

PR82/024 - Diaries of Private George Buchanan

Diary 1916

The diary is in a mix of pencil and ink. Parts are difficult to read owing to the size of script and condition of the pencil script and paper which is fine and carries marks from one side of the page through to the reverse side obscuring the writing. Throughout the diaries key movements and events are noted on the top of the page above the date.

The diary commences in January 1916 and covers the period prior to embarkation aboard the Borda on the 11th of January. Covered in the daily annotations is the arrival of the troops in Suez on the 7th of February their training in the desert and eventual move to France and the Western Front on April the 2nd. The diary gives an idea of the daily round of duties over the period of a year as a member of the 10th Battalion as well as a member of the Field Ambulance. He notes his movement from the 10th Battalion to the 15th Field Ambulance AIF on the 31st of August – hand written above the date .

Every letter and parcel from home is noted as are letters sent home as are opportunities to meet with friends that are also serving . Movements in and out of the trenches, billets, the villages of the Somme and troop movements during the various battles are included in the daily annotations.

As a member of the Field Ambulance he describes his daily routine and the dread of facing the trenches of the Somme again in this capacity - 15th October. He describes the devastation caused by the bombardments , the cold and mud, the large numbers of soldiers with trench feet, the broken terrible wounds and the heavy work.

Poizieres

At the very end of the diary, under the hand written heading August he gives a more detailed account of his time in the trenches at "*Prozieres*" [sic]. This account begins on the 18th ends on the 22nd. It is a personal account of the difficulties faced, the long periods of shelling; the death of friends and of fellow members of his unit ; the confusion; the noise of the bombardments and accompanying light from "*star shells*" . On leaving the action he states "*I was flinching all over and was for days after. Terrible lot sent away with shell shock*". He mentions the 12th Battalion's involvement at Mouquet Farm.

Diary 1917

At the beginning of January Private Buchanan is given leave and travels to Amiens. He describes his leave.

On return to Fricourt baths he takes up his usual duties, including providing clean clothing and responsibilities relating to the maintenance of the facility. He tells of the various Commonwealth fighting units as they visit and their movements in and out of the trenches.

Private Buchan returns to the trenches adjacent to Flers on the 31st January. His work there included stretcher bearing, building latrines and laying duckboards. To prevent slipping on the frozen ground they were wearing *"sandbags over their boots"*. This section of the diary includes a diagram of the trench and the ADS shelters – see Tuesday 6th February.

The unit is relieved by the 14th field Ambulance on the 7th February and returned to *"Bernafay"* [sic] this place name is spelt in a variety of ways. Duties now included work on a hospital building to accommodate 300 patients. The hardship of a bitterly cold winter, short rations and enteritis eventually lead to a period of hospitalisation beginning the 3rd of March. A day by day description of life in the hospital ward follows. He notes the news of America joining the allies in the war on March 14th. On Saturday the 17th he writes of the 5th Division taking *"Bapaume"* and the expectation of a further advance in the evening. Hospital cases are sent on and the wards emptied; all the bearers ready to *"move up"*. He is discharged.

March continues to be a time of activity with units on the move and he comments on the 19th *"Hard to believe that we have Fritz on the run"* and Tuesday 22nd *"We are all in good spirits"*. Pte Buchanan moves again on Wednesday 28th a heavy march to *"Bapaume"*, he notes the devastation in the surrounding districts – Cambrai, Bougney, Frenicourt [sic] included.

The use of horse ambulances and Fords and Sunbeams depending on the state of the roads is discussed 5th April.

Bullecourt

Heading to front is inscribed over Sunday 6th May. The 9th Battalion and Gordon Highlanders take Bullecourt on the 7th May and Buchanan writes *"hottest[sic] since Prozieres[sic]"*. There are rumours that the Germans are evacuating on Saturday the 12th; descriptions of heavy fighting 14th, unit losses and difficulties faced during this period 14th – 15th *"All feeling knocked up. Terrible lot of wounded from last night".... "Young Snowy Hornby buried next to Westwood"*. Returns to trenches Monday 21st *"bombardment to the left of Bullecourt"* description of work and conditions. Private Buchan leaves *"Bapaume"* on the 24th May heading to Bellevue Farm adjacent to Albert. He describes the train journey and significant places en route.

