

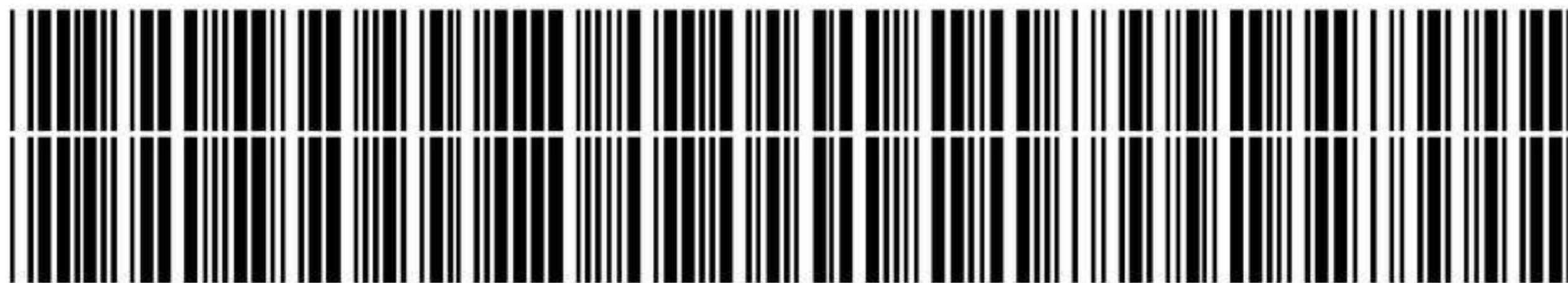
**AWM38**  
**Official History,**  
**1914-18 War: Records of C E W Bean,**  
**Official Historian.**

Diaries and Notebooks

**Item number:** 3DRL606/107/1

**Title:** Diary, April 1918

Includes notes on photographs by Sir Hubert Wilkins and Frank Hurley, and on Baron von Richthofen, the 3rd and 48th Battalions, Bullecourt and Dernancourt.



AWM38-3DRL606/107/1

*Original*

AMM 38

DIARY No. 107.

30RL 606 ITEM 107 [1]

DIARIES AND NOTES OF C. E. W. BEAN  
CONCERNING THE WAR OF 1914 - 1918

THE use of these diaries and notes is subject to conditions laid down in the terms of gift to the Australian War Memorial. But, apart from those terms, I wish the following circumstances and considerations to be brought to the notice of every reader and writer who may use them.

These writings represent only what at the moment of making them I believed to be true. The diaries were jotted down almost daily with the object of recording what was then in the writer's mind. Often he wrote them when very tired and half asleep; also, not infrequently, what he believed to be true was not so — but it does not follow that he always discovered this, or remembered to correct the mistakes when discovered. Indeed, he could not always remember that he had written them.

These records should, therefore, be used with great caution, as relating only what their author, at the time of writing, believed. Further, he cannot, of course, vouch for the accuracy of statements made to him by others and here recorded. But he did try to ensure such accuracy by consulting, as far as possible, those who had seen or otherwise taken part in the events. The constant falsity of second-hand evidence (on which a large proportion of war stories are founded) was impressed upon him by the second or third day of the Gallipoli campaign, notwithstanding that those who passed on such stories usually themselves believed them to be true. All second-hand evidence herein should be read with this in mind.

16 Sept., 1946.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

ACCESS STATUS

C. E. W. BEAN.

107 1  
DIARY AP 15/1918  
6 Ap 22

107 1  
DIARY AP 15/1918  
to Ap 22

Ap. 15. We hear tonight th 1 Germans  
are held up at last in front of  
the Forêt de Nièppe, & Merris; that  
They have a corner of Bailleul &  
have twice been thrown out of  
Neuve Eglise.

A man from G.H.Q told  
our 3rd Divn staff th the 1st Aust  
Divn was in 1 line holding 1 whole  
Corps front from Melosis to  
St Venant, 2nd & 1st Bdes in line,  
3rd Bde in close support w 1  
Pioneers.

A cold bleak day - like  
yesty. Wilkins has gone North  
- our car is in 1 workshop or  
I shd be with 1st Divn -

Tues. Ap. 16 Sid Gullett arrived tonight.

He told us that he had got the trophies away from Bailleul on April 9 under the hottest shellfire he had ever been under in his life - & he was through 1 battle of Polygon Wood. He could not get lorries from anywhere; the officers whom he asked, however willing to help, had no lorries to give him. Finally he looked for lorries which had apparently nothing to do for a few hours & gave the drivers a money tip to come & help him. He arranged to get 1 lorry into Bailleul on 1 morning of April 9th. That morning the bombing started. The streets of Bailleul were impassable - The lorries

Drivers were very windy about  
 going into 1 place (they had  
 actually to go round it) & keeping  
 them still while they were loading.  
 Gullett had to give 1 driver a tip to  
 do the loading, & they did  
 load those lorries in <sup>quick time</sup> ~~short~~ -  
 there was no mistake abt 1  
 work they put into it, Gullett  
 says. They were taken by  
 roundabout roads to Caestre  
 & the military forwarding officer  
 there was persuaded, ~~convinced~~ &  
 entreated to put them in trucks.  
 They occupied one huge truck &  
 1 part of another. By this  
 time lorries were being  
 commandeered to carry  
 ammunition - even the lorries  
 wh our Corps sent up to bring  
 back its details in was  
 commandeered on 1 way &

made to carry ammunition. The loading in Bailleul w / shells crashing down into the town w / one o / ~~most~~ <sup>most awkward</sup> things he had ever undertaken - Julliet says. <sup>But luck was in.</sup> If he had arranged to send them to Steenwerck they wd have been in German hands, the day. He had chosen Caestre as less busy - & they were safe there.

Now while he was in his hut at Corps Hqs at Hêtre next ~~day~~ <sup>evening</sup> <sup>night</sup> <sup>abt 1 am.</sup> there was a scream thro' the air, a crash, & the hut shivered & humped itself up. Five minutes later came a second shell & Corps Hqs shifted. There was a huge crater abt 20 feet across. 25 yards from the hut.

Poor Fullert! In the middle of all his troubles I sent him that most lovable unselfish impracticable Col. Newcome of an assistant - Col. Butler. He sd this was the last straw. By a brilliant flash of intuition he finally switched dear old Butler off onto salvaging the £12,000 of Comforts Fund gift in Baillet. When last seen

"Fertie" Butler was wandering off thro Hêtre with his pack, tin mug, haversack, overcoat, in a tin hat seeking for further lost causes to serve. Goodness knows where he now is! I trust not in Germany.

I saw Col. Leane two days ago & got from him 1 story of the 48 Bn in Dervancourt

fight. In course Jolly considers<sup>6</sup> him a magnificent Colonel - & so he is - w a magnificent Battalion. Leane thinks same of Jellebrand. Of course one knew Jolly's Bde wd do grand things. He has made the 46 Bn - The 47 is not quite right - & Iwley is to so. Leane told me the story of Ap 9. 1917 before Bullecourt.

On Ap 9. the Battle of Arras occurred. And on Ap 9. Robertson<sup>Gen</sup> (who wd never admit argument as Jolly will) ordered Leane to take Bullecourt w 200 men!

It was not occupied, he held; Leane sd th he had bn within 200 yds of face of it, all along, & he believed th it was, strongly held. He sd he did not



think it ~~to~~ be done.

"But you must do it,"  
sd Robertson.

"No man who goes over a bit  
will come back," sd Leane.

"You can never accomplish  
anything without taking a risk,"  
sd Robertson - "It is an order,  
& it must be done."

Leane sd: "well, if you will  
write on paper an order to me  
to do it, I will do it. But  
I must have it in writing."

Robertson ~~to~~ not understand  
this opposition.

"well - if it has to be done  
I shall put my nephew's Coy  
to do it," sd Leane. "I can't ask  
any one else to ~~do~~ undertake

Such an enterprise - I shall be sending my nephews to certain death. And ~~for the reason~~ I am not going to do it without putting up an opposition to it."

At the moment a staff officer from Divn came in & supported Leane & the attack was not undertaken.

["But Jolly will let you put your reasons for & apt, in a case like it," sd Leane to me.]

Two men of 24 Aust M.G. Coy, who were captured at Dernancet, ~~they~~ escaped from Germans & were seen by Cutback 2 days ago.

They said it they never fired one shot before they were captured. They had their

Guns in 1 bottom of quarry & Lt.  
 Myers (?) was there. The bomb  
 was heavy round 1 edge of quarry  
 but did not get into quarry.  
 They were getting their guns  
 to put them up when they  
 heard shots whistle around  
 them & there were 1 German  
 around 1 edge of quarry above  
 them!

