

DIARY II

As indicated at the beginning of this document there is a significant lapse of time between the end of Diary I and the beginning of Diary II - from November of 1915 to October of 1917..

Wednesday, October 31, 1917 - Edinburgh

Started to pack up in the morning preparing for my journey to Reading, Berks, to join the Royal Flying Corps. Left Glencorse and the Royal Scots on the 4 p.m. train. It was rather hard saying good bye to all the boys and really leaving the regiment under whose wing I had been for the last 17 months. But I shall always belong to it more or less for I am only being attached R.F.C. at my own request and I'll always wear the Royal Scots uniform, I hope. It's one of which I shall always be proud, at any rate.

Met Lockhart in Edinburgh and had tea with him at the Picture House. We then went in to see the pictures. Went to the North British for dinner and met Scott, whom I knew so well in the 2nd Bn. at the front. He is home on leave and the hardships have made a complete wreck of him. Took the 11.0.30 train and was soon asleep in one of the comfortable berths.

Thursday, November 1 - (London)

Arrived London 8.30 a.m. Had breakfast at the Regent Palace. Then tried to find particulars regarding Reg's wounds but could get nothing. Had early lunch at the Regent Palace. Met Ross of the Argylls. He's the same nice chap and is trying to get into the R.N.A.S. relinquishing his army commission.

Took the 1.40 train from Paddington Station and arrived at Reading an hour later. Reported for duty. Was billeted at 194 King's Road and have as a roommate an R.E. officer, Norden. Went to the pictures in the evening but did not feel very well.

Friday, November 2 - Reading

Up at 7.30 and on parade at Wantage Hall Workshops at 9.30. Had lectures on observation in general and tips on flying at the front.

Norden, Fowles (a pilot) and I went to the Palace and saw a poor variety show. Not feeling well.

The Germans still seem to be pushing ahead in Italy and the situation is beginning to look very grave. The one silver lining these days is the British Army in Flanders. They forge ahead day by day against long odds, unbearable hardships and with

a courage that could not be surpassed by the bravest men imaginable.

Saturday, November 3

Paraded at Wantage Hall and were told to be ready to move on Monday morning. Drew my flying pit which makes me look and feel just like an arctic explorer. Took a rest during the afternoon by writing to Beth, Wilf and father. I get so lonesome for them all some times that it does not seem that life is worth living. And these dull days only make the outlook look more depressing.

Went for a walk in the evening but it was very dark and muggy. Went to bed early after the usual plunge in a civilized bath.

Sunday, November 4

Up at 8 a.m. and took a stroll. After lunch took a long walk up the river towards Tilehurst. It was very cold and enjoyed tea at the Cavensham Bridge Hotel. Had dinner at the Upper Ship Hotel with Norden of the R.E.s. It was a very poor dinner. Was feeling worse so went to bed early.

Monday, November 5 - Saturday, November 10

Learned that my orders had been cancelled so settled down to the week's work. I might now be made corps instead of army observer but I prefer to be with the fighting squadrons. Spend the week on learning the Morse Code (passed my first test), aerial photography, aerial gunnery, wireless, artillery observation and map work. It was all very interesting but hope that I may never have to use it. On Saturday morning received word to stand by ready to move on Monday morning to Hythe. I'm to get on a fighting bus yet, thank heaven.

The Germans are still pushing the Italians out of their own country. It is another unexpected disaster. We are gaining ground by an almost daily attack in Flanders. Gen. Allenby is gaining brilliant victories in Palestine. The British bulldog is showing them all how to fight.

Another revolution in Russia! All past work gone for nought and the country in a turmoil. She will never be able to keep us again during this war. Kerensky has flown but we'll hear more of him.

Have felt very ill all week so went to the doctor. He ordered me a week in hospital but have managed to escape that. Am sure I'll feel better soon and can feel no worse. Was lucky to hear that Reg's wound consists of a g.s. wound in the right

elbow. I hope I'll see him in this country soon again.
 Weather = very muggy and depressingg. We have not seen the sun
 for nearly a week.

Went up to see a doctor today, I felt so rotten. He
 advised me hospital for a week as I was much run down. But I
 cannot do that for it might mean being pushed back to the
 infantry and I wish to get on with the flying as quickly as
 possible. It's about time I was doing something in France once
 again anyway.

Sunday, November 11

Up at 8 a.m. for church parade for I wish to avoid the
 trouble of last week when the squadron commander endeavoured to
 punish me for the reason that vague orders had been issued. But
 I made it plain to him I think that it took a general to do that
 and headquarters seemed to be of that opinion too.

Came back to the billet at 100 a.m and went straight to
 my room and to bed for the day.. Found it very lonesome and was
 glad that Norden, my roommate remained inside most of the day..

Received a nice letter from Beth and am glad to hear
 that she is enjoying life in Edmonton. After all, I have a great
 deal to be thankful for and life will be more than worth living
 after this is all over.

Monday, November 12

Received my travelling orders and arrived in London at
 3:15 p.m. Just had time to rush across London, have tea at the
 Corner House and catch the 5:15 for Hythe.

