

December

1917

Dec. 8 Last week had a trip to
Eu, Le Repard & others & then
to Stult. They are all fine
towns. Here (Wauwille) all the buildings are wrecked
& the trenches & wire are
everywhere. So far the area
is quiet.

10 Runouts everywhere. Went
to Railhead at Peronne this
morning & had a good look
round. Received a fine
parcel from America &
distributed most of it.

15 Have had a fine chance
of seeing Peronne & have
been in there about
six times. There is
not a complete house
in the town & the
more important are
completely wrecked.
The town was finely
situated on the Somme
& must have been a

very pretty place before
Fritz commenced on his
Kuller. The Bank of France
is badly destroyed & there
are only about 20 civilians
here, mostly old ladies.

Things go on the same at
Bardonnages. Plenty of
rumours but nothing
definite. Have been busy
writing up mail & am
square at last.

21 A heavy fall of snow
occurred on the evening
of the 15th & in the
morning was 8" deep.
Since then it has
frozen consistently and
the ground is very
slippery. Went to

Peronne on the 17th at 8 AM
& was delayed until mid
night as the train was
snowed up. Very cold.

Believe that we move tomorrow
where to I do not know.

Since the snow we have
had two severe white
frosts and the trees &
shrubs look like a scene
in Fairyland. The delicate
branches of the frost have
outlined every twig &
even a dry shrub stem
is a thing of beauty. The
demolished houses lose
somewhat their desolate
air & although cold the
air is fine & fresh.

Dec 27 Kinda passed quietly
& very poorly. The
day was hardly fine

then changed to snow &
sleet. Boxing Day it snowed
all the morning & was wet
& cold. Today it is still
cold but I like it
alright. We expect to
move shortly but I hope
to be in Paris for the
move. Expect to go on
the 30th.

Caught the 4:30 train at
Peronne, reached Amiens
7:30 PM. caught the 2:9 AM
and arrived at Gare de
Nord at 6 AM on the
31st. Were driven to the
Y.M.C.A. at Péténepé Barachs
& after a lecture & breakfast
took the Metro. to the
Place de la République
where we booked
rooms at Hotel Moderne

After a wash, bath etc. we
emerged ready for the
day. Walked around
the main streets & became
acquainted with the lay
of the town. In the evening
danced at the club &
spent a very enjoyable
evening. Invaldes & Tomb of War.
Jan 1st In the morning went
to Notre Dame Cathedral
inside & out & then
along a few of the bridges
Place Concord etc & Champs
Elysees. After dinner
we remained to a concert
which was first rate
there being many first
class singers & musicians.
The evening was occupied
by a dance & game

Jan 2 In the morning
went to Galleries Lafayette
& the Bontemps to have a
look at the shops, then along
to the Arc de Triump.

The afternoon was passed
at the Edhambra where
we met some rather nice
people & spent the evening
with them.

Jan 3 In the morning,
rested about the Club
& after lunch went
to the Louvre & thence
to the Big Wheel, coming
home past the Tuileries
Place Vendome & boulev
of Bligny. The evening
was spent at the
Casino where Sally
Delys was dancing
& playing. The

staging & dressing was
very fine also the dances.
Jan 4 Spent the day at
Versailles which surpasses
anything that I have ever
seen. The rooms at the
Chateau were simply
gorgeous & the views
& landscape magnificent.
Spent some time sliding
on the Grand Canal.
The carriages of the past
Kings of France were
very fine but best of
all I like the Gobelin
Tapestry work. In
the Chamber of Deputies
I read out the details
of the place to the
rest of the party. In
the evening Frank

Baker & self went to the
Folies Bergues. The show was
very dressy & the theatre
promenade very fine. At
the interval the hall
is packed with crowds
of the demi monde
who are painted &
powdered like dolls.

Jan 5 Did not go out
until after lunch.
Bought several P.B's
& books & walked
down the Rue de la
Paix passing Pagnans
& Ward's & several
other notable places.
Booked seats for the
Opera (Hamlet) this
evening.

We went to Hamlet

& it was grand. The scenery
music & singing was
marvellous. At the
interval we promenaded
in the grand hall which
is a gorgeous piece of
architecture. The Opera
itself is wonderful &
the orchestra contains 100
instruments.

Jan 6 Promenaded to the
Boulevard de Boulogne &
watched the thousands
skating on the ice. It
was a fine scene.
We lunched at the
Pyramides & then
booked seats at the
Opera for child.