The germ. w. f. fire was  
 clipping 1 grass so close abt  
 1 top of quarry that you could  
 not get your head over, they  
 sd. But there is an unexplained  
 interval between the time 1  
 bomb stopped & 1 time 1 German

~~Robertson & Leane on App. 10 to 16~~

16 Ap. ~~24 Aug. Coy~~

Daly. McCounagh. Miles.

Coach of Trophies & ↘

Ap 17. Wytochaeti. & at foot of Kennell

at Pasche

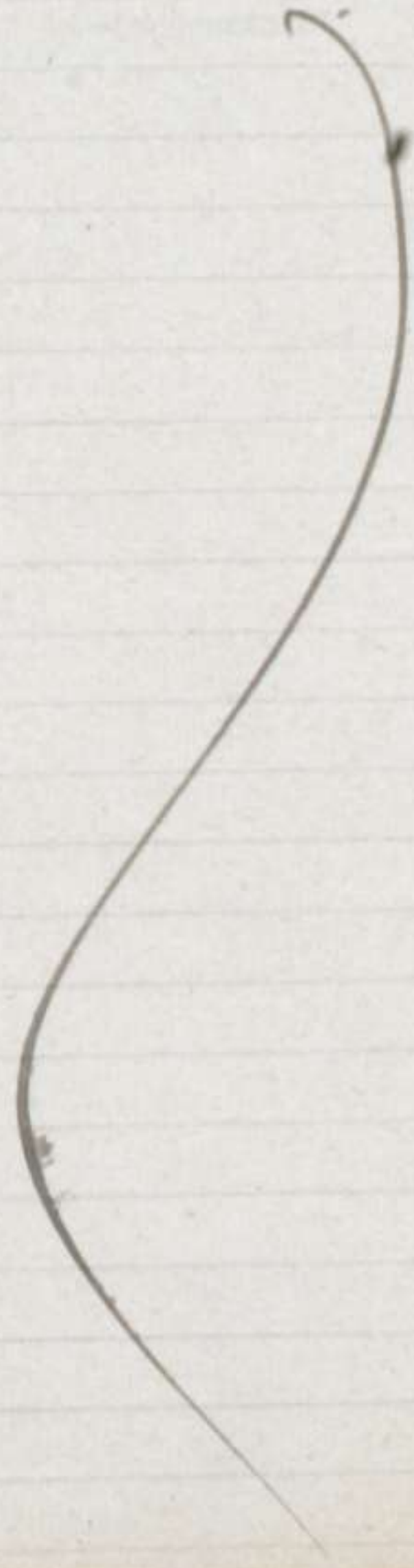
To Propaganda & another

Ap. 18. ~~As A & Arras to South of Somme.~~

~~SV ↘ S. of Somme & N. of Albert.~~

arrived -

(This space was left for  
the W. Junners' story - but  
Freddy Cullack later wrote  
it out for me, & so  
I append his notes).



\* This account obtained at 1st Divn. Hqs is not very accurate. The chief interest of it really is for comparison with the accounts given by the Gallais to show how ~~widely~~ ~~divisive~~ a story alters by the time it gets to Divn from front line.

14th July

17 2/12  
 16 y 1/2  
 15 2/2  
 3/4 r  
 7/8 2-  
 6-1 Verte Rue  
 1-2-1  
 1st v m - vt = p 120cc  
 2d h e g 2150+  
 3d v 6 f 106+

89 April. I came today from Rollencourt to 1st Divn - I heard it was at Hazebrouck & found it at 9.10

\* The 1st Divn came up <sup>on April</sup> at 9.10 we told it was G.H.O. Reuss specially intended to defend Hazebrouck.

It was marched straight in from Hondesheim & Caestre where it had detrained, & began to dig a line (under XV Corps) - <sup>it was practically</sup> behind Merris & southward skirting the forest of Nappe. At the time the 33rd Divn was in Merris, in front of Vieux Berguin; the 4th Guards Bde at Verte Rue & l'Epinette.

The troops ahead, however, gradually drifted back - & except at 2 points in front of Strazeele & in front of Caudesecure our new line became front line.

we finally asked if all troops  
 in front of our line shd be  
 cleared. we went forward &  
 relieved the 11th salients at N &  
 S ends of our lines. The  
 4th Guards Bde had had a very  
 sharp attack upon them, (the  
 ? 98 Bde troops just N. of them also) &  
 had fought it very manfully.  
 we took over their trenches, &  
 the present line is 1 line deep  
 by us w these two bulges.  
 In addition the 4th Bn seized  
 opportunity of an attack by  
 French on our left on night of  
 Ap 16 to advance & straighten  
 out a reentrant in our line  
 by turning 1 fermans out of

92 Bde }  
 93rd Div }

trenches were had by dug by 15  
 Tommies on 1 height behind  
 Merris; & the 1st Bn was put in  
 on 1 left to connect & swing as 1  
 French in this attack - only 1  
 attack did not reach 1 front line  
 of 1 33rd Divn. (a Scottish Brigade).

The troops who retired thro'  
 us were very tired. The Germans  
 made a couple of raids on us  
 about Verte Rue, & lost heavily.  
 They came out at dawn &  
 did not reach our front line but  
 we took some prisoners. The  
 strength of 1 German was estimated  
 at 200 in each party.

Our people started digging  
 3 lines - ~~the second~~ the third  
 just in front of Hazebrouck,  
 another two Sec Bels. Tho' the

Forêt de Nieppe they put up  
barricades <sup>of rails</sup> between walled  
barriers or stakes. It was  
impossible to dig deeper than  
2 feet without striking water  
- often not so deep as that.

Col. The 2nd Bde went  
into / Southern part of / line of the  
1st Bde into / Northern, Hqs  
at Pradelle & at Le Tir au pais.  
As Col. Daly <sup>6th Bn</sup> was riding out to  
reconnoitre / line wh his bn  
was to take up he was k. by  
a shrapnel burst & his horse  
killed too. La Motte Choleau was  
hit by a shell & lth La Motte  
au Bois <sup>became</sup> a pretty nasty place.  
Strazelle was shelled to pieces,  
& Hazebrouck became dangerous.



We have left / salient & are back at St Julien. The Germans shelled Passchendaele for 2 days after we left it.

There are alternative loop <sup>18</sup> to Poperinghe fortunately.

On April 15<sup>th</sup> when the line was held by (N. to S) 4<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, & 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> Bns, the Germans attacked apt abt 1 junction of 3 & 4, but more heavily apt 1 junction of 7 & 8. This was a morning attack. Our artillery smashed his attack at Verte Rue - indeed one body was broken up entirely. In one other sector a few men reached our posts but were captured or killed.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn estimated there were 800 Germans dead in front of them & the 1<sup>st</sup> Bde put the number on their whole front at 1500.

Night of 15/16 at 12.30 am  
 Germans made a minor  
 attack upon 2nd Bde S of  
 Rue de Bois. We took one &

133rd French Div.

The Estimate may be much over  
 1 mark but it looks as if 1  
 German attacked w at least  
 one div.

On April 16 we ~~advised~~ <sup>had</sup> heard the  
 1 French were to advance at a  
 certain hour (I think it was 6 pm.)  
 & we had arranged for the 4<sup>th</sup>  
 Bn to ~~swing~~ <sup>move</sup> up & get onto 1  
 hill top behind messes & 1st  
 Bn to go in on 1 left &  
 swing w 1 French. The French  
 staff work however was surprising.  
 They were most casual. The  
 infantry in 1 afternoon did not  
 know it was to attack till  
 evening, apparently; the barracks

89

came down on time but <sup>21</sup>  
 French did not attack until  
 2 hours after their barrage &  
 finally dug in before reaching  
 / line ~~already~~ held by the  
~~21st~~ <sup>21st</sup> Divn.

Yestdy, Ap 17<sup>th</sup> the Germans  
 made a heavy attack  
 northwards - the battle has  
 gradually been swinging northwards  
 off our front. This attack only  
 involved our left & the 1st  
 & 3rd (? or 2nd) Bns sdlyt they  
 had great shooting. The <sup>German</sup> arty  
 preparation to left of us was  
 very severe.

This Mf - Ap 18<sup>th</sup> - we  
 captured a German officer who

sd that Germans did not know that Australians were in front of them here - He had on him an order for yesterday's attack - it was a very ambitious one - they were to get thro to Steenroode.

At the 1st Divl mess tonight I heard that the 1st Heavy Trench Mortar Bty was part of it in Ploegstreet or messines when 1 German attacked - Lt Darling & 11 men worked their ~~guns~~ mortars & fired off all their ammo - but the ~~1st~~ infantry floated back past them & no more has been heard

of them.

Some Australian Tunnelers are also sd to have bn in / force in Armentieres - The force were eventually surrendered - we do not know what happened to our Tunnelers.

