercy, in most cases the ground would be dotted with dead along the front of his position.
In the early days of the war the germans had it all their own way, but we were now returning it in full measure, and they were beginning to wilt. Even here behind the lines, the ceaseless shelling goes on night after night, and day after day.
Some battalions are marching towards the front line, some of those going in will never come out again, and yet they go by whistling and singing on the march
Never before have so many men given their lives in action, I look back and think of the terrible ordeals, I sit and think of the best way of expressing the struggle, I have thought out how I should write it, how to make you see what I have seen, I have wondered how to explain the shell torn earth, thousands of guns sending forth bursting shells, that make almost impassable curtains of fire, and of the ruined villages and large towns, and have tried to take you through the villages and smashed houses, and trenches where the Germans once were in command, past the ambulance dressing stations, and water carts lined up ready to go to the front.
When the weather is wet the stretcher bearers have a difficult task carrying their burden through the mud, yet in spite of all this some of us survived month after month, in fact it was now becoming years.
In most villages there are a few houses built of stone which have deep cellars, giving good cover during a heavy bombardment.
On the whole of the "Somme" area there is not one sign of anything green, nothing could live here yet some men manage to live.

I have seen steel shells destroy a forest or a whole town, but when all is clear, the remnants of a regiment will still be holding out.
When you go over the top you become used to the whizzing of shells. In the midst of the hail you listen for the sharp note of the machine gun, and from experience you can distinguish the german from our own.

A barrage will fall about, you can see a number of your comrades still pushing forward. If I were to describe every battle and the experiences we went through they would fill a library, back from the rest camp and forward into the line again among the whizz bangs and minniewurfers, I was seated on the fire-step listening to one of the many yarns being told, when I heard my name being called out lower down the line, I was then informed to gather my equipment etc., and proceed to headquarters from which I was to go on ten days leave to England, imagine my surprise and joy, a few hours previous I was expecting to die, now this astounding news that I was to be taken away from this hell. Leave to England or Paris was given according to a soldier's length of service in the field.
Hearty handshakes from all the boys and all kinds of good wishes, and off I went wasting no time, stray shells were bursting but I watched them with impunity. Down along the Cambrai road I hurried, getting a lift occasionally by ammunition waggons, eventually getting a lift on an Ambulance waggon. I get clear of the fire zone, men who worked behind the lines asked me for souvenirs, I had none they did not appeal to me now, after a few hours I arrived at "Albert" where I boarded some goods trucks and a slow journey was made towards the coast. The next night I arrived at Boulogne where a leave camp was situated, here I received a thorough cleaning and a change of clothes. The gay town of Boulogne beckoned me, but I boarded the leave Ship and quietly slipped away from France.
The English Channel was a bit rough but anything seemed good now, after all life was sweet, a few hours and the channel was crossed, here was Folkstone in the distance, a special train was awaiting us, and we sped towards London, the roar of the train seemed as music to my ears. At last we are at Victoria Station, crowds of people were there to meet the boys from all kinds of regiments.
I had got to know London well on my previous stay, but it seemed as home to me now. Near our headquarters the slums were the same as before, but even this quarter was as heaven compared to the Somme.
People still clustered around the pub doors and dirty kids crawled on the footpath. Down to head office for some financial assistance and we went our way, my leave was so unexpected that I was unable to notify my wife, as there was a rather surprised re-union, with her I spent my hard-earned leave, but how quickly the days seem to fly past, sight-seeing, theatres and visiting friends was how I spent most of my time, London is a remarkable place and there is always somewhere to go.
I travelled on the network of underground railways, get out at St.James station, through the park with its lake, you can take long journeys and never seem to get out of London, catch a bus at Victoria station, pass westminster,

opposite is the big hospital, stroll along the embankment of the Thames, pass blackfriars, over Waterloo bridge, then London bridge, get from one bus to another, girl conductors would often pass by as we sat on the top-deck, ignoring our offer of fare, then the Tower Bridge, then Trafalgar Square with its huge Nelson Column of black marble, along to Whitehall, beneath a big arach, then the Mall, Buckingham Palace, then the Horse Guards, and the wonderful changing of the guards.
The people of London seem to swarm wherever you go, for those of you who have never sailed out through the Sydney Heads, I feel sorry for you, as these sights are worth travelling the width of the world to see. But the morning arrived when my leave had expired, and the thoughts of going back to the battlefields of France was a hard lot.
That day is still quite clear to me, London was covered with a foot of snow, on the way to the Railway Station, I gazed at the buildings and the streets thronged with people.
I felt as though I was departing for some other world, and thought to myself that there appears little chance of seeing this place again.
After a farewell to wife and friends, the train moved out, bound for the boat which would carry me back to the blood-soaked fields of France.
Over the channel and then towards this living hell again.
I reached the end of the railway line, and prepare for a tramp towards the Bshell-swept area. The trudge along those cobblestone roads is still a nightmare to me.
Only the ceaseless tramp of the soldiers feet, disturbed these stricken villages.
I arrived at a large clearing and dressing station, and camp for the night, in the morning I passed through a town into the open country beyond, where my battalion are still in the line. I arrived at Headquarters where I reported, and set to work to make myself comfortable for another night, where I hoped to get a good rest before going on again.
Mu hopes were shattered, for Fritz opened fire with long range guns. He continued at intervals during the night searching for our munition dumps, and in the early hours of the morning, the dreaded drones of his planes could be heard. Then the bombs would fall, and the crashes and reports from them seemed to echo for miles.
I was glad to leave this place next morning, and proceed further on my way, where I would be free from the night bombers. I set out before daylight making towards the front line, I passed wounded men and ambulance stations packed with troops, and at last reached my pals in the line.
A quiet time for a few days, with occasional stories of my well earned leave.
But Fritz had got to know this position and bombarded it heavily for several hours, we were unable to move backwards or forward and expected any moment that they would attack, the trenches shook and contained a foot of water, and the rats clamoured over us, even they wanted to leave this place.
Then the germans attacked and there began an awful day, our front line and supports were battered beyond recognition, and the stretcher bearers were unable to cope with the unexpected rush of casualties, our line was in ruins, when you looked back you could see men and mules mixed up in a mass.

Ammunition dumps were set on fire by the enemy shells, and a german observation balloon directed the fire on to our waggons and transports. Lorries were on fire, and the ammunition exploded, blowing up everybody around them.
Mule teams in their efforts to avoid the shells, pulled their mounts form the road only to be bogged in the mud.
They would stick to their charges until forced to leave them by the murderous fire, many acts of heroism were performed that day and hundreds did not live to receive the reward that must have been theirs. Suddenly a terrific burst of fire opened upon us, shells of all sizes and description struck and burst, all the torn and retorn ground was swept by shrapnel, german airman flew overhead directing the fire of their artillery, parapets and sandbags flew into the air, and fell in dust and rags, trenches and dugouts simply vanished under the fury of this metal, our lines of defence became nothing more than an open fire-swept battlefield.
Battalions had now lost fifty per cent of their numbers, wounded men were crawling away from us in the hope of reaching safety, but the fire left few of them.
We could now see the enemy advancing towards us, the grey looking uniforms and spiked helmets appearing quite new, several runners lost their lives before we finally got a message through from Headquarters to hold out till the last and die at our post.
Reinforcements had been sent, but the barrage of shells had us completely cut off, and things were looking black, through the whole of my soldiering, there always appeared a ray of hope and I was confident of surviving, but I now thought this was the end.
I was half stupid with the concussion caused by the explosion of the shells, I was now reduced to a state, where I had no fear of death, in fact I was sick of it all, and hoped for a quick ending. I was frantic when the hordes o germans kept pressing towards us, I tried to scrape a hole in the ground with my bare hands, I crawled about seeking for shelter and more ammunition, we crawled over one another raiding the dead for their cartridges.
At last two diggers arrived dragging a case of bombs each, how they got through the deadly fire we did not know, they left us to return for more, we filled out pockets, and stacked them in heap in front of us, we pulled out the pins and pelted the germans till our arms ached.
No book could hold the story of the great deeds done that day, and great deaths died, it is enough to say that a mere handful of Aussies held a german division at bay.
At this position a private in my company showed splendid heroism, we had lost all our officers, he took charge and directed our bombs by drawling in the open, he grasped a revolver from one our dead officers belt, and poured the contents of it at the enemy, although a german bomb had shattered his hand he carried on, his example was encouraging to us all, he had led a charmed life, and had to be forcibly stopped from getting in the open to attack Fritz.
We survivors made sure there would be numerous decorations bestowed after such a gruelling time and heroic stand, but "Lo and Behold" when the