In the afternoon
we walked along

the Blvd. Italiens, Madeline
& Rue Rivoli, then the
length of the Place Concord
& Champs Elysees. The
Bvds were crowded.

We then went sliding
on the ice at the
Tunieres to the great
amusement of the
onlookers. The slide

was beautifully staged
& the whole play a
grand piece of engineering.

Monday 7 Snow fell all day
& we walked to the

corner of Bligny. In

the evening we dined
at Cafe Boulangier &
then to the Olympia

We slept that night at
the Hotel Lafayette & had
a restless time. Last
day of all, a little
shopping & letter writing &
a sad farewell to Paris
by the 7:20.

Arrived at Amiens Hotel
cold, slept in a carriage
until morning. Then
went on to Peronne &
found the unit gone.

Back to Amiens where I
slept the night & next
day went to Bailleville
where I slept the evening.

Jan 11 Reported back to
the unit in mud &
dirt & am now in a
good dugout somewhere
around Wyblacke.

Jan 1911 Am working back
in the office again & have
a pretty heavy cold but
will probably shake it
off in a day or two.

Heavy snow last
night.

20 Cold just about
right but had a fairly
colden time with it.

Weather mild at present
Front very quiet. Spare
time occupied by letter
writing.

Jan 31 We have had fine
and warm weather
but today has been cold
& foggy. Saw Paddy
Moore about 9 days ago.
He is looking alright.

Have sent in an application
for the infantry & have passed
an interview with the
Colonel. So should be pretty
right for a school. Feel
quite keen on it. Still
at Viersstraat and it is
reasonably quiet. Last night
there was a fairly heavy
artillery duel which kept
a clap a wake. Attacks
are pretty slow.

Feb 21. The past three weeks have
been quietly passed with-
out much incident. The
Bde have come out with
very few casualties & are
now at La Blyde. We
expect to remain here
for some weeks yet.

The weather has been fine & warm with only a few isolated wet days. A few frosts at night but they quickly melted under the influence of the sun. Two days ago 3 Fritz's were brought down. One in flames & one with 14 bullet wounds. Fritz has only bombed one night & the artillery except for 3 nights when it was very heavy, has been quiet on both sides.

Bill Wenshall has been up several times & I saw him going "up" yesterday. Have only been away from

here twice when I rode into train.

Feb 27 shifted (per horse) to Metzerin. Were billeted in a rotten barn so shifted to another. Weather has turned bitterly cold.

Mar 5 Weather still cold. We fill in the evenings dancing at a small estaminet for a couple of hours & afterwards bed. Expecting Fritz to attack any time but he will probably wait for finer weather. Very heavy bombardment on 2/3/18. Saw Upton re R.Q.M.S & have a starting chance. Mails poor & irregular.

Mar 14 Last Sunday rode out
to Viersheart & saw 7 Miles
was a beautiful day but
the leaves have hardly
only slow progress.

Monday we proceeded
to Lalente for the
purpose of having
photos taken. I

had a pretty stiff
knee from a long & far
home days. I have
had a bad knee.

Weather is almost
summer. fine &
warm.

Mar 25 Left Melun for Busnes
remained there 4 hours
& on to Sommelem where
we issued & slept the
night. on the

morning of the 26th we
moved to Baillicourt
S. of Amas where we
passed a rather
exciting time as rumours
were current everywhere &
there was a chance of
being cut off. We
issued here & a 6th Batty
took possession of our
dump so we issued
that night at Bassens
afterwards shifting to
Bavericourt where
we slept out. The
weather was now
cold & windy. Next
day we continued
& I came through
Prevent where I had

very fine reception. The roads were thick with traffic but everywhere the men were in good humour. We remained at Delicet for a few hours. Whilst there a Fritz plane came down & bombed us, killing three horses outside our lorry & sending three pieces through the cover but no men were hurt. We moved on to Bontay & are now camped in an open flat where we have been now 2 days. Last night was the

first good sleep. That I had had for some days not having had my clothes off before. Fritz has attacked with immense numbers & forced us to retire. The regiment has been perfectly orderly & everyone is in good spirits. Poultry & fowls are plentiful, as are also pigs & fowls etc & wine (as the civilians have evacuated). Our brigade are doing fine work & we reckon that Fritz's advance is stayed. He

position, is not very
clear as no one knows
where our line is &
Prigs are being captured
miles behind our line
on bikes etc. Met Fred
Bayley yesterday & had
a yarn to him but
was a bit busy.