[The fate of our 12<sup>th</sup> Army Bde of arly is not yet known here, either. Some think they were in / fight <sup>in front of</sup> ~~at~~ Tunnelers; at Corps I heard ~~at~~ <sup>that</sup> they were not in the fighting.]

Arthur & Duncan Maxwell have had news of their brother Ken, Colonel of the 2/5<sup>th</sup> Manchester. They went to find him with his Division near Vignacourt. They heard, when they got there, the

He was not w/ Division.  
 He was last seen - after his  
 men had apparently most of  
 them floated away in / earlier  
 days of fight - defending a  
 bridge-head in Peronne. He  
 was married a few years ago & has  
~~had a new wife~~  
 two youngsters, I believe.

Col M. Conaghy was  
 mortally wd, poor old chap,  
 (other day in his HQs. (of  
 the 54 Bn) S. of Somme; &  
 Col. Milne of 38<sup>th</sup> Ws killed  
 in the line near Villers  
 Bretonneux. Villers Bretonneux  
 is defended by our 33<sup>rd</sup> Bn  
 & some British units, &  
 Col. Mowhead (33) is in command

there.

I heard at Compts Hqs  
 that 1 German are expected to  
 attack at any moment now  
 - probly tomorrow (Apr 19.) possibly  
 next day. French mortars <sup>guns</sup> have  
 been noticed registering 1 road  
 around the Southern battlefield;  
 & the little dark objects (probly  
 wagons bringing French mortar  
 ammunition) wh were  
 noticed behind 1 line at Cambrai  
 just before 1st fight are in  
 position there behind 1 line  
 now, (I think they sd, have  
 been camouflaged). Prisoners have  
 sd that they are now ready to

attack. One prisoner, of 26  
 taken by our troops in 1 South,  
 sent to the 13<sup>th</sup> Divn (?), which ~~to~~ had  
 been relieved <sup>some days</sup> after the Dernancet  
 attack, was to move into 1  
 line again on the 17<sup>th</sup> or  
 18<sup>th</sup> to attack. One ~~of~~ of our  
 prisoners said they were  
 talking of a great attack  
 on Apr 20.

The Germans are  
 expected to attack ~~to~~ South  
 of 1 Somme (towards Amiens)  
 certainly - apt Villers  
 Bretonneux; ~~but~~ not  
 so heavily between 1 Somme  
 & Albert; but heavily  
 North of Albert. The attack



might extend right to Arras  
 & ~~be~~ <sup>involve</sup> an attempt to get  
 Vimy Ridge. The Germans  
 have 13 reserve Divs in  
 the North (5 completely fresh)  
 & abt 11 opposite Arras  
 still fresh - apparently.  
 We have still the Canadians  
 untouched & 1 Guards, down  
 there - Guards, 2nd British  
 Divn, & 2nd Canadian Divn  
 in one Corps, & 1st 3rd & 4th  
 Canadian Divns in another.  
 With these & the Australians &  
 N.Z. further S. the Germans  
 ought to have a pretty hard  
 fight.

There are 5 French Divns

89

(3rd Arm Cavalry) behind  
 Kemmel + Ypres - we were  
 passing their transport all  
 day. The French <sup>population</sup> (Wilkins  
 tells me) in Steenwoorde were  
~~so~~ delighted to see them arrive.  
 They ran out w bottles of wine  
 + fruit + you saw French  
 infantry going along <sup>in column</sup> with a  
 bottle of wine in each pocket  
 + drinking out of a third.  
 Two French women were  
 looking on behind Wilkins. They  
 tapped his arms. "Français  
 soldats good soldiers like  
 the Austrians," they said.  
 "Not much salute, march

all over 1 road, Officers<sup>29</sup>  
talk w 1 men like Australians  
but good Officers Soldiers."

The Germans, no doubt  
deliberately, in order to  
create divisions between  
1 Dominions & Mother  
Country have been writing  
th 1 British have as usual  
been thrusting 1 Australian  
& other Colonial troops from  
into 1 most dangerous  
places, & making them  
do 1 hardest fighting.  
"The Australians & Canadians  
are much 1 best troops  
that 1 English have" says  
one concept. At 1 battle

89

of Dernancourt they got  
 few prisoners from <sup>the Austrians</sup> because  
 1 Austro fought so bravely  
 "but 1 slope is covered by  
 their officers & men." Our  
 men on the embankment could not  
 be reached by their art, they  
 say; but they were  
 swept by m.g.s. mounted  
 on 1 house in Dernancourt  
 (& probably in 1 church). Under  
 cover of these 1 German  
 infantry attacked w bombs.  
 [Capt Mac Dougal 47 Bn.  
 sd that 1 sound of bombs  
 could <sup>still</sup> be heard on 1 rly  
 line up to 1 mile (1 p.m.  
 acc. to him) when the support

coy left its trench thro  
enfilade fire].

The Germans on April 12  
seem to have reached  
foot of Kemmel & Wytschaete.  
Wytschaete was retaken by  
the 9th Divn but is appth  
now German again. There is  
a battalion of the Seaforth  
Highlanders wh went over  
there & disappeared -  
Mackenzie (1 American concept  
of concepts Hgo where I  
stayed last night) tells me  
th he heard th this bu was  
cut off but still holding out.  
~~Lytton tells me th~~  
~~Main force~~ They expect an  
attack here too, tomorrow. But

89

unless it is very severe I shall go South in order to get 1 car back to Cutlack. If 1 ferrous got thro down S. ~~(tho)~~ I dont expect they will ~~do so~~ <sup>make there</sup> such an immediate <sup>advance</sup> ~~hurry~~ we might have to shift our little Hqs at Beaucourt any time.

Kemmel & Villers Bretonneux

Seem to me 1 two vital points for 1 moment. The ferrous have got so near to Kemmel that they may <sup>go on</sup> push there altho it is sd not to have been in their plan. Indeed Lytton & some others say that 1 advance N. of Armentieres was originally only meant as a raid but

21 Guards Bde }  
 & 892 Bde }

Apr 18.  
 Snowing tonight - hard bitter  
 white sleet showers from occasional  
 dense dark clouds. Exactly like this  
 time last year.

succeeded so well that  
 Germans followed it up - first  
 got thro opposite Wamelon,  
 then later in 1 morning further  
 north, then at Messines; &  
~~did~~ did it w/ ~~the~~ Divs in 1 line.  
 up here at St Divin.

Col Blamey says he is sure it  
 is not true, but that 1 push  
 was intentional.

The 2nd Aust Bde comes  
 out tomorrow night, to be  
 relieved by 3rd Divin; the  
 3rd Bde similarly goes in to  
 relieve 1 French who ~~the~~ <sup>move</sup> ~~push~~  
 further north; the 2nd  
 Bde go into close support in  
 1 North as it is 1 part where  
 pressure is.

89 3rd Bn. Got in on night 12/13 9pm.  
 and moved straight in. were there all next day  
 9pm  
 Night of 13 Tommies whose whereabouts was not known came thro' abt 4 am on 14  
 4 am on 14. Abt 5 am on in st 20's. Field gun on road.  
 got out heights and unfiled.  
 Prescott, platoon capt & k. 40  
 Lt Champion Co. Coy was k.  
 Sniped when Tomms were quiet, abt 7pm.  
 It was fine &  
 Champion 2 Prescott & B. asked  
 went out as on parade 500 75 & Serms. Lck  
 back. Prescott  
 \* (Young son of Lt M Newington) 500 Serms.  
 Boy 2 { 500 Serms. said he killed  
 Got in contact abt 7pm. Fighting till 7pm when 150 75 & 1 x  
 Practly none got back & in this last all we had  
 not one cas. Coy had abt 60  
 during 1 day. 1 x 60-66  
 This was on left of Strazels C Str  
 2 Coy Serms came along from Merris & Veins Berg



Som. of the who told us he had shot some of his men.

|||

89

Dayd

14th

in fours later in day. But before 37  
This a screen came along before them + then 6 waves.

House

in E6c5.9

They are there still.

Few dead were left in 1 farm where Prescott was.  
The Gs had been occupying 1 farm since.

We left dead in house

Watchmaker who gave away his watch  
On the 17th day the Gs but a sum up to 800 yds

They saw 1 G too far away to fire on them.

69

19th

a mg. fire effectively up to 600-700 yds.

10th

7th

platoon Skirmishers get within 30' of the p. before they opened fire. They passed 1 wd back -

Does Mr D. allow us to fire yet? They wd have scattered first if he had shot before. They were being enfiladed by D Coy on their rt before. There were 6 waves.

11am

German's fell back like a green screen when these 20 men went out. were killed at 1 house. we lost 6 K 3 wd.

House in E6c5.9

They were getting thro' 1 hedge.