He is diagnosed with Trench Fever June 7th - description of experience. Leaves Bellevue Farm 16th for Contay Village near Vadencourt and while there is transferred to a Casualty Clearing Station run by *"Tommys"* at Edge Hill. Here there are a number of troops being treated for Trench Fever – description of ward / hospital care.

He notes at the top of page – July 1st – Americans in France and 3rd July – Russian offensive in Eastern Galicia capturing 8,000 prisoners and advancing on 18 mile front. Discharged from Edge Hill 18th July. Private Buchanan leaves Contay on the 30th July for Sercus. On the evening of July the 31st he notes the Germans shelled Hazebrouk and estimates the casualties at 100 and adds – “*First time shelled*”.

During August he speaks of action around the town of Hazebrouk and on 12th adds “*Heavy bombardment in the direction of Armentieres*” as he closes off for the day. His month continues with light duties and away from action in the trenches. The local rural families continue with their work - women, boys and old men – harvesting and building haystacks. Long awaited leave begins Friday 31st August.

On Leave London

Arrival in London September 1st. Describes his journey and delight at seeing the cliffs of Dover and the shores of England. Each day he speaks of his travel experiences as he moves from London to Scotland and then to Brighton. He leaves London on Wednesday 12th of September.

On the 13th September at his billet near Hazebrouk he comments “*It was hard hearing the artillery again after twelve perfect days of peace.*”. Fatigue parties begin taking down tents and on the 15th and the patients are sent on. They are marched towards the Belgian border and camp about a mile from Poperinghe [sic] - the 18th “*thousands of troops around here. Busy busy sector.*” Above the heading for the 20th he writes “*Went to trenches Ypres 1st time we attacked 5/40*”

The trenches, Ypres, September and October 1917.

From the outset the action is heavy, many wounded and heavy machine gun fire, colleague killed within an hour of arrival.; 1st and 2nd Divisions “*hopped over and took Polygon Wood*”; “*the 2nd, 14th, 15th and 3rd bearers working the posts*” Pte. Buchan and colleagues are hit by shrapnel, Buchanan suffering a fractured knee. Relieved by the 1st Field Ambulance on the 22nd and returns to camp. Moved to Ypres on the 23rd he notes that the papers of the day record the battle as the Third Battle of Ypres. The dugouts are built into the ramparts surrounding Ypres. The description of the fighting and heavy losses continues; he returns to the trenches and the 25th is headed with “*Day of Horrors*” later “*nothing but a hell all day*” finally relieved from duty on the 27th. “*Third time in*” heads the 28th September. He speaks of the difficulty of working during gas attacks wearing a gas helmet “*chaps went nearly mad*”... “*couldn't see through the glasses*” leaves trenches again on the 30th. The action continues with a move to Dickeybusch [sic] trenches from October 4th until 6th, he speaks of the dissatisfaction felt by the men about the management of the ambulances. Wednesday 10th is headed “*Fifth Time In*” and he notes “*with bearers going straight in and taking the Burr Track to Westhock*” he returns to Dickeybusch [sic] Main Camp on 11th dissatisfied with the arrangements to get them out and very tired. On Friday the 11th he is back in the trenches “*heavy carries all day*”... “*dodging shells all the time*”. Pte Buchanan comes in from the line on October 16th returning to quarters in the ramparts at Ypres. He speaks of things going on in leaps and bounds towards Ypres and the Menin Road. By the 20th he is returning to the trenches - “*hot carries*” and describes the heavy shelling of “*Anzac Ridge*”. The unit is relieved on the 22nd to return for the eighth time on the 24th until 26th of October.

