

DOP/01/003

Frank Gillard

Born 1st November 1891

- 000 Continues story of occupation. Took boatload of Russian prisoners to Russia. Englishwoman came up and asked to be taken on board. Invited to Ambassador's for meal. Told sugar cost £5 per 1lb. Tea expensive too.
- 067 At Christmas time, bought two geese at market, had them for dinner. Wonderful canteen, could buy lots of things other regiments couldn't get.
- 080 Reflects how strange world is. In those day's army used to issue men with cigarettes and tobacco. Never enough. When off duty, smoked like chimney pots
- 091 People of Wolverton sent small tin of chocolate at Christmas – organised by Benevolent Fund.
- 103 Officers seemed to get medals? "Oh well it wasn't a socialist country like it is today, you know". Officers led from front and some paid the price too. One person came out and carried on as though troops were on parade ground with rules and regs. Etc. Very disliked. In big battle he got hit and nobody bothered to do anything to help him.
- 129 Court Martials – used to shoot you, for what? for anything. One day stayed in camp to do training. Young man came up and asked whereabouts of brother. FG said and he had to go up to front line trenches in case he had to give evidence. Later on young lad in Worcester's whose nerve broke. Missing when meant to be on guard duty. Soon "in Jinkers" for absence, desertion and cowardice. Court martialled and condemned to be shot. F.G.'s platoon chosen to be one to shoot him and F.G who was on guard had to wake them at four a.m. and give them a cup of tea. They then went off and shot him. Belief in Army that if twelve men, only one would have live round – obviously not true. Man blindfolded and ad white patch over his heart. "It would have been in my mind for the rest of my life if I'd been one of those as of shot him".
- 182 Good battalion - no discipline problems.
- 192 Saw shell shock. Debenham, as hard as iron, he got shell shock. So disgusted after the war that had job to get him to come to reunions. "It shakes your brain you go floppy, lose control and confidence in yourself". Doesn't know how it occurs.
- 212 Doesn't know if shell-shocked people were wrongly court-martialled and shot. Court Martials not only for desertion, but also for disobeying orders.
- 227 They had no field punishments, but remembers when in France went to visit football friend from Aylesbury in Bedford not far away. There were 7 or 8 of Bedford tied up to a cartwheel doing a field punishment.
- 241 Only had a few shell of gas in whole war.

- 251 People wore stripe on arm after being wounded and returning to service. Been out and captured Horseshoe Hill, moved back and cut slits in back of trench to rest. Shell cam over, wallop, and chap next to him, who had eased out of slit because he was too hot, rolled over dead. Chap from Bletchley two or three feet away shouted he was hit. FG had previously done two examinations for first aid in the Works. Went to him, took his puttee off. He hadn't broken leg and hurt bone, but then he took puttee off and tore trousers, blood shot up. All carried first aid field dressing in jacket. Ripped it out, tied it on as tight as possible, picked up stone, put it under knee and then pulled up leg and strapped it to thigh with puttee. At first, first aid station doctor said bleeding had stopped so he could go on, passed on up the line. By the time they looked at it properly at a bigger station, poison had set in. Amputated leg. Man says FG saved his life.
- 295 Then went to another man shouting and moaning. Leg blown off in thick part of thigh, only piece of trouser stopping leg falling away. Sat looking at it. FG did same again, bound puttee just about wound as hard as he could – but he died, shock and loss of blood.
- 308 Instantaneous reaction, you're in a mob, part of the machine.
- 314 People didn't mind getting a wound that wasn't too serious, as it got you out of the fighting.
- 323 Had bad malaria.
- 345 Doctors brave? "Well, don't stand back and think about it as we are now, you're in the machine, you're part of machine, so you do it."
- 364 Field hospitals just out of sight of front line. Bigger as they went down the line.
- 366 In hospital in Salonika with malaria. Had 17 – 19 year old helper girls, not nurses. VAD's – Voluntary Aides. Parcel from home with cake in from mother. Girls having rotten time, asked on 18 year old how many people there were in the ward. Ten. "Well take it out the back and cut it into eleven pieces." She said "But there's only ten". I said, "Well there'll be a piece for you". Well, her bottom lip quivered and a tear almost came in her eye. Girls were not well fed – bully beef and hard tack.
- 396 Bravery – can't remember any great bravery. Thinks there was such a thing- all built different. Man named Ross always volunteered for patrols and dangerous missions. If I had my way I'd go back to bed. Some didn't care. Very little cowardice – just nerves. There so long as you were part of machine; didn't allow personal feelings to enter it all. Weren't isolated so weren't frightened.
- 460 Remembers talking to sailor who was orphan and had no real home, home is the next port they go to; "that's all the world matters to me".
- 495 Had C of E, Catholic and Free Churches chaplain. Recently told Jehovah's Witnesses how in war Catholics had fought Catholics, Protestants v Protestants, etc.

Side Two

- 000 All trying to kill each other. When Artillery had tried to blow their barbed wire up so that they couldn't repair it' FG had to fire 700 rounds at a certain gap in their lines. Hopes he didn't hurt anybody.
- 008 Never hated the people he fought, never saw or knew them. Never any hand to hand fighting.
- 013 When they blasted off, shells came back trying to find them. Tried to limit the amount of flare given off by the gun by putting box of wood over it with sandbags in the end.
- 026 Man once had said how good the movies of the war were. FG said they were rot. No one can act war, because, I said, the temperament, the smell and the agitation and the emotion of everybody can't be acted like it is when the man's there. I said "It's all acting to me so I don't take too much notice of it".
- 033 Rumoured there were outlaws in that part of Macedonia. Never saw them.
- 040 No superstitions, no feeling "bullet had name on it". Often wished it was, and then could be off down the line in Malta recovering.
- 051 Went twelve months without seeing a white woman.
- 055 Shows shoulder badges, etc.
- 080 Went to Salonika reunions afterwards.
- 098 Friends in war were like brothers, because you lived, slept together day to day. You was part of them and they was part of you".
- 107 Didn't have anyone whose death particularly affected him. Automatic, did as told.
- 114 Fellow from Atherstone going out on a do he wasn't on must have had premonition. Handed FG a letter to send to mother if he didn't come back. Didn't come back.
- 120 Made a fool of himself once where close friend missing after raid. Wrote and told his mother. After posting the letter he returned. He'd been wounded and picked up by another regiment. He corrected it. He survived -war. FG never told him and hasn't heard more about it since.
- 139 Good times at Oxford billeted at Balliol College for few days. Ate in main hall.
- 145 Four or five of them billeted in Pembroke St. Lots of girls chasing them. No front garden, window and grating beneath it. Girls used to chatter, men persuaded tem to come beneath the window. One man went in cellar and stuck a hose up the grating when the girls were standing on it.
- 160 Two copies of "Balkan News" shown Officers were allowed leave to go to Salonika, but not the ordinary soldiers.

- 180 "Tadatha" book by Rutter – parody of Hiawatha – man in Wiltshire.
- 276 If you wrote ordinary letter it was censored. Every now and then allowed to fill in leaflet that wasn't censored.
- 280 Can't remember having much to tell people at home. Didn't get homesick, just wanted war to come to end or for shell to blow him up.
- 290 Nothing to look forward to, no end in sight.
- 294 Made history – first link in chain that started peace – surrender of Bulgaria