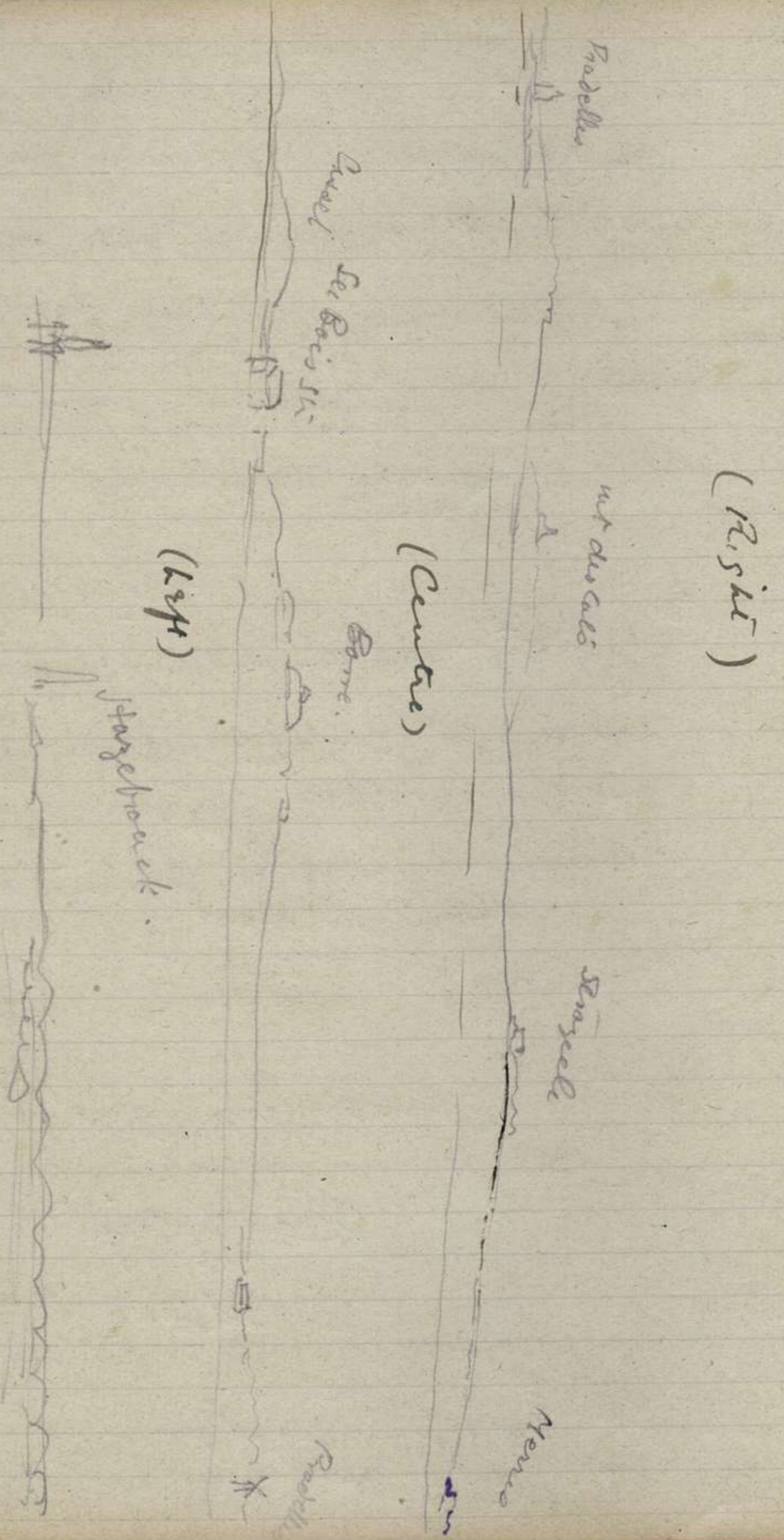
Prescott took ch. of this Coy afterwards.

No fighting Exp. this day

On 17th we saw many Germans

1 parapets opposite B Coy but 1 arty dispersed Rem

View of Stargate ridge from the plain to Southeast near  
see Bois) 19/4/18



89

Burrell says he has never seen 1 man so cheerful & confident.  
The G. has registered to T.M. 3-4  
20 of T.M.

On 17th 20 of 3 Bn L. Gs.  
2 m. Gs. of 3 Bn L. Gs.  
got on to them & laid them out straight.

(Germans) Officers who got out of you 17th, tried (to get their men forward)  
on 17th - 10

2nd Bde got in on night of 7th. holding  
Apr. 12

abt 5000 yds with 7 Bn and  
By Daylight 8 Bn were in position

Apr. 13. afternoon - guards came there  
This, abt lunchtime there  
2nd Bde. before 6  
- was a heavy rifle & machine fire.  
(Daly) - 61.

This was prob the 92 Bde & Gds being cut off by Gs.  
92 Bde & Gds being on

Cut off 12. On ret  
Gds were still holding (50 of them to 5 Div)  
(50 (45))  
Gds had prob. got thro'

Epimette. 20 17 7 7  
1 Bn AP. were enveloping them to right  
as they retired. A tremendous no were  
up of 20

69

suppered.

(then became

front line. The only  $\frac{1}{2}$  Bu 6  $\downarrow$  ahead of them were

The Gds  
Gds in Ferme Baillieu

On this after was holding attack.

2 posts were blown out w heavy TMs  
2  $\downarrow$  S 1  $\downarrow$  TMs.

Posts we had dug behind hedges & 1 ft got  
into these & they must have found some of our  
dead there. They were in E 17C.

TMs were in a factory there wh arty  
was trying to hit on the

Rue du Bois.  
we were going to rush this but arty  
cdnt keep 1 fire down.

there was a lot of fire - arty

On Ap. 15-9  
rifle & mig. Germans concentrated.

Rue de Bois, Seclin  
Ferme Baillieu  
The arty broke these up.

89

100 men came out apt 8 Bn

100 → → → → 8 ✓

\* left 100 + 19 men

On 14th → → 16 19 → ✓

& we capt

5 maps. N of Rue du Bois. The maps are still there, mounted. They sent up rounds of amm.

21 (2) 800000

5 h → ✓

16 Ap. att'd by 3.2000.

8 Bn L 3 ✓

200 or. Drove them off w heavy loss & capt a c & m.

This showed a new div from Reserve Div.

6 9 Alsace - 48 since identified these are regular organised attacks. (12 + 19 ✓) 6 → 20 L

17 Ap. 8th Bn were there holding attack. So were seen scattering but did not reach line. There was heavy shell fire th day.

Losses of 8 Bn much heavier than 1 of 6 7th. Everything is on left sector. South the wood is a good screen.

Originally line of 2 Bde <sup>went down</sup> is <sup>line wh they were</sup>  
 to K in support P 1  
 digging - further down than where they are the

La Motte Merville Rd.  
 when they took over from  
 Shortened front to Landescure.

2 Bns to relieve 7 Bn  
 2 Bns 92 Bde relieve 8 Bn.

(One Bn each in <sup>reserve</sup> 5  
 on it having come from have Bns  
 Each). Sds have att 400 in a

The fighting of Apr. 13  
 wiped out <sup>completely</sup> the Brit. in front of  
 2 Bde v. few got back at all  
 Exc. on it. were holding a v.  
 big frontage. Sds

On night of 12th 2 Bde 1 2  
 Vieux Berguin Rd  
 had 2 corp actually on the  
 British were in front, but

neither they nor Germans were in  
 Merris & had Merrville.  
 The people <sup>3rd. were odd to occupy</sup>  
 when they did this on way of  
 Merris. <sup>1.6</sup>  
 our Corp were withdrawn to live in  
 front of forest  
 then did  
 6-2 Hqs in Lamotte on  
 12th. They went 1 saw after.  
 (31 + 50) 31 w guards <sup>now</sup>  
 have taken over from us.

The 4th Sds Bde were rushed  
 up <sup>by lorries to Roussel Fin</sup> on April -  
 deployed straight from buses + rushed straight into  
 fight. + had heavy fight in front.  
 They said tht 1 fight in the S was nothing to this.  
 were there in front of  
 Merrville  
 from S of Merrville Rd to Verte  
 Rue. There was a gap there. They held an  
 enormous front  
 One Bn Coldstreams  
 lost 17 to 500 or more. + they went at full strength.

89 We relieved 3 Cos + 220  
~~men~~ Coldstream Irish Sds  
 Pioneer Bn Yokohama.

Ap. 19 I am writing this in bed in  
 our comfortable photographers' hut  
 at Steenvoerde after a long day  
 on the 1st Div's front. The  
 1st Div moved today to San Sylestre  
 Cappel; so I started after breakfast,  
 & drove thro' Hazebrouck to Borre  
 [Hazebrouck shows nothing like  
 the signs of shelling that I shd have  
 expected - <sup>not a great deal</sup> ~~very little~~ more  
 than when we were last there.  
 There are 3 or 4 very light shell  
 marks in 1 paving of big  
 square - a few <sup>cobble</sup> stones out  
 of place. One shell fell there in  
 one corner of square as  
 Boddy drove out at 1 other.

