

Diary Book One

Cover reads

33 Field Ambulance 11 Div

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Date of Starting 3/8/17

69. Reinforcements. France. 3-8-17.

Set sail from Folkestone . 4-8-17. on HMS Victory, landed Boulogne same date. Marched to St Martains, stayed the night entrained the 5-8-17.

12.am. for Rouen, landed at Rouen 5.am. 6-8-17. After riding in cattle trucks. stayed in Rouen station 15 hours with rations, went in camp. slept in one tent 7-8-17. Still hanging on, and still raining, and been through gas chamber, and started to be chatty

9-8-17. still raining and still sleeping in a tent. Been through gas again up at the bull ring. Put on draft for the line. 10-8-17 drawing kit to go off, left Rouen station 6-15. Going steady rate, 4 mile an hour riding in cattle trucks. 34 in our truck, not much room to stretch. Arrived at Etaplee 11-8-17 at 3-a-m raining and cold got pushed on siding until 9-45 stayed out Colone, called at Amen gradually getting near Belgium frontier. Called at Arneke. Left some troops there then pinched some spuds. Then went on to Bergues from there to Popheringe, slept in a station there was a few rats, got down to it 11-30 pm. 12-8-17. Marched right through to a camp, 5 miles from pop station, tired and weary. arrived in camp at 1.am. we walked in shell fire all the way, but was still eating our spratts biscuits. Went and reported to H.Q. Sent to 34. field ambulance, then transferred to 38. field ambulance kit inspection 9.p.m. then supper then to bed old fritz started dropping his souvenirs just behind us then taubs came. 13-8-17 still shelling us but resting before going in the trenches ready for the big push 14-8-17 started our journey 7-am, passed tank wood to our dugouts went up to ypres at 4pm. Shell was flying over us there was a 15in. gun 200.yards on our left and the armoured train behind us no sleep at night [the Battle of Landmurke] 15-8-17. Old fritz dropped shrapnel over our little dugout. 4am. had to go Hindenberge farm, up mud alley over no mans land . nearly over my knees in mud and water. Returned back at rest camp for breakfast 11.am. had orders to go again at 2pm to cainpoint farm 500 yards from fritz line in a cornered dugout. Stopped the night, slept on two petrol cans. 16-8-17 Called out 3 am. for the advance under shell fire. We was carrying wounded and old fritz shell has killed a fellow 10yds from us, blowed an officers arm off and wounded seven others, we had wind up shells came busting over, we was covered in mud. Two of our boys got wounded we had to lay outside one of the dugouts, could not get inside for water, so we had to sleep outside no blankets or ground sheet. Shivering with cold lying on the wet ground. But old fritz gave us a good shelling. 17-8-17, all got quiet about 8am. Then I was sent down for a rest had not had our breakfast at 11am. Dinner at 4pm. But I went to cook myself a dinner, and while I was away I missed my squad going up the line. Got choked of but followed them up, not much rest tired out had a chance to get a lay down in a dugout but could not sleep for rats and flies and a terrible bombardment took place. 18-8-17, called up as the wounded came in. cooled down, nothing doing only old fritz kept us on the dodge. We got filling sandbags to cover us from shrapnell but he spotted us and then we had to fly, but no one got hurt

19-7-17 a bombardment they shelled and set fire to to paulapile which was only two miles from our little dugout, on the left of ypres just got laid down for the night fritz gave us a

bombardment knocked the corner of our dugout down. gave us a terrible shock lasted for three hours. 20-8-17 we had a quiet time from shells and not many wounded. Dirty work on old fritz just having dinner and sent some gas over for desert, which we had to leave our dinner, and put our helmets on for half an hour then it cooled down until 9pm until 11pm when the taubs came and bombed us 21-8-17 we was shelled again, wind up, but cooled down later paukappelle is still burning fritz left alone until about 9pm, then he started and then ours put up a barrage. it was deafening, as our boys was going over the top.

