

DIARY OF
393 SAPPER C R HILL

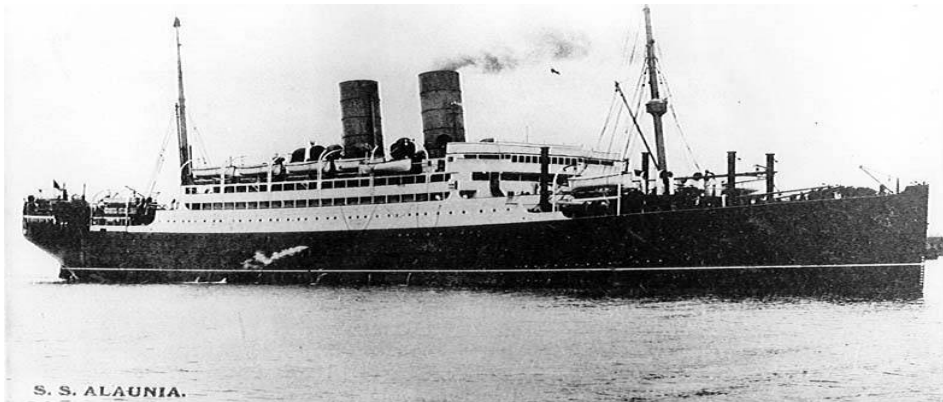
HQ SIGNALS
17TH BATTALION
5TH INFANTRY BRIGADE
1ST AIF

PART 1

This diary commences on **15th August 1915** whilst in Egypt just prior to leaving for the Gallipoli Peninsular.

Sunday 15th August 1915.

Left our camp at Heliopolis. There was great excitement during the day getting things all issued out to us. We formed up at 7:00pm and marched out at about 8:00pm. We entrained at Zaitoun (probably today's Helmet El-Zaitoun) and steamed off to Alexandria. We got some sleep on the way and arrived there about 2:00am. Got our things together and went aboard our Troopship B3. Was late SS "Alaunia" - Cunard Line out of Liverpool.



13,405 tons

Built by Scotts Shipbuilding & Engineering Company, Greenock

Launched on 9th June 1913

At the outbreak of WWI the ship was requisitioned as a troopship and made a number of trips to
Lemnos and other locations

Sunk on 19th October 1916 after hitting a mine off Hastings, East Sussex

All our bunks were allotted to us and we soon got in and got some sleep. Things were rather unsettled at the breakfast tables the next morning with such a lot aboard and others arriving all the time but I managed to get a good meal. All the 17th Battalion were in the forward part of the ship and the 18th Battalion were aft, things were getting much better towards night.

Monday 16th August.

We had left Alexandria about 6:00pm. It is a fine big harbour, seems to be a very busy port. A lot of shipping in as well as lots of Troopships and Hospital ships, some others left along with us but our boat was a good goer and soon left them behind. We had a good passage to Lemnos and went into the harbour. Took us about 40 hours to go across. We steamed right up through all the shipping, transports with stores, troopships and warships of all description and there was plenty of cheering. We had a couple of destroyers to come across with us as to be on the safe side as there were a couple of accidents earlier in the week. 2 Troopships were said to have been torpedoed and a crowd of English soldiers drowned on the way across. We anchored very high up the harbour and laid there for 24 hours.

Thursday afternoon, 19th August.

We transferred the 17th Battalion into a smaller troopship Z37. It was about 6:00pm when we left Lemnos harbour. We had all our stores and were packed in very tight. It took us about 5 hours to get round off the point where we were to land so we laid off till morning. There were crowds of shipping about. Lots of gunboats, destroyers and hospital ships. The hospital ships looked very pretty as they are all painted white with a green band round them and big red crosses in places. At night they burn a long row of green lights. We could hear the bullets flying all night and it got worse towards morning as it seems to be the general thing to stir things up about 5:00am and 7:00pm. Barges came out from the shore just as it was breaking day to take us in. But it was very much daylight when I went in as we were almost last. We were all expecting to hear the music amongst, but we didn't get a very warm greeting, only a few shells went near the last barge. They have a jetty built out at the landing and it's very nice and handy. We got ashore it seemed strange for a while at all the rifles cracking. One could imagine it was a rifle range and the big guns going off occasionally. We were all put in a gully called ANZAC Gully on account of it being taken by the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. The original landing is a little further down the beach about 300 yards. We all got little ledges or dug outs in the gully and very safe from the bullets. We had some rest then. We had brought up some water and had bully beef and biscuits to eat. We mates went out into some of the work from the beach and found some Mountain guns very nicely concealed on the spurs but they weren't working at the time. We went right ahead into the firing line; there were only a few snipers at work. They were doing all their shooting with periscopes on the rifles. We saw where the 10th LH had been in an attack and got cut up. (*This would have been the disastrous attack at The Nek on 7th August*). Some of their men and Turks were still lying out there and couldn't get them and bury them. We went through miles of trenches and then went off down another spur into another gully and round home. One sees some great sights and little dugouts everywhere. Got back to camp and found out that orders were out to move out that evening. So packed up our things and left our blankets and waterproofs and some clothes behind. We went along the beach about a mile and then turned up into a Gully. Went along up the Gully in the Turk trenches as they hadn't been driven out very long before. We put the night in there and it wasn't too comfortable. The next morning we all boiled our little dixies and made soup and tea and had biscuits. Had fatigues going bringing up water from wells nearby the beach and the Turks started shelling some of the near abouts. Some of the Boys got hit and others had some close shaves. So we left that Gully as it was considered unsafe so we moved back and then moved around over some ridges which were under fire so we had to run over them all and it was hard work with the pack up. We passed a couple of field batteries on the way. Then we got into the main sap and went up towards the HQ of the 4th Battalion and settled ourselves in a Gully. We soon got a posie dug out on the hillside. There was a terrible bombardment during the afternoon; there must have been a lot of warships in it and all the batteries. We could hear the great shells going through, they were rolling in the broadsides and I believe they moved some of the Turks out. The 4th Brigade was away a head of us and we were to reinforce them if needed but we weren't called for. We heard since they made an attack and took a couple of trenches. The 18th (Brigade?) were in with them and they lost a good many we are told. We had a goodnight's sleep but rather cold. We got a good supply of rations on Sunday but couldn't cook much as no water to be had. We put the day in our little "dug out" and were expecting to move out at any time. During the afternoon one of our aeroplanes was circling all over above us and the Turks put up a few shells after him, we could see them bursting about him. We heard that our Boys captured back a French .75mm Gun which the Turks had captured previously on the ridges about here and put here in the Gully last evening. They uncovered a lot of .75 shells which had been buried for safety. We all thought it as a genuine grave as there are lots about with little head crosses which as a rule bear the name, but some only have written on "in memory of an unknown Comrade". This grave had the cross and all so one did get a surprise to see them lifting out boxes of shells, about 300 rounds, and some Turkish clothes and our equipment. We didn't hear much big gunfire work last evening, only rifle work and machine guns. A company and a ½ went out about 8:30pm of our 17th and we were told to be ready any minute, but we put the night in our little dug out.

Monday 23rd August.

We don't expect to be here much longer. May move off at any time we got a ration of bread this

morning and it went high. We put in a very quiet day of it. It was made known about midday that we were to move off to take up a position next morning. Water was very scarce today, so to make sure to have some when we moved off next morning, all hands marched down the main Sapp to the main wells down near the beach. There was plenty of water about. We had a swill in some dirty water but it went well and filled our bottles and carried back some big tins. Slept well as I don't think there was much doing.

Tuesday 24th August

We had to be up and doing and got breakfast and then packed up. Moved off at 9:00am went round into a big Sapp and then into a very narrow one and got up on a very good position which is one of the connecting positions. All the Headquarters Signallers have been detailed off to the various companies. I am detailed with 3 others on a position at the foot of the gully with some of C Company. Put in a very quiet night, put in 2 hours during the night on duty but nothing doing at all. Some of them here went out during the evening and got some Turks rifles and gear. Others had to bury some of their dead as they had been there some time. It wasn't too pleasant a job. This is No2 Post and we have a Post on either side of us up in the hills. Had a very quiet day of it, just did a few messages. My mate and I off with a water fatigue at night and got some water. Nothing doing at all during the night so had no work to do.

Thursday 26th August

There are rumours that we are to shift any time but don't know in what direction. But there is something brewing. We lost a few of our men yesterday on the posts on either side of us. Sent a few PC (Post Cards) away today to some friends and one for home. Had two letters to go to Mother and Ve but I know they wouldn't pass the Censor so have kept them as we have only been told on what subjects we are to write on, mustn't mention the Peninsular at all.