On Sunday 28th he ends his writing with *"Our bearers move out of the line."* During the following weeks he is at Bossedon [sic] Camp (29th) returning to usual duties. But notes the change *"To be away from the roar of the old guns"*. At the top of the page for the 31st of that month he notes *"Three years since the first battle of Ypres"*

News in the papers on the 8th of November that the Canadians had taken the village of Passchendale. The unit is moved on the 12th to Lurcan, Buchanan speaks of an artillery duel all night with the Germans bombarding the Allies' new positions near Passchendale. Routine duties with periods of free time continue during November with work being carried out in the camp including picquet duty, laying duckboards adjacent to the quarters, erecting and moving huts. On the 24th of November he notes *"Good news of the push at Cambrai9,000 odd prisoners."* The unit moves on again and by the 19th of December he is at Quiten[sic] The weather is now very wet and cold with snow falling – *"horses slipping a terrible lot on the roads they have been frozen hard."* Visit to Boulogne on the 22nd December with friends. Notes on the 24th *"The votes for conscription are against it by a big number"*. Christmas is celebrated with a dinner on the 26th and the end of the year is celebrated with a dinner in Pont-De-Briques. He notes in the closing statement *"Lads all merry and joyful after their spread."*

At the back of the diary he lists parcels and papers receives; the railway route taken from Marseille April 3rd 1916; addresses and details of family and army friends. The diary is covered in linen which has been stitched to hold the cover in place.

Found in diary

Between pages 23rd and 24th October 1917 a newspaper clipping – a death notice for Pte Buchanan's mother – no date or information relating to the newspaper. Between pages 4th and 5th November 1917 five black and white photographs with details on reverse side. Measurement 6.5 x 4 cms.

Details on Reverse of Photographs

Paris; 2. Billet Wallenchapel near Hazebrouk 1917; 3. Taken 2nd September 1917, Daly, myself and George M Buchanan, Richmond on Thames; 4. Main Street Contray, showing Church; 5. Snow scene at Quiken [sic] Farm near Boulogne, December 1917.

Condition

The diary cover is partially detached from the body of the diary . The page for December the 19th is loose and detached from the spine.

Diary 1918

The year begins with a quiet period, Pte Buchanan notes on the 4th January “*the job tres bon*”. Over the month he visits and describes local towns visited by the troops – Boulogne and Ponte-De-Briques included. News that they will move is given on the 29th and tents are taken down and they leave Quchen [sic] Farm. He notes that the 15th Brigade are entraining at Samer. On the 31st he writes at the top of the page “*Dranoutre*” and on the 3rd of February the activity in the air leads him to the realisation that he is back in the line once again. Busy building bomb proof mounds adjacent to the wards. On the 7th he ends his entry with “*Talk of the 1st Divi going over the top shortly.*” He writes on the 13th that Russia has pulled out of the war.

On the 17th of February he begins his leave in Paris. He notes that his first impressions of the city are that it is a wonderful place but at the end of his daily entry he adds that even here you “*can't get away from the noise of the guns*”. He describes in detail his time on leave and the sights visited. His leave runs until the 26th and on the 27th notes that he is back from Paris and that most of the bearers have gone out to the line.

The 14th Field Ambulance takes over and they leave Dranoutre on the 1st of March. They end their journey at the main dressing station on the main road from Kemmel known as Gordens Road [sic]. Here daily duties included the clearing and flooring of pill boxes at Scott's Farm to enable their use as an aid post.

London Leave

Leave and his trip to London begins on the 19th of March. His diary for the 21st notes at the top “*Big German offensive (Somme) between Cambrai and St Quentin.*” On the days of the 26th and 27th he notes that the Germans have taken Bapaume again and that they are near Albert “*so old Prozieres[sic] will be in their hands again*”. On the 28th “*Albert in the German hands and is only 17 miles off Amiens. Things are looking serious alright.*” He describes his leave time in London Edinburgh and Glasgow and the journey back to France on the 3rd of April. The boats conveying the troops to Calais were camouflaged and escorted by cruisers while seaplanes could be seen overhead.