I sent Boddy back thro  
Hazebrouck to wait for me  
in Morbecque - while I revisited  
the old <sup>familiar</sup> country where first  
we "lobbed" in France - so  
peaceful then - Borre, Sec Bois,  
la Motte.

At midday Wilkins passed  
Boddy & told him that we wanted  
to stay 1 night up here we did  
find joyce at the Hut, & plenty  
of food.

at 8 pm after a long <sup>fairly</sup> ~~cold~~  
heavy day we reached 1 hut.  
Joyce bicyclid off & got us some  
hot potatoes & vegetables from  
a French house up 1 road - the  
house o 1 caretaker o 1 road -  
he has come to know all 1  
people around here like a friend



No doubt an exaggeration - but it shows what 1 Pole thought.

(This page = Notes made Apr 20 before going S. from 1st Divn.)

69 [ Total casualties 1st Divn to date. (Apr. 20) 47

Off. k	w	Off.	w	w
15	38	k	749	4

Very quiet day yes. Amos Divn

11 Bavarian Divn identified some distance to NE (2 divs away).

If driven back French <sup>genl says</sup> will retire NW or WNW

The Germans (so the French <sup>sepl. says</sup>) are trying to get round high ground by pushing round the low ground.

On arriving at Press Hqs this day, Apr 20, I heard a message that 1 German were expected at any time to make another vigorous attack on Strazelle & Kemmel etc.

A German offr capt'd by the 1st Bde <sup>1 day before</sup> yesterday told Kesslie that he had had to shoot some of his men. A Pole capt'd same night sd that it was less dangerous to advance than to retire. a man who went back was set to dig his own grave & a nig. turned on him. I

89 (he has gone off to sleep there).  
 He talked to me during dinner.  
 He sd Wilkins had bn in  
 Strazeele on 1 heavy day there -  
 Apr 17 - he left car there & Jack  
 the driver sd he never saw anything  
 like it. I dont wonder - it  
 must have bn worse than Villers  
 Bretonneux.

"He" (Wilkins is "he" to Joyce)  
 "has had terrible luck - & dont  
 "I know it" - Joyce said - "luck  
 "with duds. There ws three or four  
 "in / salient - one when we  
 " ws photographing a dead German  
 " in / bottom of a shellhole -  
 " Mr Wilkins sang out to me  
 "'look out!' & I ducked for  
 " a shellhole but it went in

87

within 5 yards of him - just <sup>49</sup>  
where it must have blown him  
to pieces - he wd have got all 1  
issue if it had exploded - But  
it went in deep & just blew  
back -

"But the closest thing we  
ever had was on 1 Soume -"  
(Wilkins was photographing several  
points I gave him at Louverval,  
& ~~Hermines~~ <sup>Hermines</sup>; & amongst others  
from a hill beyond them  
overlooking Queant (where the

11 Bn & 10 Bn were held up -) "He put  
his camera up first on 1 edge of a trench looking down  
1 Valley <sup>(towards</sup> One went in there right at 1  
<sup>Macuvris)</sup> foot of his tripod & didn't explode.  
Then he picked it up & went on up 1 hill.  
Explode. I thought we were getting  
pretty far forward a day. I

\* They were 1 front line supports

89 always <sup>Count it by</sup> ~~know by~~ when we pass  
 the field guns. We passed them &  
<sup>I think we'll buy it from that hill, to the</sup>  
 went on & on. ~~And~~ at last we  
 came to some infantry in a  
 Sanku Road - I ~~didn't~~ thought  
 they were pretty far up but  
 I didn't know they were 1  
 front line\*. We went on up to 1  
 top of a hill - there was  
 beautiful long grass & no shell  
 holes & I felt all right up there.  
 I stood looking down into 1 village  
 below - there were men & transport  
 there, & I ~~noticed~~ <sup>saw that</sup> 1 man were in  
 grey but I thought they were  
 just French soldiers. I noticed  
 that he sd to me "Give me the  
 slide, quick". He doesn't often

hurry himself (this was after  
 we'd had to duck so in by 1  
 tripod - & then they started to  
 put shells all over us. First  
 one - like a ranging shot; then  
 salvos - they ought to have got  
 us but they didn't shoot too well.  
 When we ran back, that time -  
 he picked up his camera quick  
 & we ran ~~the~~ quarters of a mile  
 I think, back past that old  
 broken white chateau (Louverval)  
 - they had their heavies on back  
 there. When we got back he  
 says "I think the Germans  
 had a good shot at us." "Could  
 they see us?" I asked. "Why  
 didn't you see them in 1 valley?"

89 he said.

"And I had thought they were French all the time. Why you could have seen if <sup>one of them</sup> they had a pipe in his mouth!"

"The only other place we saw him so close was at Newport - we got into a strong post there, from underneath. It had a tunnel to it, & a m.p. in it. And from there you could see across the river one of Fritz's posts, with two Germans sitting behind in the sun, smoking those long big German pipes, with little grey caps stuck on each chap's head - and 1 machine gunners never fired - I suppose they had orders not to."

[Ap. 21 Some time ago I tried very hard to get Wilkins his captaincy from Col. Dodds but Dodds wdnt hear of it, tho' all the other Colonial photographers are Captains & he is the best, easily. Today Wilkins tells me he has an offer from the Royal Air Force to manage their photography & cinema department with rank of Captain & Major within a month.]

89 "The Captain <sup>(Harley)</sup> was just as bad,"  
 Sd Joyce. "We were up in front of  
 Zonnebeke when Fritz started an  
 area straf. You could now I  
 knew you cd always dodge  
 an area straf by going round  
 the edges of it - but the Captain  
 wdnt do it. He went straight  
 through it - of course we cdnt  
 do it quickly - but we got  
 thro somehow, on 1 duckboards,  
 without taking to the mud (wh  
 means diving into a shell hole)  
 I'd have liked to have told the  
 Captain not to go thro' the  
 straf but of course I couldnt.  
 But neither of them cd ever come  
 out of another time like they had

11 Tunnellers. Bvt. ahead - cut out.  
Desbois & 2 at 30 yds. L 70 ft  
Germ & and gun at 100 yds  
Bolly fired.

~~In return Lt Albert to some.  
Germ method shoots to  
goes for every to be can find  
Orders to go on, simply.  
splendid looking trench.  
Jeweller  
French & French 80.~~

trip to low  
strong of summer  
near Roiset.

By attack day.  
Shayell - corner  
La Motte - beautiful  
Suis in front of Chateau

~~Stephens - 1/2 1/2  
The Bn acc'ts v. diff from Divn.  
2nd Bn D.H. Co. Lt Bde staff~~

~~set up at Amiens  
at attack bolted. Before  
one arranged men to kits  
just over 1000  
by Leslie.~~

89 at Ypres.

It was a regular April day  
again today - <sup>bright</sup> Sun between dark  
shadows - except for 1 shower  
were little hard white frozen driven  
snow - they call sleet.

Gen Leslie (who says he is 1  
junior British officer now left in 1  
Aust. force) & who is very anxious  
lest it may be his turn, next, to go -  
& who I ~~know~~ is a splendid  
hard little officer in a splendid  
hard Bde -) told me of  
his men - Bde HQ, D.H. Co  
(Genl, had some on by car) &  
2nd Bn were sitting in 1  
train in Amiens station &  
with the kit on 1 platform  
When I ferms (at dusk - abt-



89  
 7.30 pm — began to shell  
 1 place. The French station  
 staff bolted, & there our  
 men had to sit. One shell  
 whizzed just over 1 engine  
 & exploded fair amongst 1  
 men w 1 kits. German  
 planes afterwards came over  
 & began to bomb them. The  
 English engine driver stayed  
 by his engine but he said  
 "I don't know 1 points, Sir,  
 I cannot start or we might  
 get into worse trouble." In  
 1 end Leslie <sup>others</sup> went &  
 hunted for 1 staff & found  
 them in a dugout. They  
 got them out & 2 hrs late  
 1 train started.

At Beaucaumont.

Ap. 21. No attack - the two saw  
save him 100 rounds each betw  
3 & daylight today.

Wilkins who went out opp. Derruan-  
court says we have a complete  
point of communication there now  
by the C.C.S (wh he photo'd); He  
took me a Copt of 28 Bu there sat up  
w head & shoulders over top  
while he got his photos of C.C.S.  
(Wilkins himself focussed his camera  
over top of 2).

April 20. No attack followed today.  
There was snow between sunny  
periods in morning.