Saturday 28th August

Friday morning was very quiet but a bombardment started in the afternoon about 4:00pm and they did shake things up, I think the Turks got a lively time. Everyone had to stand to on our Post and everyone opened up a lively rifle fire but nothing happened on our post. They made an advance out on our left flank and got possession of 3 lines of trenches. A Company of the 17th were in the charge, an officer was killed. A few stray ones caught some of our Battalion at different posts. They kept up a good supply of bullets flying all night. I think they were expecting a counter attack. One boy on No 1 Post was shot in bed and another NZ engineer was shot while putting up barbed wire entanglements. We have received no word about moving out of this post but may have to go any time. We had shrapnel burst in our gully this morning and it landed near one man and knocked him about on the back.

Sunday 29th August

Had a quiet day. Was on a QM fatigue early this morning. One man was killed going up to No 1 post he was on the same fatigue carrying up the stuff. Have been over to No 4 post this morning as a Church service was held there just down the dip. D Company are all round there in the trenches. The Chaplain gave a very short address. My mate and I went down to the beach in the afternoon and were just getting our clothes off when they put a few shells amongst us. There was a scatter back against some little sand hills. Stayed there a little time then ventured out and had a swim, it was lovely to be in the water. Then we went back to the well, filled our bottles with water then set off for home arriving just in time for tea. Things very quiet at night on our post.

Wednesday 1st September

Have had it very quiet during the last two days. **Tuesday afternoon** were down at the beach and had a swim. The Turks put a few shells in the water and there was a scatter. We came back and got water at the well then home for tea. We are expecting to move away from this Post this evening but where to

we don't know. We left our No 2 post Wednesday evening, were relieved by Tommies. We moved out with 2 Companies of the 17th and it was a long march as we were bound for a position round on our right. I had to fall out on the way down with a Boy that was sick. We found a dug out near the beach where we put the night in. The ships did some bombarding during the night. We got going early next morning, round through ANZAC and across to the gullies at the back and found our boys then had some breakfast. Rested until about 4:00pm then were detailed off to our various posts. The firing line here is just on top of the ridges and seem to have just a footing in places. In one place the Turks have a part of the top; their trenches and ours butt one another so they indulge in a lot of bomb throwing. The trenches are very close to one and another up on the top. Most of the posts up here are named after some of the grand heroes that have fallen. 3 of us are on Popes reserve. My mate another chap and I have a phone here to attend to. But it's a fairly easy station, not much doing. We are right in the gully in a good dugout. We have 3 orderlies, at present we are attached to B Company. Popes Post is on top of the hill. Our orderlies are from the 18th Battalion as they have just been withdrawn from the left flank. They had been in some heavy fighting and did great work and their losses were very heavy during the raid to be only 300 left of the Battalion.

Thursday 2nd September

Find it a bit monotonous at the phone but one will get used to it. Went down to the beach this afternoon and had a swim. We all seem to get on well together. We have had a quiet time of it on this reserve post but it is very interesting at times. My mate and I went down to a well and did a lot of washing. It was nice to get clean hands.

Saturday 4th September

We are hearing a lot of tales if we could only get some news it would be something to go on with.

Sunday 5th September

The 6th Brigade has arrived here now and is camped down at the foot of the gully. One of their transports had a very narrow escape we are told as a torpedo nearly caught them. I think it was fairly close to Lemnos and it closed the watertight compartments and ran ashore. So far I hear there are a few men missing as it said they jumped off when the ship grounded. Things still continue to be quiet. At times in the evenings and at night there are a few shrapnel dropping about and some rapid firing in the trenches and the machineguns also do some firing. Judging by the noise at times there are plenty of bombs flying about.

Tuesday 7th September

Things have been very quiet the last two days though our boys were expecting to see something of the Turks in a charge but it has not come off so far as they took all hands of the gully up on top for supports. So we had the gully to ourselves. I have been a bit off colour last two days with dysentery. They supply us with boiled rice at each meal and not supposed to eat anything else. We got a mail in today, I didn't hear from home. Got one from Frankston Junction and 2 from Hornsby but there should be some more about I think. Both Annie and Mrs Beverley wanted to know if I needed socks or woollen caps but no need for at present. I got a PC (Post Card) from Mother yesterday she said there was no news to fill a letter but they are all well at home. It was dated 14th July.

Thursday 9th September

Things are very quiet at present. We have the 18th Battalion camped in the gully at present, they are for supports I believe. Some more troops have landed in the last two days and are going round on the left flank. They are supposed to be doing very good work round there so we are told. It's rumoured that an attack on one of these days round there. I have been off colour last few days with dysentery and it is the general complaint. Things have been very quiet along this front last few days so nothing doing. We hear rumours they are fairly busy on the left flank. We have another hand sent to us on this

station so we have better shifts. I haven't been too good again but manage to do my bit. One of the others has been off with sickness, but it is the general thing all around. I am feeling pretty good today. It is getting colder now and has threatened rain the last couple of days; we have an issue of fresh meat to day.

Tuesday 14th September

There is talk of the 19th Battalion coming up here and taking charge so a few of us may go down to headquarters. Went down and did some washing in the afternoon and had a good wash down and it went very well. Had a good shower of rain and it cooled things down and settled the dust. However it made things very muddy first thing this morning but suppose it's only an introduction to what we will get. It is cleared up now and is nice and sunny. We had an issue of bread today and it went very good.

Wednesday 15th September

We moved out of our good home, the station Popes Reserve, at 5 PM and have been sent up to another station Quinn's Post. It is very high up and a great client to it. We are right against the trenches and we have a good view of part of the harbour and the hospital boats are a pretty sight at night all the lit up. This Post is a little more up-to-date and plenty of officers about being one of the important posts; a fair amount of work going through. We have not got at all settled down but just putting in any where for the night until the other boys move out tomorrow. We finally got settled down fairly well in the terrace shelters.

Thursday 14th September

We had a shower of rain in the afternoon. Went round the trenches and had to learn where to find the officers on duty as we have to run messages up there. We have to be alone in this post, plenty of messages coming and going all the time. This post is going to be the 17th Battalion HQ and some of the headquarters are up here now. We are expecting some of our boys up from the other stations today or expect them as the Brigade headquarters are going in where the 17th Battalion was. Got a big mail in yesterday and I got several letters and two papers from home. It is a treat to get some news so got a busy time now to answer them all today.

Friday 17th September

Just a month today, since we arrived on the Peninsular. The time does fly. One is often getting mixed up with what day it is.

Sunday 19th September

We are getting settled down in the new post but there is generally plenty to do. The weather still remains good. Went down and had a look around the beach and it is a very busy port indeed. We had a swim and it went well. The OC and Sgt of our section are shifting their camp up to these posts. The Turks made a surprise attack yesterday afternoon and there was a great noise all round the lines of trenches. They didn't do anything rash near our posts. But there are reports they came out on the left flank.

Monday 20th September

It was very chilly last night we are to get an extra blanket issued for the occasion. We got in a big mail yesterday; it was all papers and parcels. I got two Auckland Weeklies from home and some papers and Sydney Mails from Hornsby. Mostly it is all about Australia Day and it was a great event and some enormous sums of money were collected according to all accounts. Things are going along up here very quiet at this post.

Wednesday 22nd September

Had a good spell off yesterday but there was plenty of water to carry as there is a good crowd of us up here now. My Cobber went down after to one of the wells and did some washing and then had a rinse down and it went very fine. We got mail in during the day and I got several letters and all were well at home. Things very quiet at our post but one never know when things may make work.

Thursday 23rd September

Things still continue to be very quiet up here on our post and there is not a great lot for us to do so I have been doing some letter writing lately. The nights are beginning to get very cold now, will soon be looking for extra clothes. We got an issue of fresh bread and meat yesterday it was very nice. One of our Officers met with an accident while he was in his dugout, a lot of sandbags came down on him and broke his leg. Our little officer had a narrow escape as his dugout is next door and they broke a lot of this stuff. He had just gone outside or he would have copped it.

Saturday 25th September

Things are still going along smoothly and not much doing or we don't hear of much. There was a demonstration last night at 8 o'clock and it was to have been in the shape of a dummy attack but don't know how it took on. All the line right round seemed to open fire and all the mountain batteries were going all along the ridge just behind us and we could see them flashing. There were flares and rockets going and it was very willing for a while. Then the Turks let it go for a while and the machine guns did rattle. No one was hurt during the raid but a few accidents happened later on in the evening. We fired a mine yesterday morning and it shook things but don't know if any damage was done on the other side. Then the Turks fired a mine last night and it shook things but didn't do any damage on our side. Our supply of fresh meat and bread is still coming on so we are doing very well. Things still going along very slowly on our post though I think something is moving on either flank. There was a big bombardment going last night from our Navy. I got an odd Auckland Weekly on Sunday as there was a little mail in. But it had been a long time on the way here. Very little work doing on the phone to last few days so things are a little bit monotonous when not much to do. It hasn't been so cold and the flies soon get about. We are back on the biscuits again now and not too nice after bread for a few days. I had an egg today which is somewhat of a luxury.