orders came our later on, we found only one man received a decoration, and he was our senior officer who had remained behind at headquarters and directed the operations with runners.
To those two diggers who braved hell to get through with our bombs, and the private who took charge of us in a crisis, to them must rest the honour of saving the position.
The shelling eased a little, reinforcements arrived and made the position secure for the time being. All manner of praise was handed out to us by the new arrivals, and we again settled down to the inevitable trench warfare again.
After this battle the dead and wounded lay in hundreds between the two lines.
Some would raise their arms or partly sit up, then flop down again with the pain of their wounds, the slight of these men laying tortured in agony and us no distance away, resulted in some heroic rescues, there were some unforgettable, fearless and daring feats by the stretcher bearers, they risked their lives to save some of the enemy wounded as well as our own.
They would crawl out on hands and knees through the mud and slush. I saw german and Aussie wounded laying side by side, each helping the other to dress their wounds. Then again comes the terrific sweep of fire, we scratch a hold, any sort of a hole that will hide a fellow's head from the bursting fragments of steel and lead.
The sky becomes blood-red and thick haze envelopes us, how much of this can the human frame withstand, men in the line near me, who were making their first appearance in the war, marvel at the length of service some of us had seen, it seemed almost incredable to them that any man could survive so much.
After many more weeks of fighting with the occasional night raids, we awoke one morning to find Fritz had started to retreat on a large scale, so of course we followed closely on his heels, we were about fed up with the wait and see game, which had been going on, a little excitement existed while we were advancing, the first bit town to fall into our hands was "Bapaume" which was still burning, the people who had been under German rule since the early days of the war rushed from the cellars to greet us, children wept with joy and grasped us by the hand. I was touched with the scene of old women and men who caressed us, and called us their saviours, I thought of Australian women and children who were really untouched by the war, many had lost a father or a brother, but none were starved or stricken with war plagues. They did not have to retreat seeing their homes burning as they fled.
They did not know destitution, nor bombing nor Air Raids as these poor devils in the war area. We search a cellar in the main street, and come upon champagne and wine stacked to the ceiling Ye Gods what a sight for the boozers?
But an officer stood by and ordered every bottle to be destroyed. The germans left behind a mine, timed to explode days after, which brought down the Town Hall killing many high officials who had made their headquarters there.

That night we slept in the open, near a road leading to the town Grevillers. There were all around us beautiful laid out dugouts, under huge underground places, twenty to thirty yards under the ground, comfortable places with camp-beds, electric light and heat, also ammunition and spare parts of machine-guns.
There were also remains of old houses, they were very enticing but we would not venture in them. The germans had left behind all manner of cuning devices and traps.
To enter the door-way of a dug-out you might be blown to atoms, in an old house a cat was left hanging alive when released a bomb killed all nearby, a picture would be left hanging crookedly, when straightened it would explode a bomb.
A splendid souvenir such as the spiked helmet of an officer of the Prussian Guards would lay tempting us all, attached would be a timed fuse and a deadly bomb, a plank across a stream, even the moving of a body of a dead german may be the means of blowing you to pieces.
An early start on the morrow and we had advanced about ten miles.
From time to time our patrols came in contact with the enemy patrols, but our lads never turned from a fight, and some lively scraps occurred in the advance. Two Regiments of Aussie Light Horse done some fine work, also exceptional skill was shown by the Indian Lancers.
Many of my battalion lost their lives through german cunningness, we would come across stray germans lying apparently dead, after passing them they would fire on us from behind, of course they were soon shot or taken prisoner, but proved themselves a menace to us.
The germans gradually fell back to a well prepared position called the Hindenburg Line, the main feature of this line, was the great depth of barbed wire, which was 100yards deep in places, especially near the town of Bullecourt. At last we took up a position and was back to trench life again, german mines, aerial torpedoes, and the frenzied artillery added to the excitement of our life in the front line. New positions of our own or the enemies had to be fought for, parapets and dug-outs were ever-lastingly being destroyed or repaired, good strong men died violent deaths every day.
The stationery warfare was bitter and hard, but it was costing the enemy more than it cost us. Our battalion was in good spirits, but how altered were the faces when one looked around.
Not one of our companies was led by its original Officers, pals with whom I had fought with as privates were now holding high rank, some were even Captains, death, wounds, and promotion had been swift of late.
Every road in this salient was constantly under shell-fire from two or more directions, the casualty list must have told the story to the outside world.
Well the morning of the 11th of April 1917 arrived, and will live long in the memory of those who were near Bullecourt on that date. Many a good laid paid the price on this awful day.
It was the day that one of the biggest battles of the war was fought, and in it my battalion took a very active part.
After a little preparation we were shown a location map, our destination

being the town of Lagnicourt. We hoped the bags and went over the top, circling around the shell holes, whilst the bullets and shrapnel pellets tore up the ground us.
Guns were blazing death and destruction, we came under a withering fire, machine guns would bob up in most unexpected places, there were cement pill-boxes with narrow slits through which machine guns fired.
Eleven armoured tanks were advancing in front of us, there mission was to destroy the enormous amount of barbed wire, the german shells were directed at them and they were soon put out of action.
The crew of one emerged from the little exit door at the side and joined in the attack with us, we halted and took cover in the shell-holes, Fritz then put a heavy barrage of shells in front of us, his range was a trifle short, but a few casualties occurred from flying splinters.
One company of a Scottish Regiment on our right were wiped out with enemy machine guns which were concealed in a building ahead, our numbers were gradually being reduced, so we decided to keep going ahead, we kept running part of the way, ducking at intervals and taking cover behind mounds of earth.
Nearing the village of "Lagniourt" a german plane kept flying low over us, and poured a hail of lead at us from above, then some shouting and cheering we made our dash for the village, turning the corner of one of the streets a party of us came face to face with a german machine gun, which suddenly emerged from a cellar.
They opened fire on us at a range of a few yards, I remember some screams and cries from most of my pals as the fell riddled with bullets, being taken unawares I stood stupified, then felt a heavy thud and a sharp pain in my arm as a bullet tore through my flesh. I flung myself to the ground and wriggled behind a partly demolished stone wall of some old school or church.
Hopeless looking men crawled behind this wall for shelter, we were the remaining few of an entire brigade, the greatest defeat we had suffered against the germans, death did not end this drama for us all, it had its pitiful and heroic sides, we fought against the pain of our own wounds and tended the badly wounded cases.
I lay down among a number of others, my battalion was practically wiped out, few of us remained, and few were left unwounded, we had no officers, it was a case of every man for himself. To go back to our own lines seemed almost certain death.
Some decided to remain where they were and be taken prisoner, but I did not relish the idea and was not keen on seeing the "Kaiser". I had a hurried conversation with several others, and we decided to run the gauntlet across the shell-swept area. One man took the lead and about ten of us followed, but what a nightmare it was, only four of us reached safety, how we reached there I am unable to explain.
Never had I been so fast of foot, our speed was amazing, when half way there came the screaming of a shell then the blinding flash it burst at our feet, killing one poor fellow and wounding another, with the wounded one I crawled into a large shell-hole, and waited undecided what to do, my

wounded pal could not walk, and it would have been suicide to try and carry him, he pleaded with me to leave him there and push on to save myself, I emptied my pockets of bombs and decided to leave him hoping to effect a rescue later on. The enemy were now attacking and advancing close by.
I made a dash for it, crawling and flinging myself into shell-holes, the time occupied was only a few minutes but to me it seemed ages. Several times I was knocked down by the concussion of shells which burst around me and clods of mud struck me from all angles, bullets whistled passed me, I forced my way through the barbed wire, and here I saw some ghastly and gruesome sights of men belonging to a Scottish Regiment hanging on the wire suspended by their kilts, bodies riddled and torn to ribbons by bullets. I would stumble and crawl over corpses, some without limbs, others headless, some with torn stomachs and gaping wounds. Some of the faces of dead soldiers with glassy stares gave me a sickening feeling, on I pushed in a seemingly hopeless endeavour to save my life.
The horrible sights struck fear into my brain and I dreaded death. I was unable to recognise any of these dead men they were so battered and torn, the ground was simply littered with bodies, here was my old 4th Brigade wiped out.
A shell screeched past me dreadfully close, I felt the rush of air, but it burst some yards ahead, I rushed on with the lumps of earth from its explosion falling around me, the advancing germans were pushing towards our lines. I was between two fires, it flashed through my mind, what a fool I was to try and get back, why did I not stay with the other wounded. I frantically waved my arms to them in our own trenches, and in my excitement I shouted "don't shoot" and flung myself into the trench among them.
What a sight I presented, my clothes were hanging in shreds from the barbed wire, and blood from my wound was all caked with mud and dirt.
Whilst having my wound dressed, some members of the 14th battalion said they had watched out return across the battlefield which seemed a hopeless case, and were astounded at even four of us getting through, of the poor devil whom I left in the shell-hole me must have been taken prisoner.
I have oft-times regretted my action in leaving him, but at the time decided it was for the best. After a little rest I made for the dressing station, where my wound was dressed, and a cup of hot coffee warmed my blood, feeling contented to be leaving the line. I could still picture the scenes and the figures lying on the ground I can well remember the boys going into action, and again being carried off the field of battle.
I cannot forget them, I wish I could, the scenes are as fresh in my memory as though they had just occurred. I lay alongside german wounded conversing with them as though I had known them for years, pain is a great leveller.
A German officer offers me a good brand of cigarette, and talks freely, he shows me a decoration he had bestowed on him by the Crown Prince of Germany, an "Iron Cross", I assured him his future as a prisoner would be all that he desired, like us they had been getting reports of cruelty to prisoners of war.
This dressing station was a large marquee, hidden in a gully about a mile