We came South by St Omer  
& Rollencourt. All way down we  
passed <sup>at intervals</sup> refugees w their ~~big~~  
carts piled high w mattresses  
chairs bedsteads tables sometimes  
a crate of pigs - the <sup>younger</sup> women  
walking on foot, the older  
women riding on top of  
bundles. One man driving  
a cart shouted to us to ask  
us to give a lift to "Mauiselle"  
- there was a girl in black walking  
by herself dressed as if she were  
going to church. ~~Dark~~  
~~if she~~ I told Boddy to stop &  
the man said: "Mauiselle peut  
pas marcher." It turned out th/

89

girl was not going to ~~church~~ <sup>next farm or town</sup> as I thought but was a refugee. She had come from Neuve Eglise & was walking to Abbeville, about 100 miles or <sup>50</sup> more, & she had been a week on her way already, & was lame & could hardly walk any further. Even Abbeville was not the end - she was going to Rouen - they all had to report there. The old chap <sup>walking</sup> with a cart was her uncle, but she didn't seem in the least to be flustered at leaving him - We took her as far as Fuges where I asked a traffic control man to put her on a lorry for Abbeville if

one passed - they were sure <sup>62</sup>  
 She had no luggage & I don't  
 know if she had any money.  
 Whole families ~~loaded their~~  
~~cart~~ were <sup>trudging</sup> ~~walking~~ beside their  
 piled up carts - & for 1 first  
 time I realised that these women  
 were walking like that day  
 after day for 100 miles or more.

We picked up at a X roads  
 an English captain - an arty  
 Ofr who had been transferred about  
 1 country for staff work. He told me  
 that 1 Australian who came up  
 near ~~Villers Bre~~ Hamard wood were  
 1 first cheerful stubborn people he  
 had met in 1 retreat. On 1  
 first day his battery of 6 in guns

89  
 was near Templeux in front of  
 Roisel & he was in bed w his  
 clothes off in his pyjamas for 1  
 first time for many days. They had  
 been told so often <sup>in last few weeks</sup> that they were going to be  
 attacked next day that he did not  
 believe it. In 1 early morning, suddenly  
 came a drenching of gas shells -  
 & he had to get up & dress himself  
 w his gas mask on. The battery  
 managed to fire in spite of 1 gas  
 & he thinks that 1 German had  
 some extraordinarily accurate  
 & early intelligence of this because,  
 in case of this & some other batteries  
 wh did 1 same, they changed to  
 high explosive & cross appeared  
 to be shooting deliberately at the

64  
battery. The Germans  
appeared in Boisel about  
10.30 am. They appeared down  
a road where they were least  
expected & where there were  
no preparations to receive them.  
The field artillery there ~~was~~ turned  
their guns round & fired on them  
& then there occurred a scene  
which broke him up entirely.  
The field guns were all 500  
yds away from his observation  
post. He was watching 1 gun  
firing & noticed them slewed round  
when he heard shouts. His  
attention was particularly  
centred on this hoarse shouting  
& he then saw 1 German

- a mob of them - all making  
 towards / guns. They rushed  
 shouting towards them - he saw  
 the British gunners put their  
 hands up & saw / Germans  
 bayonet them & cd hear /  
 shrieks o / men in those last  
 few seconds as / Germans killed  
 them with  
~~above~~ their bayonets, ~~into~~  
 one after another. They  
 were then 500 yards away,  
 & this officer left his observation  
 post & ran.

Two of his guns were ~~still~~  
 farther back ~~for some reason~~ at ordnance, being  
 repaired, & these they saved.  
 He was w these guns in /  
 retreat up to Bray & then  
 Hangard; & then was chosen for

a staff job. The 66<sup>th</sup> Divn let  
 1 Germans thro at Roisel, he  
 says. Two hours after 1 bomb  
 started he noticed large numbers  
 of men coming down 1 road; but  
 he thought tt they were being  
 relieved - East Lancashires, he  
 thinks they were.

On my walk yesty I  
 went first w Gen. Lesslie ~~thro~~ to  
 Strazeele, wh had been entirely  
 smashed up by 1 bomb showered  
 on it by 1 Germans on April 17<sup>th</sup>.  
 There were two Bn HQs there -  
 the routine o 1 day is A 1  
 Dist Genl manags to get to his  
 Brigadiers each day; the Brigadiers  
 to one or two of their Bn. Commanders  
 & I suppose the Bn Commanders



to their companies - And 1  
 Coy Commandrs round their  
 front line. The two Battalion  
 Hqs at Shazele were in  
 cellars. One of these was <sup>next to the</sup> ~~at~~ village  
 jewellers because ~~there were~~ lots of  
 watches & trinkets stored in the  
~~neighbouring~~ <sup>next</sup> ~~to~~ cellar.

The inhabitants of this  
 part were as pleased as those of  
 Somme to see 1 Australian come  
 back; & the men, as a matter  
 of fact, met on 1 road up  
 numbers of 1 families & girls  
 who had been known to them up  
 there, & they were feeling pretty  
 keen on paying some of all this  
 misery back to 1 Germans.  
 One <sup>village</sup> watchmaker was trying to

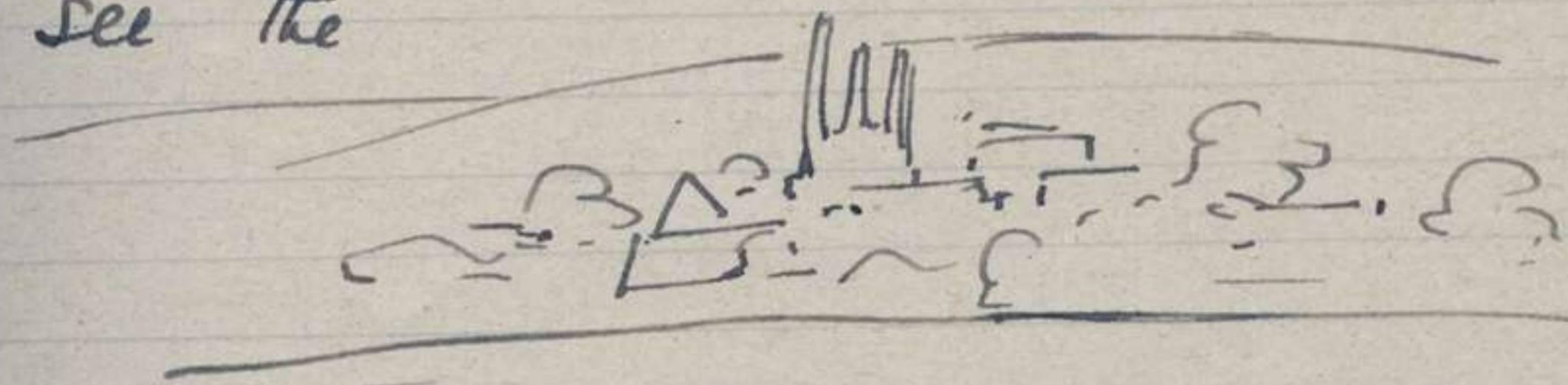
salvo his stock of watches when our men came in. He at once made up his mind & handed watches out to them as they passed.

The straggle was not at all a comfortable place - they were shelling 1 town as we approached. We hurried up a side street where 1 untidy ~~litter~~ <sup>grimy</sup> litter of recent shellfire was lying all over 1 road - fine earth scattered & small black craters in 1 road & 1 black earth & 1 ditch. Under 1 hedge in 1 ditch were two French soldiers, dead w wounds in 1 head; & across 1 road a

cows, killed by one or same  
 shells, by the broached  
 ruin of a white washed farm  
 cottage. The cellar where we  
 found Stephens of 2nd Bn was  
 small & untidy; but where  
 we found Sass of 4th Bn  
 (in a brewers store or estaminet  
 for it smelt of hops & malt)  
 was ~~not~~ large & a neat  
 lunch was laid out. It was  
 abt 12 noon & both battalion  
 commanders were in bed -  
 Sass just getting up. (Of course  
 they sleep in their clothes ~~up~~ there).  
 They work all night I suppose.

The road beyond  
 Strazelle was ~~marked~~ <sup>covered</sup> w  
 / dust of heavy shellfire. &

dead horses & overturned. 70  
 Ammunition wagons were beside  
 it. I suppose 1 German had  
 caught some transport on 1  
 skyline there. We ~~we~~ could  
 see the



poor three pronged remains of  
 the beautiful old Meteren  
 Church (the Virgin of Albert  
 was also knocked down on  
 April 17 or April 16 - by our  
 fire I believe). Wilkins I  
 later drove up the Bailleul  
 road, when he came up here,  
 with intention of photographing  
 Bailleul. After passing

71  
Fleete he went thro a line  
of Tommies in trenches on  
either side o / road - & later,  
just across Meteren brook, found  
another line, abt one man to  
every 20 yards, looking towards  
Meteren. He left / car here  
& walked up / road intending  
to get photos of Meteren, wh  
was burning. There were a  
number of men clodging  
about just under / near  
side o / town. He thought  
he had better ask what  
had happened. The men by /  
roadside told him th they  
were not sare whether the

89 figures they'd see were  
 Germans or English & they  
 didn't know whether to fire at them  
 were <sup>getting</sup> pretty anxious. Wilkins  
 told them they were almost  
 certainly English - wh was  
 probably right. Half an  
 hour later at Gen. Lesslie's  
 Hqs he heard a telegram  
 arrive saying the Metrum  
 had been taken by 1 German.