Tuesday 28th September

Have my long shift off so went down to the wells and did my washing and had a good wash down and it was very nice. The weather is very mild again and the flies soon get about. The Turks made a little demonstration last night but it didn't last long. Everyone had to stand to. We have been receiving some good news from France; they seem to be on the move a bit. The Turks put a lot of shrapnel over yesterday morning onto the ridge behind us after some of our batteries and a few in some of the gullies. One shot in a dugout killed 4 men. It did knock them in pieces.

Wednesday 29th September

Things are generally a quiet.

Friday 1st October

We had a very heavy fog this morning and things were very damp. Things are very quiet about in these parts but sounds to if something is doing on both flanks, they always seem to be putting it in a fairly solid. We got an issue of fresh bread yesterday and are to receive meat today. Lots of our boys are on the sick list and we have some of the other others up here now as they have been relieved off the other stations. We're expecting to have a pay day very shortly now.

Sunday 3rd October

The Turks blew up a mine yesterday afternoon and it shook things a bit. Sent great heaps of dirt over us but didn't do any damage to our trenches. So it's business as usual. Two of our boys were down in the hospital and they had to be sent away on the boat. Things are very quiet we are to draw fresh bread and meat this morning. There is also a big mail up here but it hasn't been sorted yet. We are having the weather very mild at present.

Tuesday 5th October

Things are still going along in the same quiet style. But there has been some bombardments on either side of us. A lot of shells passed over us yesterday. We got our mail in on Sunday morning. I got a letter from mother; all are well at home and were receiving some of the Egyptian cards. Also got a letter from Ted Saunders of Manly. Got an Auckland Weekly from home and a couple of the Sydney papers, one from Rosa. I believe you there is another small mail in now. My mate Wal got a parcel from home with a variety of good things, a nice cake which it has shared amongst us and it was a treat. My mate and I had two days off the phone as we had to fix up a dugout for a signal lamp. The weather is still very mild.

Wednesday 7th October

We received a mail and I got about nine letters. Ken Ross sent me a large handkerchief with and a pair of bootlaces and a letter. Had another letter from home and also an Auckland Weekly. Got a postcard from Jess, one of herself, and not too bad. Also got a card from Vic and he sent along Jimmy's address. Thursday morning we received our part of the Australian gifts that arrived. We drew lots, for little lots, as there was not enough for each. Some of the things were very nice. I got a pair of putties and some figs and they went well. Others got a few biscuits and one lad got a nice packet of chocolate. Another got a tin sardines and some rolled oats. There were a good variety of things but I think as they had passed through to me hands all had taken some. Some of our boys still go on the sick list ago off the peninsula. There seems to have been a big run of sickness the last two days.

Friday 8th October

There was a demonstration on our right last night and one of the destroyers was putting it in as well. It was reported down this far that the enemy were using poisonous gases last night but had only turned out to be a tale. Otherwise things are quiet. Friday night a heavy storm came over and this made things very rough and the wind is blowing very cold. The Turks made things a little lively just as a heavy storm was on. But it soon died down and things are normal again. Things will be very unpleasant out in some of the dugouts and in the trenches tonight as the rain kept coming on severely. Two of our boys went down to hospital this morning my mate W Brooks was one of them and are round at Rest Gully in a Field Hospital. Our Corporal went away tonight with a rash and fever but it may not be very serious. Brookie thinks he will be right in a couple of days. I was down at the beach this afternoon and had a few hours off and went down from a swim it was very enjoyable. I was just moving off when a shell landed in the midst of us. The concussion knocked us over, two boys were badly wounded and a few got slight wounds, a pellet grazed my knee and it just broke the flesh and it bled a little. I went into one of the AMC dressing sheds and got it bound up. It seems all right but being a bit stiff. It seems we'll all very lucky. Coming home I called in at the hospital and saw Brookie and will take a few things down tomorrow to him. We are getting a good supply of fresh bread and meat over the last few days. Saturday afternoon I went down to the Rest Gully Hospital and saw Wally, he was just as good as ever. They had got a rough the night before and the wet got through in places. They had a very rough night round at the beach so they said, washed away some of the jetties I believe and smashed things up generally round in Anzac Cove and thereabouts. But things seem to be very quiet again. We hear a little of the bombardment at times, some of the Navy knocking things about over towards the narrows.

Tuesday 12th October

Have not been out very far, been on short shifts. Intend going for a look around today as it's a day off for me. Wally came back from hospital Sunday afternoon and was not too good but seems to be picking up again now. Some of the other boys have gone sick. We got a good shower of rain yesterday afternoon but it cleared up afterwards and was very chilly. We got our first pay on the peninsula yesterday and it was a sight to get hold of some money. We all drew 30/- & paid in special war 10/- notes. So the boys are starting to wander round & sort the small joints where to buy some luxuries. We have been doing very well lately with rations of fresh bread & meat. I believe there is mail on the beach. Things are just the same quiet way at or post but that's all we know.

Thursday morning 14th October

Winter seems to have set in now as it's very cold in the mornings. Some of the Boys & myself have been down to the beach looking out where to buy some goods only got some cakes so far but they were a very nice change. We got some fine loadings up of box wood & will be quite contented now for a while. We got some 3rd reinforcements the other day & they all look so fine & healthy. Lots of our boys continue going away on the sick list. We got our mail in yesterday a letter & paper from home they are all doing well. Ron was in Nelson, letter from Vee & very interesting. A long one from Annie Mc. Also two Sydney Mails from Floss. I was a bit off colour in the mornings got some bad pains in the stomach. There seems to very little doing anywhere in these times. It seems we are waiting on some attack by the gunboats up the narrows. We still getting a good supply of fresh meat & bread.

Saturday 16th October

Went down to have a look about the beach but struck nothing, came back with some firewood. Things are going along in the same quiet old way. Some of the boys still leaving us and going off on the sick list. There are not many of the headquarters section left now. We are using the Company Sigs as well. The Sergeant went off a couple of days ago but he is expected back any time as our Officer is getting run down and needs to change. We did some lovely roasts of mutton yesterday and they went fine. There was a demonstration very early this morning. I think it drew some heavy rifle fire from places. The Navy were putting over some very high explosive shells in places. But we haven't heard the effect it all had. "Johnny" was putting over some high explosive bombs this afternoon they have a great pole attached to act as tail as they are percussion bombs but do a lot of damage. Our OC of our section went down to the hospital this morning, he seemed about knocked up. Don White is in charge now but I think we will get along fine together. Things are quiet again tonight. We are now working a bit short handed and so have to put in a little extra time.

Tuesday 19th October

Things are still going along in the same old quiet way. Don White is still in charge of our signals section. We had it rather showery the last two days. Still getting a supply of fresh rations, have been doing some roasting and they go well for a change. We got a mail in yesterday and I got four letters and to Sydney Mails from Floss. They were all well at home and were getting good weather, also 1 from Vee and gave me the Nelson news. Our canteen opened yesterday morning and it was sold out in a few minutes didn't have very much of the stock in. We got some tinned fish and biscuits and went real well. Things seem to be rather amusing up in the trenches here in the mornings as Johnny Turk gets over his parapet wants a chat and our boys do the same. I believe it is rather interesting and also exchanged some small articles such as tobacco et cetera. But I believe they crawl back when their officers put in an appearance. They put over few strange bombs a few days ago and it did a lot of damage. They have a great tail attached of wood like broom handles but three times as thick. Caught over a dozen of the boys of the 19th over on Popes. But I believe they have since put the gun out of action.

Thursday 21st October

Have had a quiet. Got a day off yesterday when I was at the beach and I bought a few cakes and they went well. Our sergeant came back from the hospital yesterday but is not too well yet. We got an issue of trousers and a pair of socks today they are good, it looks like very showery weather. Still getting a fair amount of fresh bread and meat. Have had a very cold snap for a couple of days and it is been very wet and muddy. Things have been going along in the same quiet style. We went to the beach on Sunday with some of the boys got a cake from the canteen down there and got some chocolate from the Salvos and it was very nice. I also found out from one of the boys on the New Zealand howitzer battery that Alan had been away sick some time; I believe he went to England.