from the line, doctors were heroically performing operations. I was surprised to find here an Australian Red Cross Sister, and remarked to her of her closeness to the firing line, and found she came away with the first Contingent and had been twice wounded, on being informed that I also belonged to an early contingent, we soon talked of the early days, the numerous men I knew, that had passed through her hands.
I shall never forget my feelings as the shells crashed nearby, but doctors and orderlies carried on.
My wound properly dressed I was put in an ambulance and sent away, the ambulance jolted over the rough road, and shells were being poured along the roads through which we passed.
We pass a cemetery where the tombstones and coffins were scattered everywhere, they would not even let the dead sleep.
Our ambulance stops, the red cross men pick up a digger who had been badly wounded, from both hips to his ankles, blood is oozing through his pants and puttees, with every movement he moans cruelly, we move off again, with each jolt of the ambulance he cries pitifully begging me to put him out of his agony.
We reach the town of Bapaume, which has been much shelled since we captured it, a little further on we arrive at a place called Et-Chet-Le-Grande, a queer name, but I could not forget them if I live to a hundred years. Here is a large clearing hospital consisting of numerous huts, those who are able to walk go into a large tent where nurses and doctors, "God bless them", are tending to hundreds of wounded, some slightly others badly, some gassed, others with arms in sling like myself, and others using rifles for crutches.
Although ten miles from the line we are still within range of the enemies guns, and the work of the enemy gunfire behind the lines is generally disastrous. Men are struck down unmercifully where there is no heat of battle, some are wounded mortally unloading a red Cross waggon, driving a car, or tending the wounded in the clearing stations.
Amongst all this the heroic nurses carry on their splendid work, and no priase can be too high for them, outside is a large cemetery where a burial service is in progress, here an odd shell will burst, there is a running for cover, and the grave is hastily filled in by a couple of shovel men. We have almost forgotten what it is like to sit in security with your life fairly safe.
Here are Chaplains who have come out to do their bit, and nobly they perform their duties. His clothes are hard to distinguish from the diggers owing to the mud and slime of the "Somme".
A little further down the road is a canteen and a Y.M.C.A. hut, we feel as though we are back in the land of the living, when so near lie tinned fruits, butter, cocoa, coffee, sauces, tobacco, cigarettes, and chocolates,
"Think of it", to sink into a great armchair in front or a fire, how comfortable and warm, we lean back puffing away at our smokes, and telling tales of our quite recent narrow escapes, from death.
It is raining hard outside, and I lay back and think of the wretchedness I have left behind, we are still attired in our old clothes which have not been changed for some weeks, you may feel beat to the world, but as soon as you

lie down thee is no rest as the vermin are a torment.
After a restless night morning arrives, the walking cases are informed that the Red Cross train which has just arrived is not for us, but for the more seriously wounded, so we wander about killing time. The roads are a foot deep in mud, here are those gallant mules struggling with their loads, we pass a quarter Masters store, which seems to be comprised of biscuits. "Army Biscuits", will I ever forget them, what a volume of cursed have been uttered on the subject of "Army Biscuits", what a part they played in a soldiers life. The carrying of them, the eating of them, and the cursing of them. I have eaten my meat with biscuits, jam with biscuits, I have pounded them to a powder to make porridge, boiled them with bully beef, stewed them in stews, fried them as fritters, and many a good tooth has been broken with the hardness of them.
We pass away the day playing cards, and tending to our more seriously wounded comrades. That night we had an Air Raid, a sudden woof and a crash plainly told that the enemy planes were over-head, there was confusion in the wards, shell-shock cases behaved in a terrible manner, it was no use going outside, we helped the nurses who pluckily stuck to their job, but we were extremely lucky, as none actually fell on the hospital.
In the morning I slipped out of the hospital to where the bombs had fallen, wandering down the roadway, I passed great gaping holes, passed an overturned waggon and came to some wrecked huts. Men who are wounded are often asked how they felt when the news is told to them that they are booked for (blighty) England.
There is really no reply for it, there are no words to fit the question. We have just passed through stern and terrible days, passed with good humour.
Trench life when all is said and done, is very dull, in spite of fierce battles. The continuous monotony of every day becomes a staleness, and a strain on the nerves, in fact one feels as though he would go raving mad if not taken away from it, even a spell behind the lines does not effect a cure, our tired minds think of better things, memories fly back home to the circle of our family and friends.
The din and the noise of the shells are behind us now, and it is amazing how a man can shake off such experiences.
The long looked for hour arrives, we are put aboard a Red Cross train. We pass through villages and by farm houses, all the inhabitants wave to us, troops on the march envy us although we are wounded, for they know we are bound for England.
How long the way to the sea seems to day, but the hospital ship with its gangway is soon in sight, we are put on board, I sigh with content, as the ship slips away from France, war to me now is but an ugly memory.
It is hard to express the feelings on crossing the Channel, but before long the white cliffs of "Dover" show through the mist, some of the English lads cheer at the sight, but here and there a silent man turns away in tears, hardened soldier as I was, I experienced the feeling as though a lump had arisen in my throat.
Once ashore and we are sent to different hospitals, I was sent to a private

hospital at Faversham in Kent, once a beautiful English home now thrown open for the wounded.
Here are numerous hop-fields and lovely surroundings, I pictured Kent as the garden of England.
Then the daily hospital routine, dressing of wounds etc, and invitations to wealthy English homes. Wounds are healed and I go to dear foggy old London on leave again.
Englands man power had been mobilised and girls had taken the places of men in many industries. Then I do the rounds in London once again.
London the greatest city in the world, with its great stores, and network of underground railways, you can see St.James park with its beautiful lakes, you can take long journeys and never seem to get out of London.
Catch a bus at Victoria Station, pass Westminster, opposite is the big hospital, go along the embankment of the Thames past Blackfriars, over Waterloo Bridge, then London Bridge, change from one bus to another with the girl conductors ever ready to show you round, then the Tower Bridge, then Trafalgar Square with the huge Nelson column of black marble, then along to Whitehall, beneath a big arch, then the Mall, Buckingham Palace and the horse Guards, and the wonderful changing of the guards.
The people of London seem to swarm wherever you go, for those of you who have never seen it, you have missed a sight worth travelling the width of the world to see.
On Anzac Day there was a march of all dominion troops, there was the usual shiver and fog and sleet, with a little snow, with a wet looking sky and no sun I had recollections of Sydney on a scorching hot day all clearing off to the surf. For this march all London seemed to have turned out, the weather did not count, the windows were crowded with people, bands played musical airs, the Prince of Wales took the salute at Australia House, which was gaily decorated with banners, displaying the names of Aussies noted battles such as - Gallipoli, Messines, Amiens, Villiers, Brettoneaux, Aussie airman thrilled the crowd
Stunts overhead.
I was perched on some railings overlooking St. Pauls Cathedral, and from the ledges numerous pigeons were flying down to the streets below, perching on peoples shoulders, and being fed by the children, women in mourning were very conspicuous among this vast crowd of people.
A few more days and my leave was finished, I was sent to a camp at Salisbury Plains, a medical examination had revealed that I would be unfit for active service for six months.
I was given a job at Headquarters at Tidworth, eventually going through a special course of instruction to become a machine gunner.
The months simply flew past, and the medical examination came around again. I was passed fit and was again being trained to take my place back with the boys in France. I had now lost all desire to fight again, and it struck me as though some were not doing their bit, whilst others had too much.
Around here were fine big healthy Aussie soldiers on the staff, some had been away from Australia for years, and not seen the smoke of battle.

To those I leave the talk of what we done at the front and the great battles fought and won.
Here was a small army of lead-swingers, men who had enlisted to fight, they had not heard the whine or the crash of a bursting shell, their continuous boasts of how we were winning the war was humourous and to me ironical. It seemed remarkable that I again should be chosen to join that gallant band of men in the trenches, whilst these champion lead-swingers will be reading of our progress, when I see the tricks and scheming necessary to remain in this place, I would rather go back and take my gruel, it made me feel sick to see find strapping soldiers avoiding the front line whilst others were returning on some occasions for their fourth or fifth turn.
Well let me take you back again to the real diggers, over among the shells and those small white crosses which dot the ground, here amongst real men who know how to die, men with whom you could trust your life.
I was drafted to France with a batch of new reinforcements, some of us bearing the scars of former battles, us older hands were calmer and spoke less than the new-comers who had not yet tasted the bitter pills of war.
A young soldier inquires of his brother and looks grim when he is informed of his quite recent death, we all looked fitter than the boys who were already here.
A few days in the line and we all looked alike, and soon became accustomed to the old daily grind. A massed attack by the enemy took place early one morning, our machine guns were turned loose on them, and for some time there was slaughter, bullets sprayed the packed lines of advancing germans, the dead dropped in heaps, and hundreds of wounded were fleeing back to safety, but the attack was checked and we breathed a sigh of relief as it looked as though we would be overwhelmed by numbers.
The diggers were recognised as the greatest individual soldiers a the war, when the diggers lost their leaders, things went on as though nothing had happened, hence our many successes, no matter how tired we became we always stuck together to the last, life here had soon become a "burden" again, I was prepared to lay down my life, but this was almost beyond human endurance, battalions were wiped out and the ranks refilled, and to those who survived, the gruelling battle would begin afresh.

Your don't know what a warm bed means till you haven't got one, all our work of late had been in vain, trenches were wet, and we were feeling the intense cold, the shells were bursting like a furnace on us, all hands were looking pale and worn, and the red glow lit up the battlefield.

Doctors gave morphine to badly battered men to relieve their pain, some would never recover, others would be doomed to lingering death, I have always thought that in hopeless cases, doctors should be given some power to end their sufferings, cases where soldiers were praying for death and relief from the awful agony of torn bodies and limbs some realizing how long they would suffer took their own lives.