From April 4th until the 9th Pte Buchanan remains in Calais at No 2 and then No 6 Rest Camps. The fighting around Amiens continues and he speaks of “*thousands*” of soldiers being in Calais and describes the activities and the camp. They leave Calais on the 9th heading back to their unit. On the 12th he speaks of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Australian Divisions having gone to Messines, finally adding “*only rumour*” at the end of the entry. Heavy troop activity in the area continues. On the 16th he returns to his unit at Daoars relieved to be eating decent food again and pleased to receive letters from home. He notes the deserted villages in the area, the sound of shelling into Amiens and the expectation of activity on the lines. Over this period he speaks of casualties from gas. He moves to a new billet in Les Allencons on the 21st of April and notes at the base of the page that Von Richthofen has been brought down. On the 23rd after a medical examination he adds that there is the possibility that he will be evacuated because of his stomach problems.

Villers Brettoneux Gas Casualties

On April the 24th he writes of the action at Villers Brettoneux and of the casualties pouring in suffering from the effects of gas - so many that the men are forced to camp along the road giving over their billets to the casualties. The town is finally evacuated by the troops after heavy shelling with gas. Pte Buchanan describes the soldiers arriving at the station, walking wounded, blindfolded with hands on each others shoulders. Heavy fighting continues during April and his health remains an ongoing issue.

In May camp activity and picquet duty continues, the French soldiers build trenches adjacent to the camp in expectation of action. Action continues along the whole front. Spring weather arrives and the "*crops are looking well*". On the 20th he states "*all getting anxious now, about another big attack by the Germans.*", "*Thousands of Americans coming to France.*" On Wednesday the 29th Pte. Buchanan is ordered into the Horse Transport.

On 2nd June they are relieved by the 12th Field Ambulance and leave Allencourt for Allenville and Chateau Wood. On the 13th he ends his entry for the day with "*The papers say Fritz is fighting their final battle*". On the 15th the unit moves up to the outskirts of Querrieu and a main dressing station. During this period he speaks of the "*dog fever*" or the "*Spanish Grippe*" being present among the soldiers all along the line and eventually the paper reports of its' presence in Paris -25th June. By the 9th of July the fever is in London with many being infected.

During July the action along the line continues and there are positive signs with many prisoners and guns being captured. On the 24th he writes that the Germans are burning villages at the back of Rhiems indicating that they are in retreat. They prepare to move off on the 30th with the "Tommies" taking over from them. He remarks that the Germans are still retreating on the Marne front. They depart from Querrieu on the 31st for Montieres – various spellings through notes.

On the 3rd of August there is good news, the French take Soissons, Rhiems and twenty small villages. There are expectations of a "*big stunt*" on this front shortly with artillery going up the line, bearers and wagons are standing to. They are marched out with transports on the 5th to Blangy Support. All the ambulance wagons are sent up the line and there are motor buses in readiness for the walking wounded. He ends the day of the 7th with the news that Albert is now in "*our hands again*". They move on to Warfusse on the 8th great activity and movement on the line continues. He notes that the front line is just out of Villers Brettoneux. At the top of his notes for the 10th he writes "*A Black Day*" shelling causes havoc in the cellar holding the horses, two colleagues are killed and one is wounded, four horses are also lost and four wounded. They move into the open and take cover in an old sunken road. On the 11th they return to their old quarters at Blangy to be moved on the 13th to Weincourt - their Brigade having gone into action. As they pass through Villers Brettoneux he notes that the place is in ruins as is the adjacent town of Marceleave. On the 15th they move to the chateau at Fouillois a centre for gas cases. He notes after a trip to Montieres on the 18th that the civilians are gradually returning to Amiens. On the 22nd he finishes his writing for the day with the comment that Albert is in our hands, captured today. On the 24th they are moved on to Vaire where they can hear the heavy guns - making the men feel uncomfortable. The unit is here in reserve "*just in case*". News in papers on the 25th indicates many towns in the vicinity have been taken back by the Welsh troops and he adds that things are looking good for an early peace. On the 26th there is news that the whole ambulance is to be moved on - they arrive at Herbecourt on the 30th. Bapaume is captured by the New Zealanders is his final entry for that day.