Tuesday 26th October

It was a lovely day yesterday but it is trying to rain again this morning. We have been doing very well with fresh meat and bread we also get a little firewood and coal issued occasionally. Things have been going along in the same old quiet way everything seems to be at a standstill. A cruiser or two do some bombarding at times from the front here to our right and some of our mountain batteries do a few rounds. The weather has been very changeable as we have had it cold and windy and this made things very inconvenient down on the beach, knocked things about a little I believe. Now the last two days have been hot and very mild nights. Got a small mail up here the other day I only got an old letter from Vee it had been such a long time on the way. The rough weather seems to stop us from getting our fresh meat and bread as we have to content ourselves with the old biscuits. Still seems to be a fair amount of our lads going away sick. Things are very slow in regards to our canteen, they don't seem to be able to get the goods. The days do seem to fly though they are monotonous.

Saturday 30th October

Things have been going along the same old quiet way. There has been some heavy seas running and our supplies seem to get short. Afraid we have to get back on the bully and biscuits. But have since had another issue of bread, I was down at the beach on Tuesday and only scored some figs and they go very nice cooked. There have been 2 lots of a small mail in the last two days but all I have received are papers. Got a big bundle from Tauranga but there is another mail in today so perhaps better luck. We have been having some grand weather so nice and mild but the flies seem to get about again.

Thursday 4th November

Have had a shower of rain today and also got a big mail in. I got two letters from home and there are some parcels on the way. They tell me Alan is wounded and in Heliopolis but I have my doubts. We also got a few things from one of the boys parcels and they went very nice, especially the biscuits.

Friday 5th November

Things were a bit lively last evening. The enemy blew up a mine at 5:45 and caught a few of our trenches on the left of our post, buried two men but they were soon got out but they died shortly after. The shock also blew some of the parapet and shook the screens about. The Turks seem to have a great demonstration about 8 PM and it was a willing go. Things were coming all around especially round from Lone Pine direction. But I think our boys gave them as good as we got and things quietened down to normal in due course. But will hear results today. Did not hear anything concerning the Turks demonstration the night before. We managed to get an issue of bread and meat but they don't expect them to be kept up regularly. Having very mild weather at present. Some of our boys continue to go away on the sick list, the time does seem to fly.

Saturday 6th November

All very quiet.

Sunday 7th November

The mail came in this morning. I got a letter and the Sydney Mail but it was chiefly a parcel and paper mail. They had the canteen open this morning but the stores did not go very far, I got a little writing paper. Things have been quiet here. But they did a little over on Popes Sunday night. Opened up a new trench, supposed to be 8 yards advance all done by the miners underneath and then they just had to break the crust at night and build up the trench et cetera. They did expect to give Johnno a surprise but don't know that they did. We fixed up a little part of the shoulder on the terrace filled it in and made it a little cosy today.

Sunday 14th November

Things have been going along in the same old style. A mate of mine was shot at the end of the terrace on the morning of the 11th. He was shot dead through the head he was in the snipers, his name was Fred Ewing. Have got a rough card away to most of my friends for the Christmas. A large mail arrived last night. I got five letters and things were well at home. They have been bringing a few loaves of bread lately so make it spin out. It seems as though we get fresh meat and bread every other day. We are very lucky as regards parcels as some of the boys away we got theirs amongst us and got some very good articles at times such as tins of baking powder et cetera. So we are now well off for doing a little cooking. We get fresh meat and bread every other day as a rule. But one of our mates gets us bread from the beach every morning and just keeps us going. We got a rough night on Monday night. It was nice yesterday. I got a small registered parcel from Annie Mac from Frankton Junction, New Zealand yesterday. It contained two pair of socks and woollen mittens and are very nice. Things are going along in the same quiet style.

Thursday 18th November

Got it rather rough yesterday and at night the storm came on and did rattle things about. We were in bed in the terraces when the rain started and it only lasted a few minutes but got a great surprise to find when we had to stand to that everything was flooded out. We were not so bad as some of the boys, some of our blankets got damp but slept curled up afterwards. Others couldn't sleep there at all because the water was too deep and everything got wet through. But it turned out a nice fine morning, cold but good day to dry the things and fix up the possie a bit. But believe it was a terrible night on the beach and cleared things away for us, the jetties included, no wonder as we got word through tonight that a mail barge got swamped and a great crowd of it went down. So we expect it would be our Christmas mail as it was outbound at the time. I had a few cards by that mail so will have to do them over again. We are back on the bully and biscuits now and expect, as the weather allows them, we shall get something fresh in again shortly. They put a mine off tonight up at number 6 post but it was pretty deep so we only got the shake but don't know of the result. Have heard the last few days some of our boys are in Egypt and others are in Malta.

Sunday morning 21st November

Have been having a cold snap the last two days but it's only what we must expect. Things have been going along quietly on the post. Some lads are being shifted about had a few words with our Sgt. Meat and bread have been very scarce lately and biscuits have been getting a good run but got fresh rations last night, Saturday. Water has been very scarce the last few days only half rations and have to go short a good many meals. The mail is down at Brigade for us and coming up this morning as the men couldn't bring it up last night. We got an issue of comforts on Friday, some tobacco, cigarettes, a few biscuits, a pipe and a tin of milk here and there.

Monday night 22nd November

The cold still continues and everyone is complaining as we haven't seen the sun for three days and the wind is very cutting, bed being the warmest place I know of. But we have not had any rain either but tried to drizzle a little. I got a letter and paper from Hornsby also a long letter from Maggie, very

interesting all about the little home, also one from Jess and a Nelson paper. We got a good issue of meat and bread, also some cabbage and it was nice raw for a change had it as lettuce. But we haven't been doing much in the cooking line, water too scarce, only able to get ½ half and sometimes ¼ rations. Am having a change of job as we taking turnabout on the signal lamp, will be on it a week and then on the phone again but it's a night job only. Off during the day but the little dugouts is rather cold in these times.

Wednesday night 24th November

The weather has improved a little but still very cold and dull.

We have had a great scarcity of water not even ½ rations at times so we have to be very careful. The boys in the trenches have been going thirsty. We got a pay yesterday, 23rd November, and drew 30/- , will keep one going for a while. This afternoon, my mate and I went round to the right of our flank to Lone Pine, as he wanted to see a friend. Found him in 1st Battalion. It was very interesting round in all the sapps. I heard some wild tales as usual but some of the boys had been right through it from the start. Some had to England wounded. The 1st Brigade had been to Lemnos having a spell and hasn't been back very long but didn't go too much on it. I was very glad to get home again as wasn't feeling too good so was feeling a bit tired. Then a couple of us fixed up the little damp dugout and put a roof on it and made it very cosy. Then today I was to go back on the phone but had the day off and was to go on this evening. Turned into bed and then soon after seven o'clock was called out to go on the phone up in the firing line at No1 post. We are working in short shifts so in for a long time and not much sleep. We are trying a ruse on this post to make Johnno believe we have evacuated and everyone is to be very quiet and not to move about no more than possible. I am in officer's dugout on the phone and it's very cosy indeed. We are not replying to any fire or bomb throwing so things are quiet. They put a mine off last night and shook things a little but did no damage to us at all and no one hurt. Thursday night the ruse still continues all along our line here. This morning a few of the enemy came out of their trenches and were fired on. One came right into our trenches and putting up a good fight for it but he was shot dead and got the bayonet as well and they had to bury him after. It's been very cold all day and put the time in bed and had a good sleep. A few more of the enemy came over again this evening but put a few shots after them and they went back. Water is still very scarce.

Saturday night 27th November

The weather still continues to be very cold and got a fair amount of rain last night and things are very muddy now. It keeps on occasionally with a little drizzle and very cold. The silence scheme is still on but finishes up tonight. I think everyone will be pleased, want to do something. We have been very busy at times on the phone but am off that now and back on the lamp joint and a very cold job and all on one's own. Water is still very scarce so could do very little cooking in these times. We have to be very quiet up here and not move about much. The water and rations is bought up by other fatigues at night. Hear of no mail coming along this week. It has been very rough on the beach so don't expect there will be anything coming forward.

Sunday night 28th November

It has been a remarkable day started to snow very early this morning got quite a shock to see things so white this morning when I went in out of the box. And it is kept up all day and a strong wind blowing, it drifts in. I haven't been doing much snowballing but things do look so pretty. Most of us have been in bed all day, just boil the billy and had some biscuits. No bread in these times, things have been very quiet in the trenches. Our boys are just putting a few shots across occasionally. There was no demonstration at the end of the quiet silence that has been on for the last few days. I expect Johnno won't be too anxious in these times. This is the weather to make one put the clothes on. I expect plenty of unfortunates are getting a bad time through all this. We are very comfortable considering, fortunately, it's freezing hard snow so we are in for it as it seems to be settled.