It was an old saying that the shells you hear burst would not harm you, for the one that gets you is not heard. Every shell hole with its pool of water holds bodies of the dead, official reports tell of these struggles, but the full meaning of the screeching shells and bravery could not be written.

After the battle comes again the cheerless-dirty trenches, shelter again becomes a problem, we rebuild again, dug-outs are remade from the remnants of the once snug little possies we possessed, it is a case of the survival of the fittest, when the ground is mud, and you have to stand up to one attack after another it is a severe test of ;your stamina, now and then one hears a laugh above the din, I had heard it many times during my soldiering, when men laughed drunk with O.T. rum, for did not they fill us up with rum in times of stress.

A shell crashed in among us, a pal slowly slid down to the ground, we rip open his tunic his head moved and then fell loosely on his shoulder, he was dead, his eyes were still wide open but of a glassy stare, another one of the boys gone west, another digger falls shot through the brain with blood gushing from his nose and ears, one feels an insane desire to get revenge, I just stared at him and watched him die.

I was chosen among 20 men to go out in a raiding party while awaiting the word to go it gives one a horrible feeling, we got a pat on the back from the boys as we scrambled over the top, we crawled along to the enemy outpost, there was a sudden yelling from the germans as they saw us, we crashed in the trench among them, we struck out left and right with bayonet, I gritted my teeth in desperation although a little outnumbered we fought desperately among the dead and wounded, one digger knocked down a german officer with the butt of his rifle as he draw his revolver to shoot, how long this lasted I do not know, it was an advanced german outpost, and they held a good position, we were told we must take it, one digger was the gamest man of all, he yelled as he bayoneted and crashed his rifle on the heads of the enemy, we were too mixed up to shoot, we were in it now, "up to our neck in it" and could not turn round. It was a case of kill or be killed, our clothes were saturated, the enemy seemed like images before my eyes, and as they came closer, I struck out mechanically, for the moment I forgot all those bayonet exercises and drilling of my recruiting days.

Now and then a scream of a wounded man could be heard above the uproar, the heap of dead lay about the trench, more germans then streamed into the trench, our sergeant cried out for us to go for our life, we struggled out, and ran like mad men bent low, trying to go faster across the shell-torn ground, the comrades we left behind were all killed, we went looking for fight and by hell we got it. I had become to hate fighting and bloodshed, but you can fight as well as any other man when you've got to.

Then more of the rotten trench life, our eyes were weary, we had to keep strict

watches at night for fear of being surprised by the enemy, we on watch sit listening and while away the hours talking of everything in the world, the troops asleep owe their lives to us so we must be alert. One night we heard footsteps of someone running, we jumped to our feet and noticed a german coming towards us, with arms raised shouting "Camerad" "Camerad," and jumped into our trench His face was white as a ghost with fear, he then told us in broken English of his wish to give himself up and of his hardships and sufferings.

He sat in the trench we bent over him eagerly, his language was a bit muddled, but we understood he wanted something to eat, our officer came along and whilst we fed him with our rations he disclosed some valuable information. The germans attacked next morning but we were well prepared as the previous night's prisoner had warned us.

They advanced like wild men, but we were sweeping them with our machine guns and rifle fire, we cut gaps in their ranks, their brave officers tried to rally them. They came on like heroes, and I did not enjoy the screams from them as they fell, what a pity such game men cannot be let live, game and brave as they are made, they were simply slaughtered, I was glad we had avenged ourselves, although to see them die like that you can't help feeling a pang. Their Red Cross men came out and sorted out the wounded from the dead, and we looked on with a queer feeling for this job to us was a sacred one.

A few days later our turn came to attack, I was turned sick at the dreadful sights of bodies some of which had lain for months crumbling and rotting and shrivelled up with the bitter weather.

Here were men who once laughed and enjoyed life, now dead, and the stench would overcome you, I know of no other smell like decayed bodies, maimed men deserted us trying to crawl to safety, it was all confusion, some had lost an arm, some were dragging a bleeding stump where a leg had been, others horribly gashed staggered away with blood spurting from their wounds. A command ran down the lines, that the reinforcements were coming up, we were spurred on as we saw them coming up behind us.

In the fore front of this battle was V.C. Jacka, he had been wounded but no one could force him to go back, no wonder men called him game, he forced his way to the front shouting get at them boys, how could we waver when such as he led, the germans also attacked, their leaders yelling at them urging them forward, but they were giving ground, and their left wing began to run away, we then got the order to charge, we charged a little way and then gradually drew back again, it was a bloody fight, a burst of shrapnel broke over us, then the nose cap from the shell crashed through a soldiers tin hat and he fell like a log, I still have visions of him as he crumpled up, but we got back to our trenches again.

I looked from the trench out over the battlefield, and saw the struggling wounded coming back, what a pitiful sight. I could easily have been one of them, one man crawls into the trench covered in blood, the would had severed an artery, with our rough knowledge of first aid we stemmed the flow of blood, we wondered how he still lived. We all looked dirty and bloodstained abut I had no grudge against the enemy. When this affair is ended I don't expect to ever feel fit and well again, more wounded crawl back to us, and lay down in the trench, battered and covered in blood.

I remember an Officer of my battalion rushing to us with a torn stomach, with his hand he was trying to push back his intestines, which had come through the gaping wound, he collapsed at our feet, I might state that this man lived and returned to Australia fairly fit. Nobody can imagine the horrors through which we went, and yet I have heard men who did not enlist, say we were well paid, or we were six bob a day tourists. All day the desperate fighting had continued, and many of my pals were dead, or crippled, another wounded man come back from the dreadful nightmare, after hours lying out amongst the dead, he had a terrible flesh wound in his leg. I tied his woollen scarf tightly around his leg and called out for "Stretcher Bearers", there were numerous small attacks, and it was becoming difficult for us to beat them off.

The pauses between the attacks were nerve wracking to us, from under our tin hats haggard faces showed, worn out with endurance, our eyes were staring hoping it would only last a little longer, it is wonderful how one clings to life even in this misery, men dropped down in the trench from sheer exhaustion and lay there, when an attack would come, they would grasp their rifles, and prepare to fight all over again. We had to be careful of waslking on the wounded in the trench.

Long after dusk men came staggering through the gloom, badly wounded men who had recovered consciousness, and recovered sufficient to save themselves, I looked around at the piles of dead, so we got busy and rolled them out of the trench, we pick them up with trembling hands, for their faces are so familiar, and it was a relief when they were removed. The blood from them had caked out clothing, and we were tired and fagged out, our limbs ached, so we lay down and sleep trying to forget all. Occasionally I would wake up hearing a groan, sometimes a form would move muttering "Water", how hard to sleep when others are in need, you cannot see them die, although they may not want to live.

I lived through these things in a sort of stupor, we were in a little world of our own, this tending the wounded made one feel bitter, but all this bitterness and hatred has now passed. My God I have had my fill of this cursed war, and how can I forget these sorrrowful scenes, we make a check of those of us living, and when I look down the list, my heart ached for the good old pals who were gone. This war has sickened me against it for all time, with its death, death, death.

Then comes "Bluey" the cook with his greasy pans, and dishes, with bacon and liver, no mean feat to cook under these conditions, we devour it, there is plenty to spare today, and I think of those not here for their share, for just across in the battlefield, lay some of the truest pals I ever made.

Then comes the roar of a big shell, it bursts among some men a few yards away, leaving a trail of wounded and killed, we go to their aid, look out yelled somebody, here comes another, but we are safe, as it was most remarkable, that a shell from the same gun seldom bursts in the same spot. In a curious fascination I had noticed all these queer pranks of shell fire, and we often discussed them, I sometimes think it helped towards my survival. Another big shell seems to be rushing towards us, but it rushed past and landed some distance away.

There were huge shells fired from some distance behind the german lines, and their roar sounded louder and clearer than the others, but when they burst there was no doubt about them being effective, for they left desolation and death everywhere.

How am I to describe this war, I cannot, each day is the same, only some worse than others, the man does not live whose pen could convey any idea of what I saw, we could not sleep our wearied bodies were overstrained, minds imagined all manner of things, we had ideas, visions, sometimes I recalled thoughts and sensations that had recently occurred, it seemed hopeless to expect a good night's rest when all about you lay the dead bodies.

We would stand up for hours, peeping over the trenches, looking out into the gloom, it did not help much, but, the agonising cries from the wounded, the hissing sound of the shells, and the constant whizzing of the bullets as they flew past, no words of mine can tell how terrible it was, the cries would die away, and we would stare at their forms, stretched out in this dreadful no-man's land, sometimes some sights became so nerve breaking, that I could no longer bear to look at them, and one had the feeling that we had been as close to hell as it was possible to get. Terrific blasts of gunfire was doing its devilish work, and leaving ruin behind, we made a sorry sight, two stretcher bearers rushed out into no man's land, with death staring them in the face, with the one hope of rescuing fallen comrades.

We refused to ;;budge from this position, many of the lads would not live we knew, but that alone makes a soldier show determination, shells came over, one huge shell burst on our parapet right in front of me, I missed death by inches, a few yards further along one of the boys received the full force of another, crushing him to pieces, portions of his uniform and parts of this limbs were all that we could find.

Then two of our Machine Gunners crawled out in front with a Lewis Gun, we

passed them boxes of ammunition, and they lay out in no man's land awaiting an attack. We never saw them again, but for some time I heard the Rat-a-tat-tat of their before an enemy shell blew them up, just died in action, no V.C.s or such honours for them, just died in action, but to us they were worth their weight in gold.