22-8-17 I was called up at 2-5am to take a case to minto farm. we got there alright, but we waited for rations and had to take cover for a few minutes and then off we went but he started again but we had to keep on. we had to go nearly two miles, it was a terrible journey and we thought our time was up several times but we all got back safe. then ours started sending him some over on the night as another div. was going over to put the line a bit straight. This bombardment lasted from 3-2am until 9am and then they got quiet. 23-8-17 call up at 12-2am as the wounded started to come in. not much shelling, went back to bed again. very quiet the rest of the day. 24-8-17 very quiet all day nothing to do but sleep got relieved went back to hindenberke farm in a tumble down dugout. had to go out singly. 23-8-17 went on working party 6am until 10am before breakfast then rest until 3-3.30PM we started to kill chats on our shirts. We saw some taubs come out from the clouds, and then we had a few shells at us, one dropped each side of our dugout. One dropped 3 yards from our door. we should have all been killed if we had not good vent through but we got wind up. we was having our tea and he put a gas shell close to us. we went on a working party at 10pm and came off at 2am.

26-8-17 but before we came off he gave us another rouse to go home with then our artillery straffed him. after breakfast got put on barricade work on another working party at 6pm until 12pm.

27-8-17 started to go back home wet through had to sleep in our wet clothes then we went to franes farm ready for the big bombardment for the attack of Floracot the bombardment at 1.45 and kept on until 5.15, nothing but a roar of guns and raining. but we had a chance to have a sleep all night.

28-8-17 wounded started to come in about 7am the wind was very rough. several places we was over our knees in mud but the shells was quiet. then the wounded finished about 8pm then went to kip.

29-8-17 very quiet we had a bit of a lively time in the afternoon but we kept low had to go on gas guard, wind and cold

30-8-17 div. Came and relived us but had to wait until fritz got a bit cool. then we started to get to our transport which was only 6 miles away on the way down old fritz made us run, that was before breakfast. slept in bivies. had a bath first time taking my clothes off for 3 weeks, then only had them off for 10 minutes, and the wind blowed a bit cool.

31-8-17 got put on picket of course it had to rain then at night fritz came with taubs and bombed us but no one was hurt. 1-9-17 all went to have a hot bath which was down corderky road, and then done washing. Had a great surprise, charlie came to see me. got time off and both went to Poperinge for the day and enjoyed ourselves. had a few drinks together and our photos taken. had old times over, got back to camp 9pm old fritz made an air raid on us. not much rest.

3-9-17 would liked to have had another day out. But nothing doing only work, but we got another air raid at night, 15 killed and 107 wounded. 4-9-17 raid still on until 6am. then in midst he started shelling us. wounded several, blew railway up, then sent a few duds to put the wind up us. dropped an explosive shell in centre of a hospital joining our camp though we had got clear from

fritz, but he followed us then he came again at night with his taubs but 5 was fetched down by daybreak.

5-9-17 very quiet easy days work. 6-9-17 still quiet but had a dreadful thunderstorm, then came out very hot. 7pm another storm, got flooded out water rushed trough all our tents, some exciting time

7-9-17 on guard again very quiet 8-9-17 still resting now and again a shell came over. 9-9-17 still resting Sunday CHARLIE came and saw me, as he had been working against pop.

10-9-17 drill in morning. 11-9-17 resting but had our usual air raid. 12-9-17 drill. 13-9-17 on guard shelled at night 14-9-17 resting, had to leave our camp and scatter through old fritz shelled us. But we came back about 12 when he was a bit quieter 15-9-17 [drill night] got a few shells over but stuck in camp. 16.9.17 had to be inoculated then 15 of fritz planes came over but got chased back no damage done . had toothache. 17-9-17 had tooth out, still back from the line. Old fritz started shelling us towards evening, we was having a nice game of cards, and he dropped one close to us and the draft from the explosion blew our candle out and our hats off. We got wind up. 18-9-17 fatigues building cookhouses. 19-9-17 on guard again rained all night. Wet through and a big push started near ypres. 20-9-17 still out of the line. 21-9-17 started to dig in for winter and protection against pieces from bombs. 22-9-17 fritz started shelling us early morning then his planes came and bombed us. 23-9-17 Getting ready for the line again. 24-9-17 went in the line midday up to spinners post just against the artillery 11 yards from us. But we found a cosy dugout with plenty of rations in we had a good feed then laid down to kip. But got woke up several times through rats runing round our heads and over our floor. 25-9-17 I got posted in a gun pit by myself. It was not very comfortable when shrapnel was flying about went to get my dinner, on my way back to my post old fritzy was straffing us. Found my post was flattened. I came back, then he straffed our dressing station but did not knock it in. but we had wind up. Then at night he waited for us, when he dropped them short we was relieved but could not get away. But he left off for about 3 minutes, and we run for lives to our dugouts which was about 300 yards away. 26-9-17 our artillery gave him double in return, but he sent a few to Let us know he was still there. We had to keep under cover because the pieces was flying about. He again straffed at night with shells bombs and gas. when he had finished with gas, we had a rush of wounded came in. cleared them then went to kip, and let the night fellows carry on. 27-9-17 he started straffing us again working parties scattering in all directions. He gave our DS a good shaking but we had to stick it. He left off then started again at night, but he don't shift the rats much it wasn't very nice in amongst the artillery. 28-9-17 Friday still straffing. we was all out with cases but two and when we came back our Dugout Shelter was blown to pieces and no one was hurt. our luck was in but our hats was buried that did not matter, we wasn't. we had to make do with a small one, we was a bit too smart for fritzy. he still sent a bit of shrapnel to keep us from going to sleep in the afternoon. I went and visited the BUCKS, saw Button and several more from Wolverton. While we was talking, old fritzy sent us three wizz bangs over. Then we had to duck, they was only a mile from me. Then I caught our train back. Went to kip. Old fritzy bombarded us and gas over, which lasted over five hours, it was mustard gas. 29-9-17 a bit quiet early morning, but we had a lot of gas cases come in as we was kept busy for a time. Still at spensor post. Hot shop just after dinner, old fritzy started straffing us again. One officer walking about round our station got wounded. I was called to help fetch him in, and just fetching him up, fritzy sent another one close to us. Had to lay flat but no bits touched us, and up came Charlie. He came in our dugout, it was a bit hot for visiting. When things got quiet he went back on our train. At night he straffed us again blew our train up and rails, he was on all night.