Tuesday night 1st December

Have had a nice fine day. One has to get about to get some exercise to keep warm, the sun has been very welcome indeed. I have been out and collected some snow, melted it down then had a good wash down and it went grand. No telling when one will get another as we can't get enough water to drink, on ¼ rations today. Things are quiet enough on our post, but had some bad luck at Lone Pine yesterday a large number were buried while mining. A shell burst on them and set it all falling in. Close on 200 casualties I believe. We are drawing an issue of rum every night now. We have plenty of cabbages to be cooked now but no water to do it.

Wednesday night 2nd December

Water is still very scarce, can't get enough to have a drink. We have someone to do our cooking now so leaves us with a lot of spare time but put it in bed mostly. Got a few potatoes today and they went real well. We also got a mandarin it was a pleasure, but reminded one of all the grand fruit we used to have. We hear no news at all lately, things seem to be at a standstill, the cold weather seems to have set in but the days are fine and sunny.

Thursday night 3rd December

Had a nice fine day it was grand to get about. Water just as scarce as ever, but went down and got two bottles full and had a good drink. I believe the beach is very clear now on account of it being shelled so continually and successfully. "Beachy Bill" is accounting for a great number lately. No fresh rations landed a small mail but not any for the 5th Brigade. It is rumoured today that the Tommies made a charge last night and were very successful round on the left flank and got to the enemy's water supply. Finished up on the lamp job on Saturday morning and then went back on the phone again. But as we have been cut down by a few men and working long shifts but one has got to get used to it. They wanted the company men back to the trenches as they are getting very short of men. But we still keep our own cook going the water has been short but it was a full issue yesterday Monday and today so we managed to get washed today. The weather keeps dull but no rain and very my and notice it after the cold snap. We have only been getting ½ fresh rations of bread and meat but it is a treat to get that much.

Tuesday 7th December

We received the mail these two mornings, letters yesterday and I got 3. Today it was newspapers and parcels. I got 2 Auckland Weeklies from home and some other papers from Tauranga and I got a small parcel from Jess and it was very nice. Some handkerchiefs, a tin of tobacco and the little chocolate. Some of boys away had a couple of parcels and we had been shared out amongst us.

Wednesday 8th December

A few of our reinforcements arrived this morning they had been sometime in Egypt also nearly a month coming over as they had been at Lemnos for some time. A few sick units returned with them. One of our Sig boys also had been having a good time in Egypt. We got three reinforcement Sigs so are getting back a number again, most of the Company boys have gone back to their Companies now. We have three men now on each shift working four on and eight hours off and we are you doing the Post Orderlies work as well. Our weather is still very mild.

Saturday morning 11th December

We are still getting splendid weather. We had the misfortune to have to have to leave our terrace yesterday as it commenced to slide down as they intended rebuilding them all. We are in another terrace, would be glad to get out of it again. They are issuing more clothes; one could just get what he wants boots etc, only need to put in for them. We hear all sorts of tales about being relieved and having a spell, but when, one does not know. This is our 16th week now; we are expecting some comforts and

a mail. Things are going along in the same quiet way. Have been getting small rations of bread and meat, have had some fresh vegetables. Seems to be plenty of cheese about, and got a 1lb tin of butter one day amongst 6 of us so we are not doing too badly.

Saturday night 11th December

We are still going along in the same old-style, and back on the phone again shift, and things are a bit busy times. The 5th Brigade seems to be settling down again as we are losing our borrowed men from the 20th Battalion as they go back to Russell's Top again. We were, or rather, the 17th were to go to the beach and do fatigue work but it's knocked on the head. We seem to be settled, the weather was very mild again. Was down at the beach today and got a cake as oranges and they went well. No bread about in these times but have some fresh vegetables often. I got a letter from mother today, the letter seemed to pass some others on the way, and I got a great shock to hear of Uncle's death but didn't get any particulars. We got some comforts issued today. My 2 mates got a small tin of fruit each and they went very nice indeed. I only drew a cake of soap.

Wednesday night 15th December

We are still going along in the same old way but things took a change on Monday night when some new movements leaked out. But how things will pan out, remains to be seen. But by all accounts it's a great move and a chance of us 5th Brigade getting a spell. Have been issued with more underclothes and I have also drawn some more comforts. I got a tin of cocoa and milk and 8 packets of cigarettes so there are many of them about now. We have been doing very well for rations got some potatoes from our canteen and they go nice, the weather has been nice but being cold today. I put most of my time in bed, been a bit off colour. We put a mine off tonight but there wasn't much noise about it by all accounts. There seems as though very few of the Johnnos are manning their trenches, only a few bombing and the machine guns which they keep busy. Put the last few days on the post and there were some great changes as the developments came out. We were to evacuate all our front so there was a great cleaning up of everything. So stock and things we could not carry had to be dumped so there was a tremendous heap of all the ordnance stores. The boys were picking out what clothes they needed for themselves. Then by Friday night the big stock caught fire and there was a terrible blaze place so just had to let it burn. It proved to be a good mark for the guns of Johnno. We were to move out any night and the word came out that ½ of each post were to leave Saturday night, most of us signallers were in that. We got packed up and burnt all the stuff we didn't carry away. We were ready to move away Saturday night at five o'clock had our boots wrapped up to go away quietly and we had a very orderly march out. The load soon began to tell as most of us as were a carrying extra blankets for the boys following next night, but they were plastered all directions, it was a great pull up Rest Gully but got over it after a spell. Then into Anzac and then we didn't lose any time, we were marched straight onto the barges and went off out to our transport which was the **HMS Mars**.



HMS MARS - A MAJESTIC CLASS BATTLESHIP

At the outbreak of WWI

Turrets & Guns were removed in Belfast & she became a troopship & covered the evacuation of ANZAC & Cape Helles in late 1915 & early 1916.

Finally sold for scrap in May 1921

We got a shock on the way out, our barge got a bump, but it resulted in the other boat getting the worst of it. They put a great crowd on the boat we are on and we were packed away and soon got going. Things turned out very lively, there was a canteen on the boat and we bought lots of stuff and it was cheap. Got tea and plenty of bread and good butter and had a good feed. Got some sleep. We arrived at Lemnos harbour about 2am and took the first crowd off soon after. I went off in the 2nd lot 8 o'clock and then we set out to march to our camp. We were very tired and saw on it. A few of us were put on the wrong road and we waded a little pond of saltwater and got into a camp and went to the little canteens and bought lots of eatables and it all went well. We found out we had a terrible long march to get to our camp. We went through a village and bought some more food and had our dinner and then set off on our long march and did it but had to have many spells and got to our camp and got bedded down for the night. The next morning we had to move our camp to a little better spot but one had a very quiet time, but one needed it. Went over and got stuff at the YMCA canteen. We are very crowded in the tent as all hands together. The 2nd crowd arrived safely and got here leaving the others quietly. Just a few men left on each post. They left at 3am. The final lot of men left on Monday morning. They had a risky job but came through safely and got safely aboard the transport and got here late Monday night. The sergeant got a little ratty on arrival, made a row about blankets (*probably the ones that had been jettisoned all over the place during the withdrawal by the 1st crowd*) but quietened down afterwards.

Tuesday 23rd December

It was a very rough night and it rained next morning but the water soon soaked away but it was muddy and things were only middling as no fires about. So we did without meals but it cleared up again in the afternoon and got a good tea.

Wednesday 22nd December

Things seem to be very unsettled here as to how long we will stay here. All want to get to Egypt as things are very slow here. The water is very scarce here and can't get any to drink it must all be boiled so we fare thirstily, not even any to wash with. We got a today and drew £1-0-0. Been out doing a little drill. There is a mail and some comforts here but expect they will be served out tomorrow.

Thursday 23rd December

We had a very easy day went out on parade but got over to the village and got some water at the well. The women from the village also draw water in the large earthenware jars and they must be served first. We also go our comforts. I got a parcel from Floss Hornsly with socks, tobacco and some camphor and it was very nice. We got shirts and socks from the Battalion comforts, plenty of everything.

Friday 24th December

We had it wet in the morning and had it easy. Had a parade in the afternoon. We got across to the village on brought all sorts of eatables home with us and had some great treats amongst ourselves. But it was a quiet Christmas Eve they all remarked.

Saturday morning 25th December

There was a church parade this morning but did not go anywhere. We have been having a quiet time. It is said that we had to move off any time as an advance party have gone. Everyone is anxious to move away. Went over to the village in the afternoon got some eatables as well.