April 6 have had several
shifts and are now
comfortably established
at Ebart in a large
farm, the owners of
which have evacuated.
Shelling is very lively
but not too close to
us. The Red were
badly caught yesterday
morning & had several

hundred casualties. The
weather has been wet
a slushy but seems to
be a little finer today.
The prevailing question is
whether he will take
Amiens. We seem to have
no supports here & our days
are standing the brunt
of the attacks all along
the line.

Apr. 17 For some days I have
been stationed at Barbic
salvaging forage left close
to the line. Before coming
here I met Reg. Gibson &
Dattersall & had a good yarn
Barbic has been a fine
town but has been
completely wrecked. We have

as a billet a fine house &
have the best of carpets &
furniture. We have a cut
glass service for mess gear &
live well. Champagne only
& rare wine are the drinks.
Fitz shells the place a
little but we have such a
good time that one does
not mind. I have done
some good salvaging which
makes one feel more pleased.
So far we have sent to
the rear some thousands
of bales of forage & several
tons of potatoes.

May 1. Corlie became too
unpleasant and evacuated
to Durieu where after
some days we moved
to nearer Amiens.
On the 29 I took a

run up to Frevent &
passed a good two days
On returning I was
placed in charge of a
coal dump & am now
living in a little ma-
ma facing Amiens.
Every now & then
huge columns of spray
of mud shoot up
into the air as Fitz
lands his shells into
the water in the marsh.
Mail has been very
poor & letters unsatis-
factory. Amiens
Cathedral stands up
fine & high. It looks
beautiful from here
but is being slowly

destroyed.

May 5. Last night I took a boat & punted along the Grand Canal. We passed along the waterways, edged with trees just bursting into leaf & fast. Innumerable islands dotted with small week end villas, now all deserted. In times of peace or even before the late advance this must have been a fine resort. One could never forget those slow flowing waters, the

broad green walls & rustic bridges. Truly life in France has much to offer. Her people are so polite & their phrases & maxims so perfect.

May 9. Yesterday I felt compelled to take a most drastic step. Lately Melba's letters have been very unsatisfactory & the last one of only $\frac{1}{2}$ a page each week caused me to write reminding our engagement. When she receives it she will do one of two things. If she really cares for me

she will abandon any false
pride, write - things will
be A.I. If she has been
wanting the tie cancelled
as I cannot help but
believe. Well I have given
her the opportunity. It has
been a great struggle with
me & twice I had been
on the point of getting
back the letter but it is
better to have this settled
one way or the other.

May 29. For 12 days I have
been in charge of
gathering fresh
vegetables from desert
plots in & around
Amiens. Have 11 men
with me & it is a

fine job; continually on the
water & in a good
billet. Yesterday things
were very unpleasant &
we have been shelled
with 12" armour piercing
for two days now. The
shells have been falling
very close to our house &
as we have no cover
things are not all that
they might be. Cameron is
just about deserted now.
Was awarded the M.M.
10 days ago for Barbic.

June 10 We shifted from
our billet just in time
& are now in a better
place along the river.
We are shelled every
day but I like the

job here & am hanging on.

There is nothing much else of import but hope to get something out of the

June 23 seem to be getting plenty of argument both of this sort. Was at Doullens & Fremont

for a few days last week & had a good time. Saw Harts yesterday & he is married to a French malleoiselle. Things much quieter & quiet here.

June 30 Have burnt the souvenirs of 3½ years ago & have definitely broken. Am more satisfied than before. Have been to

Pois on two occasions & on 28-29 stayed the night.

Had a very enjoyable time & intend going on some future occasion to see you.

The people treated me A. I. & I had a raddling good bed.

July 16 Still on the idea job.

We have changed our residence to Charles maison & find the change agreeable.

We celebrated the 14th July with music etc & invited many French visitors. Heavy thunder

storm this morning but weather generally hot & dry. Have had a

touch of Spanish flu for the past few days.

Was at Pois yesterday but nothing doing. Do

not feel been on any more
trips there. Have missed
for hours for the present
but when we go out I will
have another try.

July 21 For well over two
months I have been on
this job, an opportunity
that will never come again
I am perfectly acquainted
with the waterways &

have seen the old Somme
in sunshine & storm.

Freddie Williams has been
killed, am very sorry as
he was a very decent
chap.