30-9-17 A bit quiet until dinner time came. He let fly again we all are longing to get out of it for a time. Not getting any sleep but no luck. Had more strength to help. Got put on night work, first night very quiet. 1-10-17 Had to go off to issen farm with a note. Went with our train at 5am. Going down it ran off the line. Had to walk. On the way back got into a lot of gas but got over it alright. then things was a bit quiet. we went and slept, and went on duty at night. Had to carry rations to minty farm at 11pm, it was about two and a half miles. Things was quiet until we got 200yds from home, coming back a dud came 20YDS from me and my mate. We run for our lives. THE ADVANCE ON PAULHAPILL. WAS A MILE ON A MILE FRONT then came shrapnel, we was runing and ducking, got in our dugout without being hit, but wind up left off .

2-10-17 1am he gave us another good straffing. We sat shaking expecting one to drop on the top. They dropped all around us, blew our candle out as fast as we lit it, for nearly 2 hours. Then we got a bit of sleep, but he woke us up again, then cooled down until night, then gave us a few more. 3-10-17 He let drive at us again at his old time expecting the big drive to come off, but only a little one came off. Then we went off duty for the day, all guns seem to be quiet untill about 4pm. We gave him a bit of a shower of shells to go on with, but 11pm he gave us a straff, he made our dugout shake. 4-10-17 The great advance started at 6am. paulhapel had fallen by 9am. Prisoners started coming past us soon after 7am. Was on all night, went to our dugout but got fetched out. Wounded was coming down fast. The barrage finished 12am, but soon started again. Fritzy counter attacked again 5pm but got stopped. Pouring with rain all the time wet through. Old fritzy had no time to straff us. We lost 17 men, we got some of the Bavarians to help us. Got to keep on all night but sent the fritzy to there camp. Fritzy put up a barrage 5 minutes before we put ours up before six. Then every sound of guns went quiet on both sides, it did not seem as though the war was still on.

5-10-17 Still quiet but started again at teatime. He's still making counter attacks, but gets beaten off in the advance. 3 divisions of fritzy massed to stop the boys, but get mowed down by our artillery, Australians charged the remainder. 6-10-17 Fritzy seems to be having a lot of bad shells, we call them dud they don't go off, then things got quiet. Got sent back for a rest [some rest too] nearly froze to death. [they bombed us]. 7-10-17 walking about in mud shivering with cold all day. 8-10-17 Raining and cold winds sleeping on wet mud, clothes wet through. Went up the line in the pouring rain, had to go about 4 miles in mud and water. We was covered in mud and our shoes full of water, and mud got in a bit of a dugout, but was over our shoes in water. 9-10-17 The straffing began, we was busy all day carrying for 2 miles, went into pauliaupille for wounded. Then the snipers fired at us, we had 4 of our boys wounded and 2 killed. Then we got shelled going down over shell holes, 3 more wounded and 1 killed, and the patient got killed. We was lucky we got on the mud, we had a shell hole for our home at night. Was shivering with cold and rained nearly all night, up to our knees in mud. Was carrying nearly all night. 11-10-17 Raining still wet through water was running off our clothes. Then we started to use the light railway, and then fritzy blew that up. Our luck was out, but got relieved about 4pm. Which was very thankful, but we took our dead boys back. We had 6 miles to take them to the cemetery, but they was buried respectable. When we got to our dressing station, we was told one of the boys had died from his wounds. Then we went into a camp for the night, up at 3am to entrain 11-10-17 Train moved off from St. Jean station at 8am for Epelex but detrained Watton. Then had to walk 5kiloms too our camp at Beningham, billeted in barns.