Sunday 26th December

Was a quiet day. A Church Parade in the morning for the Brigade of Church of England, just a short dress address by Chaplain Single of Thanksgiving. We went over to the village in the afternoon I got

some water at the well and also got a good wash. Things are still much undecided when we shall move off.

Monday 27th December

It rained earlier the morning but cleared up later we cleaned up the Helios and lamps. And went out in the afternoon and did a little with the Helios. Some of the boys had a good climb. I went out to the YMCA canteen at night and bought a few things.

Tuesday 28th December

A lovely fine day. Some of the boys are way for the day with the Helios over the hills while I am orderly for the day so have to stay at home. Phil Alison, one of our old boys, went to hospital on Sunday but don't know how is getting on as he was sent to 3rd General Hospital.

Friday 31st December

Have been having some nice fine days and we lower the tents every day now. The boys get home very late Tuesday night. Had a great day of it went to some hot springs outback. Wednesday we had a ½ holiday and I went down with one of the boys and saw Phil Allison at the hospital. He was doing fine on it but not know when he could come out. We got a big mail in and I got some letters and papers but nothing from Sydney. We are not doing parades at the signalling now and put the time very well. Jim Owen had a word with the Sergeant and he has sent him to A Company. We have a holiday tomorrow, New Year's Day 1916. Things seem to be very uncertain as to how long we will stay here. Got a letter from Vic Keys and told me poor old Frank Middleton had died at the P N Hospital on or about 20th September. He must have had a very painful illness at the finish.

Saturday 1st January 1916 – New Year's Day

Was wet and cold in the morning went down and saw Phil Allison in the afternoon and he was famous, we didn't know he could get out. Went over to YMCA at night also got some stores.

Sunday 2nd January

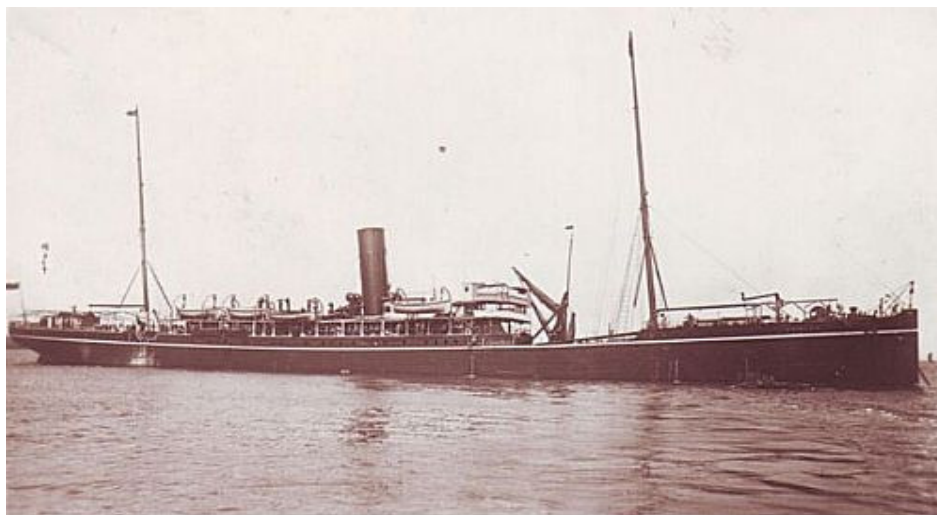
Was fine, but a very cold wind blowing. We had a church parade in the morning and I went and had a wash in the afternoon and it was good to feel a little cleaner and came back through a village and got plenty of eatables.

Monday 3rd January

Got some more rain this morning and still blowing very cold. The 20th Battalion moved off early this morning. Jim Owen had to go hospital this morning, been a bit sick. It's been very miserable and cold out on Parade this morning. Monday was very cold all night. We did no parade in the afternoon; packed up all the gear and had to get things ready to move off tomorrow morning.

Tuesday 4th January

We had to bestir ourselves early, we were moving about in the dark, something unusual. We fell in soon after 7:00am and moved out of the camp. Had a good long march to the jetty. We got the ferry to the troopship and most of us were glad to arrive as we had a good load up. It was very swampy the way we came round. We are all on a very comfortable transport an old P&O liner **SS Simla** used on the eastern trade.



SS SIMLA

Built by Caird & Company Ltd in Greenock, UK

Launched 13th October 1894

Used as a troop and supply ship during WWI

Torpedoed and sunk 70km (45 miles) northwest of Malta by the German submarine U39 on 2nd April 1916 with the loss of 10 crew

Wednesday morning 5th January

We are still in Moudros harbour; something happened we did not leave early in the morning. It's been a very cold night, slept up on the deck as they had hammocks but too stuffy down below. But we get good food so doing very well.

Thursday 6th January

Nice fine day and we are going along well; we left Moudros harbour at 3am this morning. A warship has accompanied us so far as there are several submarines at large in these parts so it means we have to do a lot of extra travelling as they go round islands and take a very zigzag course.

Saturday morning 8th January

We had a little storm last night and it rained very heavy on the boat tossed some great crowd of the boys were ill and sick and thins got very thick down below. But it was too wet to sleep on deck so had to swing the hammock for a change. We were supposed to get in some time this morning but don't know when we are disembarking. We arrived at Alexandria anchorage about 2pm in the afternoon and went up and berthed at about 4pm. But did not move that night and were not allowed ashore, though a lot scaled down the ropes at night and got up the town.

Sunday morning 9th January

We were the last to disembark with A Company as they were the duty company and got a train, very handy, with the 13th Light Horse Regiment. We left Alexandria close on 11am. everyone is anxious to know where we were going. It was a great ride though we travelled in cattle trucks. The country being a great picture, all the crops nice and green. Most of the boys got a little glum when at last we arrived at Zagazig. As we came the main line did not go near Cairo as the boys wanted to be near and see a little civilisation for a while. But our luck was out. Our journey finished by train about 5pm at Tel-el-Kebir. It is a great camp in its infancy as lots of the Battalions have only been there a week. We had a good march to our camp and were not sorry to get our packs off. Got some tea and then soon turned in. But some of the old lads who have been away sick and have been waiting to join up and got news.

Monday morning, 10th January

We got word that 8 of our Sigs Section are to go to a school instruction at the Zaitoun. Had to pack up again, me being one of them and left the camp at about 10:30 am. There was a great mail in for the Battalion; we got most of ours before we came away. I got a good many letters and papers also some of the boys did not like being left behind. We caught a fast train to Cairo and then another back to Zaitoun. There was a good crowd of different brigades sections of signallers and machine-gunners. We were allotted our huts for sleeping and dressing and then got our tea and went into Heliopolis at night to have a look around. It has altered a little but still great crowds of soldiers about everywhere; was glad to get to bed at night.

Tuesday morning 11th January

We were put into our sections and doing "A" by numbers etc which one is sick of. The food and it is not up to much so far. We are all very anxious to get a payday as we have some back pay due to us. We are doing a little better now, had the afternoon off and had a good bath and did some washing.

Thursday 13th January

We got a pay and I drew £5-0-0, have been having some easy times so far. Have met some of the boys that have been sick from our section, they all look fine on it.

Sunday 16th January

Have had a fairly good time last two days, being put through all the different tests but are not doing any good at it. We had a Saturday afternoon off so went into Cairo knocked about, met some of the old boys and had tea. I went to some pictures but was glad to get home. We have all day off today Sunday. It's very good weather did not go out until about four in the afternoon, did some writing and took them in posted them at the YMCA. In the gardens we had tea there and it was real nice and attended by Australian and New Zealand ladies. We came home early in the evening. Put in the time very well, we have very long hours but our section have a good time.

Wednesday 19th January

Only half day at school. Went into Cairo in the afternoon had a good roam round, bought a few Egyptian things to send home. Had tea at the YMCA Gardens and met some of the boys but came home early before the crowd. Things are very unsettled with our Battalion at Tel-El-Kebir as we are told they are under orders for Ismailia. We also got some mail as a couple of our boys came in from the camp had brought it up with them. I got eight letters so have something to keep me busy now.

Sunday night 22nd January

The weekend was quiet, have been having a good time out with our section, had some weekend tests. Went into Cairo Saturday afternoon went and got a couple of postcards taken of ourselves. The 3 of us went into the gardens and had a cup of tea and a sent some letters away. There was a great rush for the trams but arrived safely. We got a pay on Thursday and I drew 10/- , all that was due to me. Sunday we had a quiet day of it, went up to Heliopolis in the morning and did a little shopping and tied up some things ready to send away. Have not been to Cairo this evening as it came over very cold and rained a bit. So am going to turn in early tonight. We heard on Monday that our Battalion had moved off from Tel-El-Kebir to Ismailia way along the canal. They took our blankets away today to disinfect them all and we had to do without them at night and slept very cold. I packed up a few little things and sent them off. One parcel I sent home with a few little Egyptian items. Also sent a little handkerchief to Annie Mac, Annie S and Jess with an Australian Rising S. Also one Rosa and registered them all.