For weeks we struggled on hampered by heavy losses, and terrible weather, after all we had gone through, I had managed to survive any heavy casualties, after it was over I marvelled at this almost impossibility, it looks as though I had some unseen protection.

Many stories have been written and more ably penned, but no worse conditions could be printed, in fact to me it appears now as though it was a miracle to have faced such a gruelling and still live, the flapping rages which were once our uniforms, hung about us. For a feed of the inevitable stew we were very grateful, our poor eager feet now seem to move mechanically, here I learned what hardships were, and shall never grumble at food no matter how poor its quality, to me anything will seem a feast.

If I was not soon bowled over again I would finish up a total wreck. At night when on sentry it was very lonely, it is queer how you would hear all sorts of imaginary noises, it taught me the wretched feeling of loneliness in the dead of night although it was quiet and still, there always seemed to be someone watching you. You think you hear and see the enemy sneaking on you, in fact you finish up talking to yourself, if only I could have wrote these things as they occurred, and dotted down the experiences as they flew by what volumes I could have written.

We were weary, hungry and dirty, eyes red from loss of sleep, hadn't a decent meal in recent weeks, seeking shelter anywhere to escape the cold bleak winds, and constant rain when it was dreadfully cold, then for hours a terrific barrage of shells would fall along our lines, men lay in the trench terribly wounded, there were pools of blood on the ground, and it was gushing from their torn limbs, it gave me a sickly feeling hardened as we had become to bloodshed, it still hurt to see men lying with their life oozing away from them, in some cases we gave relief, in others it was impossible, it made us think that perhaps any moment we may be passing through the same agony.

I helped bury a few of the lads behind our trench, we scribbled in pencil their names on a piece of timber and drove it into the ground, perhaps by now they would be removed to one of the large cemeteries into their last resting place, who could believe that any of us should be spared to write or tell of these things.

Of course we all must go some time or other, though it seemed a bit harder to di in a rotten hole like this. Another barrage of shells came rolling along like thunder, gradually sweeping closer, then a roar and a crash as it reaches our

line, the concussion and sound is terrible, the shells burst along our parapet, a few feet from our heads, sending up blinding clouds of dirt and flying bags, after a time it slowly passes away, then what a sight stretched out lay those who could not escape from it, we did not feel it much at the time, but I hope the experience will not again happen to any human beings.

To survive these things was only to prolong our sufferings, more sentry go, more attacks, of late the nights had been some of the coldest on record, the ground was covered with a thick sheet of frost, we wee all a picture of misery, we crawl into dug-outs half frozen, but we raised a smile amid these hardships.

We had three solid weeks of this, it seemed like three years, we were left with nothing only the clothes we stood up in, and had been winning and losing new positions, as for the dangers they were so varied I could not record them here, in these pages I cannot give a clear account of them, but can just put them on paper, as they filter through my mind, the details of the numerous battles, no doubt would prove interesting enough for publication, but unfortunately I cannot pen them so as to compile book. Often I sit alone and my mind goes back over all those dreary years, and I wonder what the effects will be on me, for I realise it must react, and will take its toll, before I suffle off this shaky old planet. Being in the bombers, I had to take part in bombing raids, we go out to clean up an advance enemy trench, we crept from one shell hole to another, we rarely spoke, when a few yards from the enemy we charged this position, first we throw smoke bombs down their deep dug-outs, and as the helpless germans emerge from them, they are all bayoneted, not because we wanted to, but we were working to instructions, because men could not be spared to escort them back as prisoners, this was done in spite of which it was only supposed to have been done by the enemy, in these raids the man who is charged with cowardice can be pitied, for the millions who fought in the war could not but be brave.

The raid being successful we strengthen the position and await assistance. The germans attacked with a large force and drove us out of this position, it was terrible work creeping back from one shell hole to another, we rarely spoke, we simply stumbled along, we only wanted to save our lives while we could, and a natural instinct makes you do that, it was not far to go, but we had to choose between perhaps a lingering death, or the safety of our own lines, we lay for some time in each shell hole, once I thought we had turned and were going the wrong way, we were covered in scratches from the barbed wire, we scrambled on, I have not the least idea how, when in the open we wriggled along on our bellies, when a few yards to go, we ran and jumped into our trenches, and I often wonder that we escaped at ll.

Then comes a good sleep, but one wakes up stiff and sore after sleeping on the ground, the conditions of our mind I can leave to your imagination, for weeks these battles had been raging and we who had lived had suffered

experiences as terrible, that death itself could be no more fearful, "three weeks" only three weeks, but a lifetime here.

Suddenly one hears a few gasping coughs, as a pal falls shot through the lungs, one look and you know he is done, I covered him with an old blanket. Perhaps he will lay there for hours before we have time to remove him, then another man will bend and fall, you step over him to get a better position.

Wounded lay in all manner of positions, partly covered with waterproof sheets, others covered with their overcoats, and only their blood-stained and muddy putties showing.

It was heartbreaking seeing men one had got to like, lying killed or wounded, groaning and tortured men lying in the trench is not good company, stretcher bearers come at our call for help, some poor devils out in front had been calling and calling for help since the previous night, it is a horrible business, a shell comes into the trench with a loud squeal, but it was a dud and didn't burst, shells fall at intervals all the time, some uncomfortably close, one then hears the drawn out wail like a human scream, made by the nose-cap as it flies off from a bursting shell, this is the daily menu so has to be accepted, on a sunny day we doze and sleep and dry our clothes.

Then comes a whine as a shell whizzes away behind our lines, then again comes that old familiar cry "Stretcher Bearers", at the double the officer in charge was only a sergeant a few days ago, and so this business goes on, we were right up to our back teeth in this rotten game of war, we become irritable, hungry, and tires, continually using bad language, and looking back I almost blush to think of the mockery that we made of death, then comes a shriek and a crash, and the yell of the shell-cap as it flew past. Phew close thats all.

When the germans start bombing us with stick bombs, several of us sit on the fire step with a blanket, ready to throw over them as they come into the trench, sometimes we did this for hours at a stretch, then you would finish up asleep in the bottom of the trench, and trust to luck, some trenches are only about two feet wide, we would be walked on at times, but nature would have its way as we slept. Occasionally the bursting of a shell, or the groaning of a wounded man who was hit, would awaken you. Men with frost-bitten feet had to cut their boots off on account of the swelling, some men were wearing woollen socks for gloves, stretcher bearers kept going past with their wounded, officers giving orders but there you lay ignoring it all, absolutely beat to the world.

After a sleep you search your haversack for some old biscuits and cheese, they would be nicely mixed with the dirt that had accumulated in your bag, but we eat them hungrily, then begin the daily routine of lousing yourself, killing as many as fifty lice in one hunt, if you did not go through this process you

would become infested. There was no getting rid of them completely as they bred on us no matter how often we had a roll call and it was impossible to wash. Breakfast would be a slice of bacon ever so salty, the next meal perhaps rice, then the inevitable stew, if a shell came and bowled over the cook and his dixies, you got nothing.

When it snows you can eat that by way of a change, because it also serves as a drink. Then comes our turn to be relieved from the line for a spell, the new arrivals all look spick and span, some with new equipment and rifles, we tell them there are still plenty of germans to kill, and advise them to keep well down, in they come there are no gaps in their ranks, like ours, we joke with them as they pass, then we are off and leave them to it.

We find a road lined with ambulances and guns, we keep at one side to make way for them, a sort of rule of the road here, a large shell lands on the road-way, we flop down to dodge the flying splinters, a wast of energy, because I believe if your name is on a shell you will get it, men lay about the roadside who have died whilst being carried by the stretcher bearers, and left alongside the road, perhaps it will be days before a burial party puts them under the soil.

We march on and on, our legs and shoulders aching, at last we are formed up in the street of a village for a time the endless routine of the trenches is broken, we are billeted in partly demolished houses, and barns, there's a good deal of singing, then the old instruments are unearthed, and the battalion band plays.

We soon develop a thirst, we were sick of drinking water, somebody remarked that it was used for putting under bridges, so we are soon in an "Estaminet", Madame opens the champagne, it flows freely, we make a mess of it, and a fool of ourselves. Then back to the billets when money has gone, on the way we raid a farm yard, and have eggs for breakfast, then sit out in the roadway watching the traffic stream by.

Orders come that we are to leave France and go to Belgium, motor buses carry us away along the roads, we pass ambulances loaded with wounded, then batteries of guns making towards the lines, the continuous roar in the distance kept bringing our minds back to the firing line. We arrive at our destination, just after the finish of a bit battle, a few hours rest, and our battalion is ordered to assist in the removing of the wounded, an officer is in charge of our small party, we arrive at the support trenches with our stretchers, and we follow him into no man's land, then down an old communication trench, then out into the open which seemed so familiar, over endless old trenches, stumbling over shell-holes, and barbed wire, all was quiet after the storm, we struggled on with out stretchers, even the rifle fire had ceased, the germans were sending up flares, I will never forget this night, it was on the strangest I had ever spent. We turned over the dead, looking

for wounded who had been in the battle, it was hard to see them in the dark, we were guided mostly by their groans, we find them one at a time and carry them back, it is no light job carrying a man over shell-torn ground, se we were very slow and had to continually rest. Fritz had commenced shelling again, but we had to carry on with out burden, finding gaps through the wire, then we came to some wire and could not find a way through it, I remember leaving the best part of my trousers on it, but we managed to get our men back to the trenches.