In September the activity continues and more villages are returned to allied hands. Buchanan describes the devastation and the issues associated with taking cover in the open, flat country. They return to Fay on the 5th with the bearers still being in the line. On the 6th Pte Buchanan and several colleagues are attached to Major Cray and are sent to Biaches leaving there with most of the bearers for Le Mesnil on the 7th – two squads being attached to each Battalion. On the 8th he speaks of the quiet – “*no sounds of artillery*” and adds that “*the troops are not far off in St Quentin*”. Amiens is now open again for civilians. On the 9th the wagons move back to Estrees [sic] (is used as well Fay in the diary) and he speaks of the troops clearing up in Peronne. He notes that there is little war news and that they are now far from the action although there is activity with soldiers moving up the line, heavy traffic on the main road and infrastructure being prepared. He continues his round of duties caring for the horses and wagons and adds on the 17th that “*a big stunt is expected*”. On the 18th he begins with the news that the stunt was successful all the objectives reached and held up near St Quentin. In the last paragraph of the day he speaks of men in the unit that have been in action since 1914 returning to Australia. On the 24th he writes that the post has become a scabies hospital and on the 25th that they have German prisoners with guards in the camp. He notes on the 26th that there is resistance from the troops at the news that the battalions are to be split up. On the 27th they leave Estrees for Hamel and on the 28th speaks of a “big stunt” with the Americans hopping over and the 3rd and 5th Australian Divisions going through them. The morning of the 29th begins with a terrific bombardment “*we knew then that the hopp [sic] over had started*” wounded and prisoners stream in, several stretcher bearers are wounded and they are given the order to move to Finecourt – see top of page. On the 29th and 30th he notes the war news is good, but adds that the fighting there is hard and the casualties are great – with the Red Cross trains running to this point.

October 5th they are moved to the outskirts of Peronne to join the rest of the unit, entraining at La Chapelette and ending their journey with horses and wagons at Boencourt. On the 8th he reports that they will be out of the action after a long period on the line. News of the war continues to be of central importance and positive and on the 19th he ends his words for the day with the statement that he can see the war ending before Christmas. He describes, the French farmers harvesting and preparing their land for the next season and his daily work and relaxation – including sports and trips around the local area. On the 30th he adds that they are expecting a German surrender.

On November 6th he notes that Turkey has surrendered and that the Australians are seeking an armistice. There is news that they are to go up the line again but he believes that by the time this happens the line will be “*imaginary*”. The excitement escalates with the expectation that the war is at an end rumours fly and everyone is anxious for news. On the 8th he writes that the German forces had ceased fire and that German delegates had come over the lines to negotiate on the previous day. On the 9th he writes that General Foch has given them 72 hours to decide on an outcome. The armistice is signed on the 11th and Pte Buchanan describes the joy of the local people and the celebrations. He speaks of a thirty days armistice that will indicate that peace is assured. At inspection on the 17th of November General Hobbs informs the troops that they will be leaving for Germany, confirming rumours in the camp. By the 21st there is speculation that Billy Hughes is against moving the troops while there are also rumours that the 4th Army including the Australians and Canadians are to be sent to Cologne. Meanwhile the troops continue to make ready their equipment- harnesses and wagons. They depart Boencourt on the 25th heading towards Villers Brettoneux. He notes that it is strange to be in these parts without the sounds of war, the railway

bridges are now restored and the French have begun to plough the fields again. The troops pass through Bazingheim , Favril where they wait for 48hrs expecting to move on to Belgium.

On the 1st of December Pte Buchanan receives a pass and leaves for "*Blighty*" holidaying there until the 20th of December. During his stay he spends time in Scotland as well as visiting the Isle of Wight. Note that there have been changes made to the dates see 13th to 16th. The train journey from Boulogne by way of Etaples, Arras, Douai, Mons, La Louviers to a rest camp in Charleroi is described in detail – including the countryside and their travelling arrangements. He then travels by lorry to Solre-Le- Chateau where they meet up with some of their unit collecting hospital beds. On the 22nd after travelling by lorry and marching five kilometres they finally fall in with the unit at Les Bodelez. The unit begins to dispose of horses and wagons on the 24th he also notes that they are not being worked too hard. Christmas Day is celebrated with a "*good spread*" a surprise given the difficulty in acquiring food; the men are waited on by the colonel, officers and sergeants. "*All spoke of our next Xmas in Aussie*". He discusses the possibility of a return to Australia in March if the 1915 men are returned "*so one feels a different chap already*". The year ends with him looking forward to returning home.