Tuesday 25th January

Been a very cold day, got some rain and hail. Went out tonight for a lamp test but I did no good. We had a half holiday on Wednesday but money was the trouble as we had none so had to stay home, went out for a walk at night. We did more of our exams Thursday and Friday but I did nothing brilliant. We got some blankets and were issued with a fresh change and they were very acceptable. Some of the clothes were small but change them with some of some other lads. Most of the boys got paid on Friday night, drew most of their back pay but I did not bother as I had very little due to me. We had a good time Friday as we only did our theory papers and I didn't do too well at them. We went up town Friday night and got a few little things and had a good supper. Saturday morning was breaking up day. We slept in a little while and got breakfast and had to pack up. We formed up at 9am and marched off at 10 o'clock, four of our boys got the certificates out of eight of us. We got a train to Cairo then from there got on another train to Tel-El-Kebir. It was a fast one as we got down in less than two hours. We all got a native to carry out packs up to the camp. We found our Battalion, 2 Companies were away down on the canal at Ismailia and the rest of our signallers were away with them. We were told our OC was back again and a good job too. We got settled in a tent with 3 other A MC boys. Then we found out there were a lot of parcels for us. At dinner some great excitement sorting them out and opening them up. We had cakes, puddings, sweets and nuts galore and we did have a great feast. I got 4 parcels, the small one from home, some nuts and cigarettes from Bess, a scarf from Rosie Miner and another from somebody I don't know of yet but some real nice things in it. We found out our mail had been sent up to the school to us but we had not received it. We went to some pictures in evening and were rather nice and a great change to us. It reminded one very much of the old Saturday nights. It is a great open air place and it was crowded out one had a hard time to get in but it was very chilly out.

Sunday 30th January

It was a grand day there was no church parade as all the men are on fatigues. Some were sent into Cairo on picket. We went away down along a small canal and had a rest under some trees in the shade and some of the boys took some photos. We got home just in time to a dinner and did it justice. We had plum puddings galore. A mail in this afternoon and I got a nice parcel from Vee. It was well packed and everything was in good order but had been very expensive to send over. It's been very warm today and we are all about in shorts. Monday we had to do a little fatigue and I was on cooks fatigue and a change it was. A nice day Tuesday, we had an easy time did some dodging we got word that night that we were moving off next morning so had to pack up that night and strike tents. We slept out that night, were up at 4am so as to get things all cleared up, got breakfast then got aboard the train about 10am bound for Ismailia. It was practically sandy all the way. We went down in about 1½ hours. We had dinner after we had detrained. Got all our stores on transport etc and commenced on our march. Did not go into township we went round the outskirts. But it was a lovely sight, small canals are about and some grand avenues of great trees, past some lovely residences, past a grand garden or park on the way to the Suez Canal. It was a good marched to the canal and it was a very busy depot as one got closer to it, they have a light railway. We crossed the canal by pontoon bridge and the 30th Battalion are quartered very close there. We stopped about ¾ of a mile on the Arabian side of the canal for the night. We all got our tents and put them up in the dark, we were very comfortable for the night and being tired slept well. We were about early next morning and had to get all our things together so as to get them on the transports as we were to set sail. Things were taken on by a light railway out into the desert. The water was laid on out that far and have big pipes for carrying it out further and are preparing a good road as well. We left Ferry Point, as it is called, about 9am and came along well as the good road came in. The trouble started as it was terrible hard going on the soft sand and had to have plenty of spells. It's very strange to see all the camels carrying the stores and water. We were glad when we halted for lunch. The bully and biscuits were favourite but we were fortunate, had a small pudding and cake and it went well. We were sorry to move on again but it had to be done. Phil Allison went to sick at Ferry Point with influenza and his things came on with us. The desert is very rough, all little sand hills and dips. We got to A Company's camp about four o'clock in a few of the men had to join there. We met some of our Sig boys there as there is a phone attached. We had to go over to the HQ camp and got in the tent with rest of our lads and it was rather crowded. Met our OC Mr McCullough and he is looking well. The boys were glad to see us and pleased that they had a chance to

get to the school. We had a good sleep in the next morning the other boys doing the work. We did a little work of putting little shrubs in a trench and lying the phone wire on it to keep it from getting damp and had a lot do, but takes a long time to do it.

Saturday morning 5th February

We had to start work on the phone. We got an old mail they had bought on for us and I got eight letters but all ones from home they were written on 12th October. Our Sgt had also gone sick and left here couple of days after the OC came back, we did get a shock when we heard of it. To mates and I were detailed off to take over the phone at A Company as 3 other boys were going to the school at Zaitoun. 7 of them went off. The phone lines are not too good and very indistinct. The 3 Companies shifted camp on Saturday morning along with the HQ so we were cut out and they reeled in the phone line then we went on an reeled in the line from us (A Company) to brigade. Then we started on the direct line from the Brigade to 17th HQ. As they are very short of line we had to tee it out of the 18th Battalion line. We have a long walk got a lot of line out and got in the wrong direction and had the roll in a lot. It came on very showery and when we got finished it was dark. As it was dark I didn't think I could find my way to our camp (A Company) so stopped with the other lads of the night and had my tea, such as it was biscuits and jam. It rained very heavy at night and they caught a lot of water. There was a great shortage of blankets but we managed between us all are kept warm, but it was damp as we had no oil sheets.

Sunday morning 6th February

We moved our camp a little way and are almost in a direct line behind the HQ. We got nicely settled down by evening but had to sink our tents down in the sand and it took some moving. 2 of us went over to the other camp at night and found things were nicely settled. We wandered a little out of our course coming home and were pulled up by an outpost and put on the right track. Monday things are going along very nicely, have not got the phone laid on yet so having a good time.

Tuesday 8th February

Was a nice find a and having a good time is one may depend until the evening when the Brigade put our line on again so had to get to work once more on the phone but it was very indistinct on the phone. Got one or two messages through some important saying enemy patrols being only a few miles off. Wednesday was quiet but rather cold wind blowing. Supposed to get a little dugout built for our phone now but nothing doing at night. Thursday a nice warm day things very quiet. We got our little phone dugout on Friday afternoon, it's nice and quiet and we still sleep in the tent.

Sunday 13th February

We have been having things very quiet so far and having some nice weather. Patrols are always out having a cruise around. There is a lot of trench digging to be done and they are getting a lot of timber up as well to be used in the trench work. I don't think there is any church parade here today but there is up at the Headquarters.

Tuesday 15th February

Have had it very quiet, got a mail yesterday. I got five letters, three from mother and Vee and also an Auckland Weekly which was very good with Christmas supplement. Also got a magazine and book from Nell Humphrey. There are more papers and parcels going through today, have had it very showery today, but snug in our little dugout as we got some iron and put across so kept the dampness out. They have commenced granting leave to the men again. They are allowed into Cairo for one day only, not much of a catch but they rush it. An aeroplane was flying very low here this morning and the aviator dropped a note in the 18th Battalion lines that an Arab patrol had been observed about 3 miles out. The message was transmitted through to the General in Command at Ismailia in very quick time.

It went through 4 stations and reached its destination before the aviator got down with his account. All stations were congratulated by the General for the good work.

Thursday 17th February

Things are going along in the same quiet way we have a very good time here not much work going through. Had a rather heavy rainstorm yesterday. It is said there was another mail in but has not been sorted yet.

Friday night 18th February

Have had a nice day, have had plenty of reading matter today we got the mail last night, went over to Battalion HQ and brought it back. Went and saw the boys for a while, we had to reel in our old line as they had laid a new one from Brigade to Battalion and a better wire and can be buried. The other line was used to put across to an English Regiment. The Yorks and Lancs. just on 3 miles on our left. I got six letters and also a lot of Auckland Weeklies and some Sydney Mails from Hornsby. Been reported tonight some hostile patrols been observed today and a mounted patrol of ours going out tonight to try to get in touch with them.

Sunday 20th February

Still going along in the same of style and having a good time. Yesterday, Saturday, our Battalion was inspected by the Divisional Commander Gen Legg. We did not have to attend, only to duty. I believe he gave them a lecture and a very good one too, giving them a lot of advice, as lots depends on themselves as to how long we may be out here in these parts. It was a very breezy day of the sand was flying some. No Church Parade on our post but some of the lads have to go on the trench digging as no holidays on that job, but we can hear the bands playing this morning and sounds grand.