12-10-17 Done nothing only just getting a bit straight, but pouring with rain. 13-10-17 still raining and resting. 14-10-17 still back. 15-10-17 resting 16-10-17 resting. 17-10-17 resting. 18-10-17 Resting. 19-10-17 Moved off at 12am to entrain from Watton after 5kiloms march to

another place lillers then marched to Eeeudeques. Stopped the night, had a good time. Piano playing in the caffia 20-10-17 Moved of at 1pm for 8 kilom march to a place Molingham arrived 3pm, went into lines again. 21-10-17 Air raid civilians got wind up. Then quiet until 7-30pm, another air raid. Civies got in their cellars. Bits of shells flying about and bombs. We had to keep dark, but we had to make a rush at times. 22-10-17 Had orders to pack up and march off at 1.15pm. Went in motors which was 14kiloms to hospital for duty at Labeuveura. On dining hall duty, where there was plenty of food. 23-10-17 [Hospital] 24-10 17 [Hospital] 25-10-17 Hospital 26-10-17 On Hospital until 22-2-17, then went on police at Allowin at another Hospital. Stayed there until 21-1-18, then went to another Hospital at touqueres near Bethume. Fritzzy came over with his planes to see us and drop bombs, but no one was hurt. Then on the 3-1-18 he came again and killed several civilians. The next night he missed coming and he gave us a rest. But on the 5-2-18 he made up for times he did not come. But his bombs missed us, it only shook our billets. But we was used to that, so it did not frighten us. 7-2-18. Another surprise, Charlie came to see me. He had just moved to a place I had just left. We have been free from fritzy until the 16-2-18. He came again but dropped no bombs. He came 17-2-18 and he made us shift this time, he kept on for half an hour. They fetched 2 of his planes down in belhume, which was 10 minutes walk from us. He came again the 18-2-18 but his bombs dropped far from us, which we did not mind 19-2-18 The old time! 6 o'clock, we heard him coming over, but flying very low. But it was too fogy for him to see where he could drop them for the best, then he gave us a rest for about an hour. He came back and we knew it! and he dropped a few. I had just gone on night shift 11o'clock. He came again but passed over very nicely. 20-2-18 He came again, but the guns drove him back on the morning of the 21-2-18 At 2.am there was about 20 of our planes came over, they had been to visit old fritzy (some dirty work). It was too wet for him to come at night over us. 22-2-18 It was too windy and rough 23-2-18 (all quiet) 24- 2-18 " Raining " A big bombardment started at 11pm some distance away, which lasted until 1am on 25-2-18 then got quiet. "Swettingg on leave" When I got up after being on all night for tea, was told my leave was through. Went on duty all night, no sleep. 27-2-18 After coming off duty, went to breakfast then started to get my little bundle ready. 9am (Scabies inspection)11-30am for orders. Moved off to station 12am Bethume left Bethume station 1.30pm in trucks, changed into carriages for Boulougne. We got there with a struggle at 9pm. Went to billet for the night, they gave supper. We had no blankets but we done without them, being as we was coming home. Revalie was at 5.30am. But we was all washed before then. About 1 hour sleep, no blankets. 8.30am Marched to boat. Drawed our buns, then to get on the boat, but failed (full up). Away we marched back to the billet with long faces. Started for boat again at 1.30pm, but this time we succeeded. Then started off at 2-30pm. Sailed on a Belgian boat to Folkstone 4-30pm. Arrived Victoria 7pm. Got to Euston 7-15, no train until 9-40, only to Bletchley. Went off to sleep, guard woke me up. Slept in the waiting room, came on the workman train, arrived Wolverton 5.40am on the 1-3-18. A day of my leave gone the rest you know.