At the back of the diary he has listed addresses of family and friends, parcels recieved, letters written and received. A tiny photograph is hinged on a page at the back. The image is of a young woman , dark hair in a plait around her head, wearing a cardigan and white shirt.

Condition

Sections of the diary are separating from the spine and cover.

Diary 1919

The year begins with cold wintry weather, rations are poor now and the ambulance wagons are being used for patients from the Battalions. Pte Buchanan has been moved to A section and is made a Corporal on the 9th of January – in orders on the 11th he finds that he has been promoted from driver to Lance Corporal. He writes of the elation as groups of men gradually return to Australia - depending on their length of service – and the quiet that follows their departure. He finds the job of Lance Corporal “*tres bon with very little to do*”. A group of four men including Pte Buchanan are given the job of returning wagons and a water cart to Ordinance at Abbeville. He describes the journey and countryside as they travel – about thirty kilometres a day leaving on the 18th - through towns including Inchy, Cambrai, Masnieres [sic], Bertincourt, Bapaume, Favreuil, Pozieres and Albert. He notes the devastation of the war, the return of civilians and the German prisoners repairing roads and clearing the fields of debris. They visit the gravesites of friends taking photographs for relatives and writes of the “*tommies*” moving isolated graves to nearby cemeteries - Thursday 23rd. They arrive in Abbeville on the 25th leaving on the 28th by train for Etaples, No 9 rest camp is added at top of the notes for the day. Pte Buchanan describes the difficulties faced by the British sergeants trying to get the Australian soldiers out of bed in the morning. The conditions are poor and he speaks of strikes on the railway in England and locally. He is despondent and complains that there is absolutely nothing to do.

Influenza Outbreak

On February 3rd he leaves by train and is reunited with his unit at Avesnes on the 5th. Many of the men including Pte Buchanan are unwell. He is diagnosed with influenza on the 7th, admitted to hospital and finally leaving his unit he is transferred to a CCS in Mauberge on the 10th. He describes the ward and speaks of the numbers arriving and deaths from influenza. He improves and is evacuated by Red Cross train to the base at Wimereux. The trip is slow but the conditions and care on the train good, they arrive on the 18th. On the 19th he is allowed to get out of bed but he notes the following day that he is unwell and “*shaky*” he has news on the 22nd that he will be sent to England. On the 23rd he is hospitalised in the 1st Eastern General Hospital at Cambridge. By the 25th he is up and about and on the 26th makes his first trip into Cambridge.

On March 5th he speaks of influenza “*going strong in England and Scotland*”. On the 14th he leaves Cambridge for Dartford to be given 14 days furlough from the 19th. He describes his time in London including the celebrations. He has been encouraged to stay in England for a period of 12 months working with a woollen firm in Yorkshire and during his furlough he visits a mill in Bradford on the 27th and 28th.

Pte Buchanan arranges his papers in London and returns to Bradford on the 4th of April to take up an opportunity to further his education. He reports to the Technical College on the 7th. During the month the students, a mix of returned soldiers and civilians attend lectures and visit textile factories to observe various processes such as sorting and scouring wool. He writes that the mills continue to work on Good Friday. By the 30th of the month he is pleased with his progress and writes that he is now “*fairly good*” at sorting. On May 13th he adds that he is not having any luck finding a job; he sits examinations 21st – 27th relating to his period of study in Bradford.

June begins with the news that he has been granted a certificate for his work but that an extension to his time in Bradford is not possible. He returns to London on the 3rd hoping to change the decision and after much chancing about he is granted an extension. On the 11th he begins work as a wool sorter with a friend, Bill Boyce, at Margarisons (various spellings used) and Co's warehouse. He describes his work and recreation adding anecdotes relating to events of the day. Mail from and to home remain a priority while memories of significant days during the war are noted. At the top of the page for Saturday the 28th Pte Buchanan notes Peace Signed and describes the merriment of the community celebrating the news. He is now seeking a further extension to his stay.