Tuesday 22nd February

Things still going along in the grand style. We got a lot of comforts sent along to us by different comfort funds in Australia. We got a nice lot of tinned fruit, milk, cigarettes and lollies so we did very well out of it and they went very nice. There was a mail in this afternoon but not all sorted yet. I got a mail from A E Godfrey from Hornsby, told me about Fred Kay; he seems to have had a bad run. Knocked about the head and his eyes are affected, he was back in Sydney. He had met G Fraser in the trenches on the peninsula about Lone Pine it would be. We were all stopping together in Hornsby. Heard tonight there are some more comforts coming along to us.

Thursday night 24th February

Still go along quietly, the mail came in yesterday but mostly all for the reinforcements, the comforts have not put in an appearance yet. The 17th band came over to our post yesterday afternoon from Gundagai; their HQ, and gave us a few items and it was great. Some little squeals on the line at times from brigade as our 17th HQ get out of communication for a while and we hear it all, being in between them as our line is teed into their main line. They have called for 3 more Company signallers that means 8 from each Company. We have our little lot here from A company and have to give them a little practice and keep them going. I went over to the HQ camp at night and got a little out coming and got pulled up by a picket and then taken by two officers and another lad and myself. They had to inspect another outpost but got a bit tangled up for a while, but it was funny for a while but eventually got to their camp and found all the boys well and is gay as ever. Arrived back at our camp safely.

Sunday night 27th February

Things are going along in the same old good style. Have been doing a little on the Helios last couple of days with the Lancashire Fusiliers, they are away on our left. We got a pay out here yesterday 26th February, I drew 30/-, will keep me going. It's Sunday today but does not seem to be one as no church

service held here. Our boys go to the different lines and our boys came back from the Zaitoun school today and by all appearances they have had a great time. I believe only one got a certificate and the officer will give them a lecture I bet. Some of the 17th Battalions comforts had come across, they have served out all the private parcels. I got the one Rosa sent me and everything was grand. I also expect to get a letter as the mail is in but not all sorted yet. Ought to be a couple more for me. It was in orders today, got a stripe so rank as Lance Cpl but does not trouble me. There were two boys to have stopped in here with us as they came back from the school but one was kept back sick so we only have the one so far. Been a very windy day and the sand blowing some, it just about smothered one.

Monday 28th February

Had rather a busy day cleaning up our tent and had to dig a little dugout for our other lad. Had a little excitement tonight, a lot of rifle shots were heard and everyone had to stand to arms and things were very lively for awhile. But it was all done very sudden and we were told it was very smart. It turned out to be a camel had strayed into the picket lines and when challenged it bolted. So they put a few shots after it and killed it. It turned out to be one of our camels that broke loose and things cooled down afterwards. I got 2 magazines and paper from Inglewood and a mail from Floss and there are some comforts for us.

Wednesday night 1st March

Have had a very lovely fine day and beginning to get very warm. The band was over this afternoon and gave us a little music and it was very nice. Our black kit bags arrived today and all my stuff was okay, someone had been at it. Very strange to be looking over all our old clothes after six months, time does fly some. I was over at the Battalion this morning and saw that all is things are going along well over there. We hear some great rumours about us shifting shortly and it seems as though it will be to France. We got a small issue of comforts, a shirt and some cigarettes and some more to come along yet I believe. Things are going along very quietly here.

Thursday night 2nd March

It's been a terrible windy day and the sand blowing a real storm. All trenches and dugouts got filled up with loose sand; the Company has not been out too much as it's useless. Reported a small mail in.

Friday night 3rd March

Been another rough day, went over to the Battalion this afternoon to get a few things as we are packing up our kitbags again so we are expecting to be on the move again soon. Our Officer gave a little lecture on rifle fire while we were in the tent as we are to do some firing exercises shortly. All the boys are doing well up there, the wind has filled in most of the trenches blowing in so much. The track for the railway is being formed along towards our camp and comes right in front of us, so we have got to move back a little, therefore need to build another little dugout.

Sunday night 5th March

Things are very unsettled the present as we have orders to move. We got our dugout built and it was a good job. We had it all finished by 3 o'clock and its nice size, we can move about in it. It was very windy again in the afternoon, got the phone all going. The 4 of us all moved into our little dugout. It was windy in the afternoon when we got the phone going. The 4 of us moved into a little dugout with the Company lads. It has a canvas roof and is good but rather low, but we slept nice and warm. The whole camp was moved back and they have been levelling it off today, everyone has been busy. We got a whole lot of comforts today. Biscuits, sardines, sauces, handkerchiefs, patented cigarette lighters and other little items, but as usual get heaps of things when one is moving. We got word late this afternoon that we are being relieved by the New Zealand Mounted Regiment tomorrow morning and we have to be ready to move away at that time. So a bit of a bustle now, we are waiting orders as

regards our phone. We are expecting to camp down Ismailia way, our boys didn't do much rifle firing on the range.

Monday morning 6th March

We got all our things packed up in the morning there was a lot to do. We cut our phone out at 9 o'clock and helped the Brigade linesman roll in all our cable up to the main line, then went back and had some lunch. We waited for the 3 Companies to come from Gundagai. We joined the rest of the signallers there; they did not march with the Battalion as we had to take some cable from the HQ to Brigade. It was a terrible hot day; we got to the Brigade and then had some dinner. We had an hour's spell and then set off again. We hadn't gone far before a lot of New Zealand lads came down leading spare horses taking them back to Ferry Post and gave lots of us a ride, 4 of us got on transport camels and we had a good ride. They went as far as the railhead and then we got all our packs put on a transport cart and we came along well, it was a terrible day and we got through a lot of water. We got into our camp just outside of Ferry Post and pitched camp for the night. The 4 Battalions were there 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th Battalions. A Company's staff did not come down so we stayed at the rail head for the night. Some of us were short of blankets but the other boys helped us out of the difficulty and we put in a good night as we were all tired. Some big New Zealand camps close by so we got a fair breakfast next morning and had to pack up again and then get ready to move on. We were the last Battalion of our Brigade to move off at about 9:30 am. We crossed the canal by pontoon bridge, everything has a busy appearance. Warships at the lakes and dredges working as the canal runs into the lakes just below where we crossed. We went on then turned into the ordnance store as we had to change our rifles. We were there about 2 hours; in that time most of the boys had a swim in a small canal on the other side of the road. I washed my feet and it was grand. Got a rifle, not new, but a better pattern to carry the mark VII ammunition. We moved off about 1230 and then had a good long solid march right through Ismailia and down the nice streets but it was very hot. The boys sold their oranges off quick. A crowd from a New Zealand Battalion were on their way across to the new camp as we were going into their camp at Moascar just up past the camp station. Tents were very limited, up to 20 in a tent, but as the luck happens, lots sleep out.

Wednesday 8th March

We had a sleep in till breakfast time and there was a swimming parade but another lad and I missed it, we had to start on the Brigade phone as their staff have not arrived in yet. We relieved the 19th Battalion. We only did two hours on, got off in time for dinner and then went down for a swim afterwards. It was just grand to be in the water, it was in one of the lakes, just a good spot and goes down pretty deep. Then went back and found the 4th Howitzer Battery so went down after tea and found Alan Carr, he was well and told me all about his trip to England and he seems to have had a good time. Ern was away at the school in Zaitoun. By all accounts we're not to stay in these parts long and will soon be on the move again. We got inoculated this afternoon and it was entered up in our pay book and it is sore tonight.

Thursday 9th March

We only did the phone at Brigade for 24 hours and we were relieved as the Brigade staff took it over. We went out for a swim in the morning and did little washing then home to dinner. We had a very easy time in the afternoon and moved our tent. We got a small mail in and I only got a short note from Alan Carr in answer to his postcard I had sent him off at Quinn's Post. It had followed him to England and back. I got a little off colour towards night over the inoculation and went to bed early, but better this morning.

Friday 10th March

We had to go out on an early morning parade. Saturday was a very rough day and we had a good easy time lying about the tent. We couldn't even go for a swim. Went to see Alan at night but he was out, so went along to the YMCA.

Sunday 12th March

There was a Church Parade but we didn't go. Gen Birdwood gave them all at the Church Parade a short lecture about things in general and about France. I went down and saw Alan in the afternoon and he went out after as he had a pass into Ismailia. I went to the YMCA at night and there was a good singsong and an address. I met Alan after and we had a long yarn. Monday was a very hot day we had to do some musketry at the range here and managed it all right, just grouping at 100 and 200 yards but having a good easy time.

This part of the diary ends.