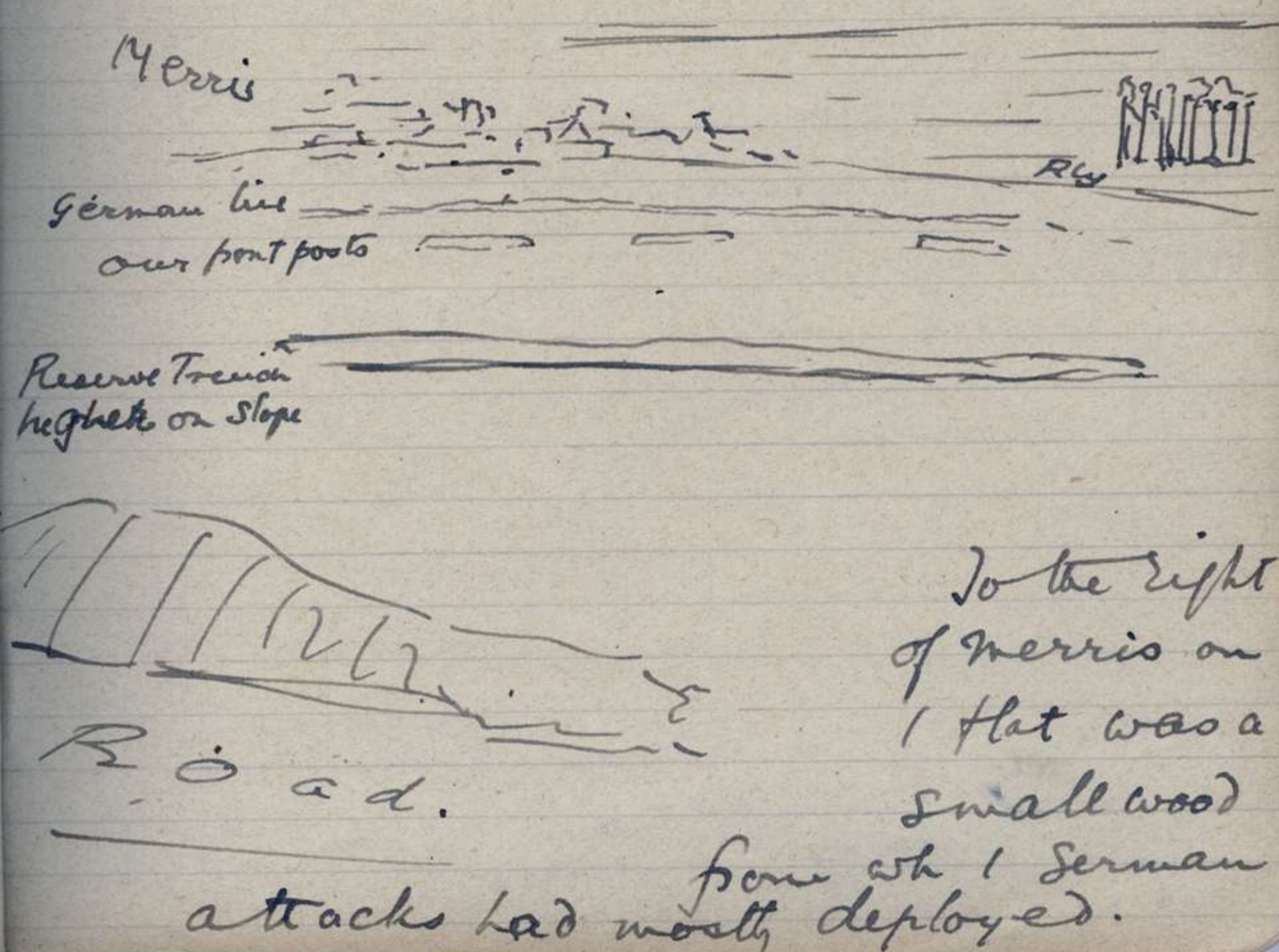
The French attacked Metrum  
 next day, or were to do so, our  
 left (where 1st Bn was put in) cooperating.  
 But ~~the~~ At 3 p.m. in (after 1 French  
 infantry (when one of our ofrs  
 visited them as liaison ofrs) did  
 not know there was to be an

✓ This was unsuccessful in /  
centre where a nest of  
m. gs was - but succeeded  
on either side.

attack; & I believe / order<sup>4</sup>  
eventually only arrived 15  
minutes before the zero hour  
(6 p.m. Ap. 16<sup>th</sup>). Our 1st Bn  
swung round & the 4<sup>th</sup> Bn  
went forward to <sup>straighten</sup> ~~felt~~ out a  
bit of line on / slope above  
Merrie so as to get / observat<sup>x</sup>.  
An hour & a half later /  
French infantry appeared  
advancing & dug in behind /  
Cameronians - ~~but~~ [The Germans  
knew that they had attacked, &  
so they either saw them advancing  
behind / English or else / French  
somewhere pushed thro beyond /  
English front - The German wireless  
says that / Engl. & French attacked but

failed J.

From a point E of Strazeele we looked down on our front posts on 1 lower slopes of 1 hill of German line facing them - both dug into the red brown loam of a green slope - probly wheatfields.



To the right of Merris on 1 flat was a small wood from wh 1 German attacks had mostly deployed.



I walked back to lunch across <sup>76</sup>  
 1 fields w Gen. Leslie & Hutchins,  
 his Bde major, past a number  
 of the useless planless little  
 "puzzies" dug by 1 poor chaps  
 who were scattered by 1 fighting  
 + retreating. I took a photo  
 of these to show 1 sort of  
 digging it was - mostly on  
 round 1 higher slopes & round  
 1 villages - <sup>in at least one case the holes</sup>  
~~often without~~  
 were in 1 bank of a stream without  
 any field of fire. ~~the do~~

Since then three lines have  
 been dug & more or less  
 wired with "apron" wire -



The trenches  
 are driven  
 than I ha<sup>ve</sup> <sup>with</sup>

Expected but are not deep. <sup>77</sup>

The farmer had scattered his shellfire all over the country on Ap. 17. <sup>Not having had time to reconnoitre</sup> He seems to have shot at pretty well everything marked on the map - farms, Cross Rds, villages, even some hedges. The corner behind ~~the farm~~ the Strazelle between the two roads to Hazebrouck & Caestre was like the Ypres battlefields, shellhole bordering shellhole.

From the farm house near Borse where I lunched w Leslie I walked to Lec Bois, where Barrett had the HQs of 3rd Bn in a farm. From there along a rd north

against the press, against the authorities,  
 against the British - "our men  
 are getting very tired of reading  
 in the press all about 'magnificent  
 rear guard actions' - 'enormous  
 German losses' & that sort of  
 thing". "What are the British  
 correspondents to write?" I  
 asked. "Would you have them say  
 that the men threw down their arms  
 & ran away" or that they killed very  
 few Germans. Anyway the men they  
 see are stragglers & no doubt grand  
 fights have been put up by those who  
 have stayed behind & been killed. He came  
 fully agreed with this - he admired - & I believe him -  
 way in which the guards fought. And Walker's grievances  
 were against Gough & the Army Staff.

of forest to the Canal, which 79  
 has been roughly bridged in  
 many places, to 2nd Bde HQs  
 in the Canal officials house.  
 He came with us there - just moving  
 the day into reserve further N.  
 He & Gen Walker were both full of  
 grievances - on this present visit -  
 & I was rather glad to get away  
 & stroll down the Canal to the  
 little cottage of Madame Venot.  
 Endot where Ross & I first brought  
 up in France on April 7 1916.  
 The cottage was unchanged, with  
 Forest control camp next door &  
 the Forest at the back. But inside  
 were only some men of the Welsh  
 Guards. There had been other  
 soldiers in the cottage before they

89  
got there. They knew nothing of <sup>80</sup>  
Madame. ~~They only~~ The only  
inhabitant I knew met me  
as I closed 1 door & left -  
he came up & wagged his tail,  
& it was 1 old stumpy dog it  
used to be so fierce in 1 old  
days.