July 2nd he is handed an extension through to the 6th of September. General Birdwood visits Bradford on the 4th. The community prepares for formal peace celebrations on the 19th. He speaks of the large crowds and dignitaries gathered in London, the local bonfires, fireworks and the groups singing on the streets. During the month there is industrial unrest and strikes occur throughout Yorkshire including the mills. On the last day of the month he notes that several more mills have joined the strike and that things are getting very serious. The unrest continues.

On the 13th August he notes that the miners are beginning to return to work. He notes that the locals are now spending time holidaying and that the town is quiet.

Pte Buchanan leaves Bradford on September the 6th returning to London. He notes on the 8th that leave is being cut out and that he expects to sail soon. On the 10th he moves to Warminter where he spends his time waiting to be placed on a boat roll and trying to occupy himself. He finally is placed on the roll of the Port Denison but has no idea of when it is due to sail. The weather is turning cold and the men are eager to return home. They are told to be ready to leave on the Sunday the 21st and he notes at the end of the page "*Probably my last Sunday in England.*" After final farewells to friends in London on the 22nd he boards the Port Denison and adds at the end "*Good bye London*". He describes the ship's movement from the docks into the Thames and finally the Channel arriving at Plymouth on the 24th. The boat takes on more soldiers and at full capacity leaves for Australia on the 26th.

Pte Buchanan describes the scenery and the activity on the ship, noting the changing weather conditions as they approach the tropics. The men tailor their clothing to suit, sleep and sunbake on deck. Sports, boxing matches, games of housie, concerts and film shows are organised to pass the time while photographs are taken of the scenery, games and marine life.

They arrive in Cape Town on the 16th of October leaving on the 19th. He enjoys his stay and describes his sight seeing. He adds after they leave that the Australian name is not liked in Cape Town and the Dutch have no time for us. On departure he is given the task of caring for an influenza patient in the isolation ward. Influenza inoculations are given to the troops during their home journey and Pte Buchanan has his 2nd inoculation on the 24th. Another patient – a baker on the ship - is admitted to isolation on the 29th and it was expected that he would be hospitalised in Sydney. On the 28th he notes that it is his fourth birthday away from home. November begins and he writes that he is expecting to arrive in Melbourne on the 10th a rumour which is eventually superseded with the news that the ship would go in at Adelaide. During the month he attends meetings with the Padre who is preparing him for communion. The time drags by as the troops get closer to their destination. On the top of the page for Monday the 10th he notes, "*Back in Ausssie! Hearty welcome home.*" He meets his family and speaks of the excitement felt by everyone. At the end of the day he writes "*The*

day I have looked forward to for so long, 120 Aussies disembarked. Day of days.” During the month he reacquaints himself with the city visiting places of interest with friends while dealing with issues relating to his return to civilian life and discharge from the services.

He leaves Adelaide on the 2nd of December travelling to Sydney via Melbourne and Albury . He describes the trip and places visited in Sydney; the zoo, the city, Randwick Racecourse, Homebush abattoires, the harbour and local beaches. Although he is not explicit it appears he is travelling with his brothers – he describes the group as “*we boys*” - and is staying with family. He writes of a property called Yoorooga; at the end of the diary along with other addresses he notes this property and the name Mrs G Yuill. The address is, 25 Cremorne Road, Cremorne, Sydney. Longer trips are taken to the Blue Mountains, Jenolan Caves and Bulli. There have been changes made to some of the dates and the the notes in this section do not run in sequence. They return to Adelaide on the 21st of December to celebrate Christmas at home. He recalls the last Christmas spent in France and compares it with the perfect sunny weather of the day. The diary ends with him spending a quiet New Year’s Eve in Brighton.

At the front of the diary he writes his name and military details, information relating to bank accounts and a money order. He notes the maths to calculate knots and miles and enters the daily runs of the Port Denison as it heads home.

The back of the diary holds a list of addresses and dates that relate to the mail written and received from his girlfriend Norah.

Throughout the diary the spelling of place names is a problem and will need to be checked with maps of the day and with unit information.

Listing compiled by Faye Maron