All stretchers were by now in full swing, all night long we done the carrying, the only time I had done any stretcher bearing during my soldiering, and one needed nerves of steel, for it is much different than being in no man's land in the heat of battle, we were done to a stand still from carrying and still many were still out in front, they had lain there all day, and would have to lie there another unless we got them in before daybreak, we managed to get them all in somehow, and at daylight, a doctor told us that everyone this side of the german wire was rescued, this was just of my personal experiences after the heat of battle, and from then on I had great admiration for our regular stretcher bearers.
Whilst out there I saw sticking out of the mud, the head and shoulders of men, most of the rubbish one sees printed in the papers was written by some war correspondent who used to pay us a flying visit, and thought it great to be near shiell-fire for a few minutes, still the public at home had to be filled up with something, and the truth was not always printed.

A week or so in comfortable billets and we again take over a part of the line, back in the trenches again, one sees boots and limbs sticking out of the wall of the trenches, and bodies of brave men who have one under, and all the time you have to smile and joke, because the others are joking around you, then comes the trench mortars again, so big you can see them coming through the air like huge plum puddings, these things contain about twenty pounds of explosives, outside lies the army of stinking unburied dead, the huge rats feed on them one can see them go into a body at one place, and emerge from another part, one sees a man crawling about coughing up blood, others crawling about not knowing which way to go, a young german is brought in with his legs shattered, he could not move them, however much you my hate the hun when you are fighting him, you can only feel pity for them when you see them lying helpless and wounded.

We had covered bags over the bodies of apparently dead men, and would be surprised when they would regain consciousness, at one period the trench looked like a slaughter house on a busy day, everything was covered in blood, I never thought the human body could stand so much mutilation and yet live. Then again comes your turn at sentry go, there was the frequent whine and whistle of the bullets, as they went overhead, and the quick "zipp" of the one that strikes the earth near you, then one hears the faint snip of the germans out cutting our barbed wire, you stare to the front hoping to catch a

glimpse of them, so as to have a shot.

Being a bomber, again comes a raiding party, that over, then comes the wiring party, we scramble out of the trench, with coils of wire and stakes, and hammers, we erect a barbed wire entanglement which seems to be done in a few minutes.

Out in the open between the flashes of the flares, and the temporary darkness dragging about with us the coils of wire, when a flare goes up, every man drops flat and lays still sometimes huddled alongside the dead, so as to look like them, till the light died away, in that brief interim of darkness, we drove stakes with padded hammers, and ran lengths of wire between them, heart in mouth we worked, one eye on the hammer and the stake, the other on the german trench, watching for the first sign of the upward roaring of the flare, we would
Spend as much as an hour in the gloom with a sergeant in charge, expecting every moment to hear the crash of the fire that would tell we had been discovered, the wire is erected, word is passed along, and we all scramble back to safety. Then your turn comes to go out on duty at a listening post, you climb over the parapet after dark, make your way through some barbed wire, perhaps going about 40 yards, then lie down in a huge shell hole, lying still and listening for the enemies movements, if you are a lover of creepy feelings, and sensations, I can highly recommend this job.

You disguise yourself as much like a rabbit as possible, four of you put in four hours at this, an hour each at a time and it is quite long enough

Back in the trench again and a feed of plum jam and hard biscuits, and stale cheese, then the shells, we had all sorts of nicknames for them, there was "Coal Box", then over would come a "Whistling Willie", every day for about half an hour they sent these shells, over;, but our trench was deep and narrow, and we had burrowed holes in the front of them, but there were always a few casualties, and we were glad when the shelling would cease.

The large shells would come more as strays, but one landed right on the trench, burying two men who were in a dugout. We dug them out but they were both dead, broken finger nails and torn fingers, told a tale of a struggle To free themselves from the fallen earth, we crouch low as the shells shrieked and crashed along our trenches, we were almost afraid to move, our officer sends a runner with a message back to our gunners to do something or we would have to get out of it, our ranks were dwindling in spite of our huddling in the trench. A gunnery officer arrives with some wire and a telephone, he expects an attack, and has come to direct his batteries, he connects it with the wire, and I was interested as I heard him send orders with dot and dashes, which to me were impossible to read the shell-fire rose to a roar, machine guns joined in, then the rifle fire until the while line in front were pouring it into us, the rifle and machine gun bullets cracked like a whip

as they struck the back of the trench above our heads.

An officer has a look with a periscope, almost instantly a bullet struck it smashing the glass, I could not resist a peep over to see if Fritz was attacking.

The Artillery Officer had his wire cut on two occasions by bursting shells, he sends two runners at intervals with the same message, after a time our guns open out on the german trenches sweeping along them.

Then a lot of bobbing heads and shoulders appeared as they clambered over the top to attack us, then our artillery gave it to them, thick and heavy, the charging gemans, flung hand grenades towards us as they ran, but they were swept back fighting hopelessly, supports poured into our assistance, but the bombardment by the enemy guns continued all day, we were helpless against it, huddled together waiting to see where the next one would drop.

The average shell does not give you much chance to get an ordinary would, and a trip to Blighty, they generally make a mess of you, it was miserable lying in the muddy trench and being hammered by shell-fire.

There was none of the lory of a big attack, or the capturing of a town or village, it was merely another "heavy bombardment", as the papers would say, lived through and endured just like so many others had been endured.

It eases down and then one sees the casualties being helped or carried out, we make way for a stretcher, it passes and the figure on it has a dirty blanket for a covering, showing from under is an officers cap and field glasses, just another one of the real officers skittled a whizz bag had made a direct hit on him, then an enemy flare soars up and bursts showing up our trench as if it were day.

Shelling would soon commence again, at times it seemed to be raining clods of mud as they roared and burst, the torn and broken sand bags were mixed with the dead bodies, blood-stained clothes, broken rifles, burst water bottles, and torn equipment, the ambulance men were busy removing the dying, we who were living were hastily filling sand bags, and building up parapets, now and then unearthing a dead body that had been buried during the fury of the shells, aa foot, or a hand sticking out from some heap of dirt marked the place of other poor devils. The whole scene was ruin and destruction it gave me a feeling of despair and sickness.

The dug-outs were full of wounded and the doctor drawled among them applying dressings as fast as he could, seeing them placed on stretches as quickly as possible,and sent to the rear now and then putting a man aside who was still living but a hopeless case, to make room for others who might be saved, another would be led away with a bandaged face, both eyes being Shot away. All would be made clear again and perhaps we would get a

nights rest.

Then comes that dreaded hour before the dawn, when every battalion has to stand to and line the trenches shivering despite our warm clothes, woolen caps, and thick overcoats, for an hour we had to stand there, listening to the whine of overhead bullets, and the sudden slap of a well-aimed one as it hits the trench behind you.

The swish and crashing of shells, the noise of rifle fire, and the boom of heavy guns, that hour I always looked upon as the worst of the twenty four, the rousing from a sleep, the turning out of a dug-out from wet blankets, the standing still in the water-logged trench, with everything, fingers, clothes, and rifle wet and covered in mud, and alas sometimes blood, they all combined to make the morning "Stand to Arms" an experience that is almost unbearable. Then we get an issue of salty bacon in our mess tin lids, begins again the ordinary routine of trench life, picked men are told off as snipers to worry the enemy, they are posted at loopholes and in various positions that give a good outlook, the enemy of course are playing the same game we others commence bailing out water from the trench, putting in duck-boards, filling sand-bags, or making the dug-outs deeper, but a slow and steady tally is always being made to the casualty lists.

I had learned to press close and flat against the front of the trench, at the first hint or the warning rush of a shell, picking out all the worst danger spots and angles to be avoided except of course in time of an attack, one's education is never complete in trench warfare, but I had studied it to a deg

Then at intervals would come the deadly bombs; there would be a dull report, a cloud of smoke, and we would all duck, those who were not quick enough would sometimes receive a wound, from the pieces of old iron, nails or metal splinters.

We could see the bomb coming over in a sort of curve, and you get the uncomfortable feeling that it is going to fall on you, but usually it is a shower of mud or earth, occasionally one will burst in the trench with a roar, and fill the air with blinding smoke, once they get their range they furl bomb after bomb, then the trouble begins, there is little escape from the bursts, even the dug-outs gave little security, plenty fall short but too many come in it, when one did we threw ourselves down in the mud at the bottom of the trench, and wait heart in mouth for the result.

To stop the torment we used to reply with bombs, then over would come the bombs from their trench mortars, (Minnewurfus) we called them plum-puddings, and they appeared about the same in size and colour. When they let these go it was a nightmare, they would rain down one after the other along the trench, and sent out blue flames and smoke, when these were in full swing the casualties were fairly heavy, but my uncanny luck always stuck to

me. Perhaps months of this then comes another short spell, the battalion tramps away, our clothes are faded and blood-stained, our equipment chafed and worn; the wood of our rifles smooth and shiny from wear and cleaning, faces weather beaten and a growth of whiskers, and not worrying about tomorrow, out here we live a day at a time, the roads are paved with cobbles about the size of large bricks, mile after mile of these, and – Oh our poor feet as we tramp along them, but we are getting too far away, for the shells to reach us, we halt for a spell, throw off our packs, the travelling cookers rumble up, led by "Bluey" our cook, "God Bless him" and we are served with the good old steaming hot Army stew, it was life itself to many of us.