There was at least  
one cottage shattered on 1 <sup>western</sup> ~~southern~~  
side of 1 street, opposite where  
the <sup>family of</sup> girls lived who were always  
out to catch officers, or an n.c.o.  
if there were no officer, or two  
batmen if there were no n.c.o.  
The park was unchanged (I believe  
there was a shell in the Chateau  
& Birdwood has since heard  
a report that our men had  
looted 1 Baronness' mansion

89  
wh is very likely true - though <sup>81</sup> quite  
as likely it was 1 Tommie's. There  
were heavy guns under 1 tree  
I walked thro 1 wood where  
1 nightingale used to sing,  
along 1 path w 1 stepping stones.  
There was one solitary little  
shell hole in the black soil.

[I suppose our poor old lady's  
elder boy will be in the army w 1  
last ~~best~~ French ~~the~~ levy. ] As <sup>light</sup>  
failed I <sup>returned</sup> ~~Back~~ across 1 field to  
Morbecque, keeping my kodak  
case well under my arm or  
I shd certainly have been  
arrested as there were so  
many British artillery positions

about. The big guns were getting into position even on the outskirts of Morbecque. ~~At~~ Crossing 1 field I saw two Australian artillerymen out with their rifles under their armpits strolling through 1 new wheat - evidently after hares. You will see these wherever you go in France, where our men are. It is ~~strange~~ ~~it~~ will seem strange in peace time ~~it~~ men can go about 1 country shooting rabbits w bullets wh travel at least a mile before they finally

ricochet into 1 crops.  
 The British troops are too  
 much afraid of their officers  
 to do this - but if there are  
 Australians abt our men  
 go out & get food for the mob.  
 An English artilleryman was  
 calling out to these two from  
 a distance to tell them where  
 the hares were... I have  
 seen 4 of our men strolling  
 across a dip in 1 hills on 1  
 Somme. Last year the authorities  
 wd have protested & stopped this.  
 Now th our men are doing so  
 much <sup>in the war</sup> ~~farther~~ they ~~don't~~  
 seem to let them have their own  
 way for 1 moment - & our own

Officers, I think, wink at it in order to keep 1 men in good spirits.

84  
 Talking of spirits, in spite of the snow showers w<sup>th</sup> the last few bright days have been interlarded, the ~~men~~<sup>Australians</sup> are well & fit, in 1 North especially. The Tommies, our men think, have become thoroughly depressed; & our officers are inclined to blame the present British ops rather than 1 men for this. "You'll find time hang heavily on your hands I fear," sd one of them to 1 Australian who relieved him at Armentières lately - "An <sup>occasional</sup> game of bridge <sup>at Hqs</sup> is the only pastime. Myself," he added



89 "I keep silkworms." The offr 85  
who relieved him relates this  
solemnly & another who was  
there supports it. This sort of  
chap gets his commission by  
the right of an Oxford accent.

Our men manage even in  
1 snow & rain to keep moderately  
dry, in 1 supports at any rate,  
by digging holes into 1 banks,  
lining them w/ straw, covering  
them w/ waterproof sheets (or  
turf over boughs if nothing  
else). One wd not believe  
it possible to be dry outside  
1 villages (& many live in 1  
villages, wh are dangerous).  
Indeed Bill Dyson tells me

86  
 The one officer & several  
 men have been sleeping  
 nightly in the old C.C.S.  
 huts which are practically  
 in No man's land.

Ap. 22. No attack today -  
 we again fired a lot of shells  
 1 hour or two before 1 dawn  
 in case 1 enemy were  
 assembling. Tonight we  
 are firing heavily again,  
 from 9pm to 10pm 1 fire  
 has been very ~~hot~~ continuous.  
 The weather has been fine for  
 3 days tho' cold - but it  
 looks rainy tonight. The  
 moon is nearly full.

Whenever a German  
 plane goes over at night

89  
- wh they occasionally do - there<sup>87</sup>  
is a wild chatter in 1 night  
& about a dozen machine  
guns round about send their  
beautiful white tracer bullets  
into 1 grey clouds after them -  
I have seldom seen anything  
prettier.

Yesty An aeroplane came  
low down in 1 slope o 1 Somme  
Valley near Corbie - a Lewis  
gun near some of our batteries  
opened on it. There had  
been confused fighting in 1 <sup>sky</sup> ~~air~~  
over Villers Bretonneux  
where two slow old Australian  
planes (RE 8. of No 3 Sqn)  
were photographing - one of  
them had to go a good way

(They think <sup>one of</sup> 1 triplane  
fell but are confident it  
was not (one in question).

past 1 line & two German  
planes had swooped on them  
& they had just managed  
to scuttle away\* - after wh  
a <sup>British</sup> naval sqn of our "Camels"  
was scrapping w/ 1 German  
triplane in 1 air. One of  
Camels was driven low by  
a triplane, his gun jammed  
when he tried to fire back &  
1 triplane came diving  
after him -  
- in 1 course of all this  
<sup>fighting</sup> a triplane came to earth  
crashing, when low down,  
near Vault sur Somme.  
They went over to it - a  
fair haired rather good looking  
pilot lay dead in it - &

amongst papers wh they  
took from his ~~clothing~~ pockets  
was one w / name

"Cavalry Captain Freiherr  
M. von Richthofen."

His Squadron was the  
1st Pursuit Squadron - wh  
von Richthofen used to command -  
His body & / plane were taken  
last night to the aerodrome  
at Bertangles - & it proved  
to be the great von Richthofen  
right enough; the man who  
has put down more  
planes than any other -  
I believe it is now  
Gen. Cannan is convinced it  
it was our Lewis Gunner who

shot him down; & the British wing Commander was convinced also until 1 doctor pointed out that 1 bullet passed through 1 body in a slightly downward direction. It was argued to this proved he had been shot from above, but of course it does not as 1 plane was diving. Both the Naval Squadron would tell Cutlack nothing except that they were sure they shot him & the Archie's also claim ~~him~~ to have done so, - which is impossible as he was shot by a bullet.

Cutlack & Wilkins have gone North. Dyson is here.

Our troops S. of the Somme,  
 Except 5<sup>th</sup> Divn, have now  
 been returned to their Divns, &  
 V. Bretonneux is held by 8<sup>th</sup> British  
 Divn. [An order was lately issued  
 by S.H.Q. to <sup>36 additional</sup> L. guns were to be  
 issued to all Divns. ~~to~~ which were  
 sufficiently trained to use them; &  
 1<sup>st</sup> issue, (by another S.H.Q.  
 order), was ordered to be to the  
 five Australian Divns, & 3 British  
 Divns (including the 8<sup>th</sup> Divn).

The 5<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> Bdes are back &  
 4<sup>th</sup> Bde is to leave on Ap. 24  
 all of them have had wonderful  
 testimonials from 1 <sup>divns</sup> Corps which  
 had them in their command.

The 9<sup>th</sup> Bde & 5<sup>th</sup> Divn suffered  
 very heavily from a gas shelling  
 laid down on them by 1 German

at V/Bretonneux - 3 daylight  
shoots in two days; 4 C.O.s &  
500 men are sd to have  
been gassed. Fortunately 1  
German gas was thrown <sup>down</sup> heaviest  
on an unoccupied trench - the  
Cachy Switch.

The Germans are shooting  
a good deal at unrecounitred  
positions & wasting a fair amt.

The German ~~method~~ seems to  
have brought up for 1 moment apt  
1 Austln down here, & apt 1  
Austln & <sup>French</sup> ~~German~~ N of Armentieres  
& the 55<sup>th</sup> & some other Divns  
S of Armentieres. His plan is  
apparently, when he gets a  
success, to go on pushing  
wherever there is an opening,  
keeping to 1 low ground  
& getting round 1 high ground.



The Germans <sup>was correct's</sup> are playing upon all possible differences betw (French & British — & betw) dominions & (mother country. Lodge showed me a number of cutting. One sd "The Australians & Canadians are much (best troops) British have!"

The French troops whom we saw in (North) looked splendid bronzed men, almost all of a good age — 25 to 35; their <sup>transport</sup> horses are ragged & skinned & look as tho' they were dying.

Lytton says th ( ~~some~~ French people are getting very querulous as to ("failure" of English (wh is just what Germans want). But Foch has been made Commander in Chief in name & fact.

His orders are simply to go on — ~~no detail~~, no confining barrage — but leaving initiative to (staff of whatever unit succeeds). Now th he has been brought up a new full dress battle will be necessary. It is thought likely to come from Albert to Arras & any day — ~~some~~ <sup>little square</sup> objects thought to be German Trench Mortar ammunition waggon have been in position since before Apr. 17 (they were noticed before the original attack near Cambrai — perhaps it was they wh were taken for 'tanks' by our airmen). Villers Bretonneux is most important & Rawlinson ~~is~~ sd to Monash th he had staked his reputation on our keeping it.

I have heard th Foch says th (northern) battle is dead & done w. But also th G.H.Q. expects an early resumption of the attack on <sup>St. Omer</sup> ~~St. Omer~~.