Every evening at
the Dea Commandant's
we have music &
singing. There are three

violins & a piano & plenty
of refreshment so we do
pretty well. We have
not been shelled for
a month & the civilians
are beginning to return.
A couple of tank divisions
are at present in the
village. They seem very
decent chaps. A couple of
them are coming down to
dinner tonight.

July 30 Rumours of a move.
Still on the gardens. Had
a trip to Paris on the 28th
& put in a good time
there.

Aug 18 Am. back with the
boy on the 16th went
to F. went to Doullens &
returned home in

time to catch a light car
so T.H.O. am transferred
to the 14th but am still
with the 26th. Have been
to railhead two nights
running.

Sept 8 After 7 days at Wernou
returned for 14 days to
Cannon where I passed
a good time. Then we
moved to Hayart, &
then to Bebecourt &
move tomorrow to
Cabelet. The weather
has turned cold &
windy but the troops
continue to make
good progress. The
country generally
presents the same

appearance. All washed
& cleaned. Rained this
morning was at training
near Bray.

Sept 15 From Bebecourt we
moved to the cross roads
just Daigt. Here the
great news was spread
of the 1914 men going
home. 37 left our train
on the 10th more go
tomorrow. Owing to
the many changes I am
temporarily transferred
to the 7th where I am
in charge. The past
few nights have been
noted for numerous
visits from Fritz and
he has had 5 machines

in two nights. There fell
in flames, their planes
& bombs exploding making
a great sight. Once the
searchlight pierce them
up they are about
done as our planes
sawle them & shoot
them down. Last night
we had a particularly
severe thunder storm
which flooded the
place & blew down
many tents. I was
lucky & escaped bar
for a wedding. Expect
to leave for Russia
inside two months
but would like my
leave first as perhaps

this may be my last
chance of seeing Italy
& Nice.

Oct 7 Many changes have
taken place. We went forward
to Bouilly then back to
Requigny to Beilly. The
country was looking fine &
I was looking forward to
a good time when I was
ordered to England on
leave. Needless to say I
was bitterly disappointed
as I missed promotion &
my leave though it had
made the best of a
bad job & hopped right
off to Rouen. Met a
nice little French W.A.A.C.
on the train but she

god off at Poix & I didn't
have time to stop there.

Had a very fine reception
in Rouen & saw a lot of
la petite Suzanne who is
hardier than ever & with
the finest hair I ever saw
chained in London

Oct 1 & didn't take much
interest in the show. 2nd

Went down to Pailhouse
the country is pretty enough
but Pailh. is a desolate
lonely place. On the 3rd
was examined & passed
by the Dr. inoculated etc.

On the 5th went down to
Salisbury & saw F. Miles'
people & had the week
end in the old world

turn. Its cathedral is very
good but does not compare
with that of Amiens.

So far I have had
nothing to do but will
get my letters up to
date.

Oct. 7 Wet & cold. My room
mate has gone so I am
left here on my own.

On Friday I take a trip
over to France with a draft
so expect to go up to Rouen.

Have had several walks
around the place but am
not impressed with it,
however with frequent leave
the place may improve.

Nov. 5 Have had a trip to
Southport & Blackpool.
Met a very nice girl, a

to Mussbaine I want on the
Sunday. The road was
fairly level & as one passed
into Hampshire the country
became rather pretty. I
fully is quite a nice ride
but I must go easy.

Well the war is over
& though things were
very quiet here they
cut up a bit rough
in other places. The
question is now, "When
shall we get home?"

am uncertain
as yet whether I shall
be returned to France
but am hoping against
hope to go back.

Peace has left me

practically unmoved
having experienced no
emotion whatsoever
so apathetic have we
become. These fine
autumn days are
very nice & one feels
quite fit.

12-11-18 Called out on
pique to assist in
quelling a riot at
Shipden. The affair
was just about all
over by the time
we got there so there
was nothing doing.

cousin of Bill Bayley's. Had a
fine time. Came back & found
that I was on draft. Put in for
leave & went to Wales. They
pressed over a chap so much
but it wasn't bad for a change.
Had the catering job but there
is no work now hanging on
from day to day. Have had
a touch of rheumatism.

Fingers straightened & am
not pinching either pay
book or bank acc. Nails
still coming in but expect
close from M.M. to cease
abruptly. Somersetshire
seems a very pretty county
11/10/18 Saturday went into
Andover & met Molly Killick
spent an enjoyable evening
with her & also rode down

PA00648
Australia
War Memorial