Then up and off again, the pace is slow but we eat up the miles in a day, with a short halt now and then, the country begins to alter, we come to roofless buildings, even women and children, tumbled heaps of bricks, some of the kids cut buttons from our tunic, souvenirs I suppose.

We are going to be allowed to live at least a few more days, then we come to a stream, we strip off, all hands dive in, "like dogs all Aussies seemed to be able to swim", and we splashed like a lot of school kids at a picnic. To think we had been killing for months past seemed ridiculous. For months our outlook on life had been the walls of a trench, piled sandbags, inside of dug-outs, and an occasional view (taken in peeps through a loophole) of about fifty yards of neutral ground, and the german trenches beyond, mostly a mass of barbed wire, there were huddled heaps mostly german, shot down in previous battles, or out wiring at night and left to rot, or killed in their own trench and tumbled out by their comrades, somehow they lost all interest in their pals once they were dead.

Well we open up our tunics, pull out cigarettes, and loll about, then an issue of some comfort, and remember all those cap comforters, scarfs, and woolen socks you knitted for us, well we slaves of the front line saw little of them, once the officers and men at the rear got their wack.

Then we moved off along the road, new regiments going in gazed at our ragged clothes, and the gaps in our ranks, for we had had a cruel time, but we pluggaed along, now and then singing a song, Tipperary or some wartime song, next night we spent in grimy cellars of the ruined houses, with lighted candles stuck in empty champagne bottles, we move on and leave behind this shell-wrecked village, and go across fields,here and there a farmer had remained, despite the daily bursting of shells close at hand, even his homestead had one corner blown away, here we filled our water-bottles from his old farm pump, perhaps the water was a little muddy, but whats a little mud inside, when are caked with it outside, to me the French are a problem, I know of no other race half so patriotic.

That night we slept in some empty huts alongside a field hospital, during the

night german planes made an air raid, dropping bombs, on the hospital huts, many patients in one hut were killed, there was no shelter anywhere, all we could do was to wait for some more to fall, we worked rescuing the wounded from the huts, one bomb landed near the door of one containing german wounded prisoners, a huge marquee received a direct hit, and collapsed on the patients inside, one nurse was killed outright, and several wounded other nurses risked their lives dragging patients out and begged everybody to help them with their patients one could not say enough for them, they carried on with rare courage, one plane was brought down by gunfire, and two german officers were found, one dead and the other badly wounded, he said there were about thirty planes in the raid, in my humble opinion we had our field hospitals too near the firing line.

It was wonderful to see the nurses and doctors carrying on under these conditions.

A few more days of resting and we were ordered back into the line, my company was ordered to dig a communication trench as an attack had been planned, it being decided to try and straighten our line. When darkness came we set to work digging, an occasional shell whizzed over behind our lines, this trench was to be used for the carrying through of the wounded to safety, it was some game when we started digging on the surface, we were exposed to all the stray bullets and shells that came over, in fact we were working fully exposed to the german lines, and the bullets whined and hissed across from their positions.

Of course when a bullet whistles past all is OK but that funny noise like "whutt" very sharply it is then merely a matter of inches.

I had learned all this by hard experience and it only made me dig the harder, for the sooner I got deeper the safer I would be.

During this time walking wounded were hurrying back; ration parties staggered along carrying boxes of rations, men swing boxes of ammunition one to the other without slacking pace, suddenly a figure near you would cease working and sink to the ground, we would send the word along for the stretcher bearers, two men arrive with stretcher, lift him up, then say he's a dead 'un then lay him down a few yards away from us, and then go in the direction of another call. The thought of the one just killed beside you disturbs you a little, and yet I had not given a thought to the scores of dead I had seen during an attack or where they were lying in heaps where they had fallen, but it seems different when a pal working at your side, falls for the final count, at times the dead must be left where they fall, because the living always comes first, especially when there are many more wounded than there are stretchers.

Several flares went up from the enemy lines, then the roar of rifle fire, then

the sharp Rat-at-tat-tat of a german machine gun, the peculiar noise told of the swinging sweep of the gun, if caught in that sweep of fire it was good-night, we all drop flat in the mud, till the spraying has passed over, it was not too bad working amongst the strays, but the sweep of a machine gun is too deadly, and nearly always more bullets than one, if you chance to be in that dreaded circle.

Again would be a call or stretcher bearers, and a fairly constant stream of wounded were being taken away from us, we eventually got down about waist deep, and at the first hint of anything coming over we would duck low, officers moved about hurrying us on, but nobody existed who could have any quicker than us.

It was a cold blooded sort of a job, we seem to have little chance, little protection or hope of cover for nearly an hour, we had to pay no heed to the singing bullets, or the crash of a bursting shell, it seemed even worse than the first rush across the fire-swept open ground, it took us the whole night to dig this trench, for communications with the line, and for drawn out nerve trying it was the limit, and when preparations had completed we were moved up into the front line.

Then comes sentry and listening post work, trench mortars and Whizz bangs, day and night, the nervous strain make us completely war weary, here was hard labour at its worst, whilst using a shovel and digging the trenches deeper we would come across dead germans and British, life of an infantryman has his mind and his thoughts on death all the time.

Along again would come "bluey" the cook, he was a noted Rum fiend, and he had an uncanny gift of being able to find its whereabouts, consequently the cook-house was always a meeting place for the boozers of my battalion. Being dirty is a bit unpleasant at the beginning but you become used to it, and after you have not handled a cake of soap for weeks it only becomes a memory. Everything is prepared for the attack to straighten our line.

Before going over we waited for nearly an hour, expecting orders any minute, we were busy cutting little holes in the wall of the trench to act as a step, at last the word comes and we scramble over.

I caught a glimpse of the row of figures, and the flash of the fixed bayonets, we were a good target once in the open, and the german gunners were making use of it, shells blew gaps in our ranks, leaving the ground behind dotted with figures, we were the first wave, and most of our line perished under the heavy fire, but some of us kept going on, then lay down in the shell holes till the second wave caught up to us, then went forward again, the first line always suffers the worst, as this second line moved ahead well, joined by us remnants from the first, then we got in range of their machine guns, they were mowing men down in heaps, then a third line of troops came on and

filled the gaps, few of the first two waves by now had survived, but with the third line we pushed on to the enemy trenches, we came to a dip in the ground and lay down, this gave our supports time to catch up with us.

Then a barrage of shells was let loose they burst right along our ranks, they tore up the mud around us and threw it in the air, the shrapnel pellets rattled on our tin hats, the ground was swept by machine gun fire, and in groups of two's and three's we huddled together, this was enough to make any man show the white feather, we had done our best but failed.

The bullets whistled and hissed over us, but we all laid perfectly still hoping they would think we were all dead. It was nerve-wracking and I felt the desire to get up and run, the bullets were striking a stray man here and there, but we did not move, then when it became too hot we up and ran for our life, stumbling and slipping in the wet mud, the machine gunners sent out a stream of fire at us, I could hear the cartridge belts clicking as they flew round, they played a few yards short and stirred up the dirt around our feet, then lifted and swept right across us, catching some and missing others, we went on our party getting smaller as we went, I once looked back and saw the huddled forms of our pals, then we reached the barbed wire, there were not many of us left now, and we could find no lane way of break through the wire; we ran up and down looking for an opening what a dreadful experience, our boys in the trenches opened up a heavy rifle fire to try and keep the germans down in their trenches, we then forced a way through the wire and found our way back to our lines; when assembled the whole battalion would not have made a decent company, we passed out of the trench with pain lined faces, others had shattered limbs, the stretches were wet with blood dripping from them, how ridiculous this seemed to me, to straighten a line lives were poured out like water, every foot was suffering for somebody. Alas was it worth it. We were taken back bhind the lines and our depleted ranks refilled.

We had a few weeks rest, then I noticed for hours there had been unusual movements of regiments and even brigades, we had been refitted and our kits were complete, re-issuing of worn equipment and an inspection of our identity discs, that tell tale little tin badge that always hung around the neck of a soldier on active service, and which bear the words of who he is when brought in wounded or who he was when brought in dead.

We old hands judged the signs and summed it up as being fattened and ready for the slaughter.

We were now in the year 1918 the greatest of the war, the numerous german divisions that had been fighting against Russia were now been released owing to the Russian revolution and the germans had now found that the American Army were arriving in France, which would make it make it much harder for

them to win, our secret service had found that they were mobilising on a huge scale, every man that could be spared was being prepared for the great german offensive. It was now March 1918 the offensive was expected any day, during this period we Aussies were away down on the Belgium front, finishing up on a quiet sector around Messines, and Armentiers, some were in the line, others were resting in the Calais area.

But on the Somme where we had done all our heavy fighting was held by English troops, they were joined up with the French Army who were on their left, it was this section that the germans decided to attack, they decided to drive through between the British and French, they attacked on a front of about 30 miles wide, it began somewhere towards the end of March, and it was the heaviest bombardment that had occurred during the war and continued for nearly a week day and night, within a few days the British Army Corps were panic stricken and retreating, much was said at the time condemning them, but they were overwhelmed, and it is doubtful if any troops could have stood the strain.

First news of the germans breaking through reached us soon after the offensive began, and there were all kinds of rumours abroad, at any rate we received orders to go south to France about March 22nd 1918, we were piled into motor buses, when we reached "Hebuterne" on the Somme, a terrible sight met our gaze, the British Army was in full retreat, indeed everything looked desperate, they through us Aussies into this huge gap, and for days the whole german army was thrown into a massed attack, men were running around with blood streaming from their faces with head wounds. Others writhing in the mud and slush, others would rise feebly and try to leave us and the danger zone, some crash down again and lie still, another with a torn limb cries bitterly calling "do something, do something for me", whole regiments were wiped out to a man, the trenches had vanished, risks were big, we crawl about in shell holes.

The effects of the bombardment here were cruel, the gas shells effected us, tear gas hurt our eyes and nose, we were almost driven to a standstilll, we threw our coats over the wounded who were in a terrible plight, we were up against it, Fritz was making one last big effort to shift us, but we hung on grimly.

Some of the wounded were faithful and remained with us, as every man counted now, it was incredible to think that we could live here, we were outnumbered by the germans we not only held the line and stopped the enemy, but inflicted heavy losses.

We had wonderful faith in our little digger army, it was remarkable that not once during the whole of the german offensive, had the digger's allowed the enemy to break through.

Then began a series of fights, tens of thousands of germans were continually flung against us and we were the means of saving the situation, in fact upon the result of this throw depended the fate of the war.

My division were holding the germans at Dernancourt, just below "Albert", and we held back masses of them in attack after attack, the first wave of the enemy reached our lines, but we charged the second wave and beat them back, they stopped and went back, we then attacked those who were in our lines, one machine gun crew ran and left their gun when we bombed them, a couple of our boys then turned the gun on them as they ran; our line was saved and a number of prisoners captured, several Aussies won V.C's here and we earned a bucketful, it was now early April and the enemy were constantly attacking, but they were beaten off again and again, in the mix up we finished up in "Hangard Wood," here we could see the german dead heaped up between the lines, just a few more to add to the huge casualty lists, and the dreadful news to be conveyed to the next of kin.

We were fighting hard for the town of Villier's Brettonneaux, and even Amiens looked like falling into their hands, it was here that Lieutenant Storkey of Sydney gained his Victoria Cross, all along the line here we were outnumbered easily by four to one.

We were treated here to a real thrill, for right in the open between the two lines, a British Armoured tank, and a German tank, fought it out to the death. Our Battalion was now commanded by "Pompey" Elliott our old Brigadier Monash was holding the rank of a General, and he made a good one too, right throughout all this there was not a german shell or bullet that was meant for me, eventually we had the great German offensive checked, and the Allies advance was the deciding issue of the war.

Then came the greatest news of the whole war, they had decided to withdraw the original Anzacs, and return us to Australia on leave, it seemed unbelievable, that after all I was going to be spared to see dear old Aussie again, from my battalion the 15th which left Australia over a thousand strong, when we originals lined up, you could count us on the fingers of your hands; for us it meant the end of so much suffering and hardships, and recollections of the day that the regiment lined up and gave us our send off will be imprinted in my memory for all time.

Whilst in England awaiting embarkation the Armistice was signed and their was widespread joy, to say the least London went mad.

A trip to Wales and all manner of places sightseeing and the time came for boarding the ship home. The good ship "Bremen" was the one my wife and I were alloted to and was lying at Liverpool.

Once on board and in our quarters it was soon evident that the accommodation was inadequate, washing decently was almost impossible, those who wanted a bath had to line up and wait, and other conveniences were on the same scale, men ca put up with such things in time of war, but to ask women and children to take a six weeks voyage under such conditions was appalling, crowds had gathered at the Quayside wishing us "Bon Voyage".

After the last look at England, one felt inclined to stay, but dear old Aussie was beckoning hard, of course London could never take the place of Sydney, good old "Blighty" was a great place, but it was a thrill to get away, and to feel you were journeying to the old home again, better than ever as the years had rolled by.

Some day when my ship comes home, perhaps I will make a trip to England and France, and then I may understand it better in the grand old days of peace.

Well off on the high seas, in a few days, where the natives had for sale, dogs, canaries, cane chairs, and beautiful hand worked linen, all brought to the ships side in rowing boats. It was our first prt of call, and most of the women on board were interested for some it was their first glimpse of a foreign shore, exciting scenes occurred, but to us was-worn veterans, it took a lot to make us sit up and take notice. A few hours stay and we were in mid-ocean again, concerts and ships games were arranged, and we played "Housie Housie" to pass the time away, crown and anchor was also popular amongst the lads.

Then Capetown for a few hours, which was a happy relief from the ship, where we indulged in a good meal, also taking back to the ship as much fruit as possible, another day or two at sea, and we were all inoculated against the flu.

Next port of call was Durban, on arriving at the entrance, the figure of "Miss Campbell" the "Angel of Durban" was signalling to the ship, a nigger loaded with oranges accompanied her to the wharf, and this young lady would throw them to all the diggers on board, I believe she met all troopships and treated them alike, her help to the diggers will never be forgotten.

Riding in the Rickshaws, and strolling about the native quarters was interesting, one can see native African women being sold at the markets for wives or slaves.

There was fruit in abundance, for a few bob we could have as much as could be carried, I went to the ocean beach and had a surf, where they have a shark-proof fence, then all on board again after the sightseeing, just before the ship departed two diggers arrive well under the influence of Durbans booze, one falls into the harbour, his pal goes in after him, fully clothed, a local fisherman

eventually got them back onto the wharf with a boat hook, they later boarded ship none the worse for their forced dip.

Then began the long stretch across the Indian ocean, then across the Pacific.

We would gaze over the side for hours on end, and great was the joy if a ship passed, then trouble arose over the food issued to the women and children.

Whenever trouble had arisen with the diggers, it has always been traceable to the one cause, the attempt to handle us as they do regular British soldiers, we were of a different make-up, and would not tolerate it, we did not want to be real soldiers, or anything leading to it, we were simply a citizen fighter, the fighting done, of which we done our share, we looked forward to becoming an ordinary citizen again.

Life on board the Bremen was much the same as on all other troopships, trouble then arose through the Officers have too much dick space, whilst diggers and their wives, were huddled in some corner, if it had not been for the presence of wives and children being on board, I believe serious trouble would have occurred.

When the weather was bad we all had to go below, this meant overcrowding, and the conditions were unbearable, on a hot day it was stifling below, the well deck was the only bit of breathing space we had, and here most of the ships garbage schutes were situated, also the seas washed over in heavy weather, the food for women was disgraceful the same as the diggers, and many times we gave our issued of tinned fruit to them.

For breakfast they would be offered greasy stew, or bacon, which we diggers will never forget or forgive, bully beef and biscuits were almost a daily supply on the women and childrens tables, during all this time the officers and their wives were living in the lap of luxury, we used to look through the saloon dining room windows, with its tables laden with silver-ware, and envy those fortunate persons, who used to devour the poultry, peaches and cream and other luxuries. One day we threatened to throw the Chief Steward overboard, after a request to have tablecloths on the womens tables, he pleaded with us to restrain ourselves, informing us he could not swim, and at one period it looked to me as though it was going to be a splendid opportunity for him to learn.

There was a shortage of water for the common herd travelling second class, and a basin of water would be made go around half a dozen persons for the morning wash, whilst in front of eyes the officers would be seen going regularly to their morning bath.

We made an attempt to persuade them to allow us the use of the promenade deck, which was seldom used but our request was refused.

Of course we diggers did not put the blame on the Officers whom we knew in the trenches, and who were striving to do everything for us, the blame lay with those so-called Staff Officers who were deep down in their dug-outs when the Hun was pushing hardest.

Their conduct aboard the Bremen would not have been tolerated in the front line among real men.

Well we grinned and bore these conditions for the sake of those on board, days before reaching Australia we were at the bow of the ship looking for land, but when the day arrives, and we faintly see the coastline looming in the distance, there was great excitement on board, for me from 1914 to 1919 was a great gulf.

Those fortunate individuals to disembark at Western Australia are packing their belongings, and bidding good-bye to Ship made friends, also some soldier will be seen parting from digger mate with whom he had fought.

We had a night ashore and went to Perth from Fremantle, and had a pleasant time, then our turn comes after we had wished to the Melbourne quota.

Dear old Sydney heads, I look about wondering if it can be a dream, for after so many years, my one great wish had be granted.

"Sydney" "Vive la Sydney", I felt as though I wanted to scream it from the mast tops, even London, Paris, Cairo, or any of those wonderful places, to me could not be compared with our own dear homeland, then the landing at Woolloomooloo Bay, and the welcome of family and friends brought a lump to my throat.

Well dear reader I have strived hard to explain and make you see things as I saw them, perhaps a little crude at times, the horrors of war, and at times gruesome but cut deep into my heart are the recollections of the many brave comrades who lie buried on the fields of battle, to me the war was a stern lesson, an experience which money could not buy, the bad times outbalanced the good ones, and my life will be shortened by many years, but in was where there were about 10 million lives lost, I was rather fortunate to survive.

To me all those medals, lavish monuments, shrines and tombs in the memory of the dead are of no use, we can do nothing for them now, these funds would be useful to those who have survived, and I sure my old pals would wish it so.

For my services I ask for nothing, only the right to live and be on an equal footing with those who stayed behind.

But for my unfortunate comrades who are blind or maimed, I trust they will not want, nothing can be too good for them, and almost any of their faults can be forgotten, I hope that these few lines will be the mans of them getting some sympathy from the reader, if so then my efforts will not have been in vain.
I thank you. FINISH