Arrived Hythe 7:30 and after being medically examined
 had dinner. Norden and I managed to get a room together. There
 are five of us in all and it's the most comfortable billet I've
 struck since joining the Army.. We are in the Hotel Imperial
 right down on the waterfront. The sound of the surf breaking and
 the smell of the sea air made me feel better at once.. Most of
 the furnishings still stand intact in the hotel with the
 exception of the beds but we have very comfortable cots and clean
 sheets (what a luxury!) Best of all we have a real bath room
 next door and that is more than a treat. I think I'll keep that
 working overtime. Rooming with us are two observers and an Irish
 Guardsman - all nice chaps.

Phoned up the 11th Res.. Bn. but found that Inmy had
 just left for France the day before. Just my luck! and I did so
 want to see him for I've decided that old friends are the best,
 after all..

The Italiass are still retreatting and the situation looks very bad. Venice is now threathened. The British still keep pushing ahead in Flanders. The Americass have come in none too soon and there will be plenty for them to do in the future. Lloyd-George has gone to Italy and British and French troops are being rushed to the Italian front.

Tuesday, November 13

Up at 7 and to work at 8:30 a.m. Had a lecture and then to work on the Lewis gun. That is going to be our chief study for the next two weeks, before we do our flying. Carried on with the Lewis gun all day. I am just beginning to realize how little I know about the gun for the training here is most thorough.

Work till 4:30 p.m. and then study hour from 5 till 5:40 p.m. Took a run into Hythe and bought not books, drawing materials, etc.

Went to bed at 10 p.m. but am feeling much better today.

Wednesday, November 14 - Friday, November 16

Carried on with the Lewis gun, ring sight, aerial gun, etc. every day from 8:30 a.m. until 5:40 p.m. It is the same thing day after day but I'm enjoying it all very much. The weather is always muggy and there is little flying being done here these days.

The Italian line is stiffening somewhat, and the Franco-British aid seems to be doing some good. Lloyd-George has come in for a great deal of criticism for his very frank speech in Paris, regarding the manner in which we are waging war - not as Allies but as separate nations. To my mind it is what we needed and as a result we have the Allied War Council. We should have had it two years ago.

The R.F.C. and R.N.A.S. are being amalgamated and the new Air Force bill is going through its readings in parliament now. It will mean that I'll likely have to give up my army commission and be transferred to the Air Forces with a new commission. I would rather have retained my identity with the Royal Scots but "c'est la guerre."

Saturday, November 17

Worked on the Lewis gun all morning and passed my first two tests. In the afternoon Norden and I walked along the sea front to Hythe; had tea at Came's and spent the remainder of the time shopping.

Had a letter from Reg. He has had a bad wound in the elbow, but luckily no fracture. He has had a bad time of it being one of the last survivors of his battery in eight days in the Ypres salient. In France he had four operations but is now resting easier in hospital in Birmingham! He must find it lonesome but it is impossible for me to get leave just at present. However I'll do my best to keep him in letters. Also had news from Wilf who is foolish enough to wish to get back to the infantry or make a change of some sort.

Wrote letters in the evening and went to bed early.

Had a letter from Crawford. Two days after I left Glencorse the 3/The Royal Scots was moved to Mullingar, Ireland. No doubt we were expected some fighting there. I'm glad I escaped Ireland for they are awfully fed up with conditions.

Sunday, November 18

Up early and to work as usual for there's no Sunday rest here. But am just as pleased. Went ahead with the indoor (?) tests and work on the gun.

Nothing of importance happened. The weather was cloudy and dull as usual.

Monday, November 19

On the gun as usual but we started on firing on the ranges. It took me some time to become used to the Ring Sight. I used about 300 rounds.

Had letters from father and Aileen and Inny. Things seem to be going all right there though I suppose they are very lonely. Aileen seems happy, but she misses us all. Am glad to hear that she has such a good friend in Netty. Inny is at last in the trenches again and I feel sorry for him.

The Italians seem to be resisting more strongly but it is a great disaster. The Germans and Austrians are now attempting to force the Piave and I would not be surprised if the Italians were forced to take up a new line again. A rout cannot be stopped in a day. The more I see of this war the prouder I am that I am of British birth. We are the one nation that has made good in this war though I've no doubt the Americans (for they are for the most part of the same breed) will do just as well.

Tuesday, November 20

Another dull day but is brightened up considerably after lunch and there was a great deal of flying. Went on with our work at the ranges but some of the work is discouraging at

times.

Had another letter from Reg and he appears to be lonesome. But I am getting leave on Dec. 1st and will spend my four days with him. It will be a treat for both of us for I am just as eager to see him. It is now three years since we last saw each other and just by a miracle, nothing less, we are both alive today. And he is the best pal I ever had. It was a happy day for me for I also received word from Beth. By this time she, Mrs. Wate and Charles will be in sunny California. I do hope that the change will do Beth good. It would make me very happy if after the war I could carry on with my law down there. But it is impossible. I wish to be where I can make the most money and where I can make Beth happy. Money may be a curse as some people affirm but, after all, one cannot be happy without it, more especially Beth and me. But it's a long time to think ahead and the future is so uncertain that I really think it's a waste of my time to worry over it. And Beth is very happy these days, which is good news. I only wish that I could be.

Lloyd-George has scored another target today in the House when he replied to the ex-Premier. He swept everything before him he is such a powerful man. Thank God that we have such a man at the present. Lord Northcliffe who has just returned from his mission in the United States is making some startling statements but that is what this country needs. The old staid English Conservative would not alter his opinion if the world were to come to an end and the radical Northcliffe gets on the nerves of such people. Why we made such a muddle at the beginning of the war can best be answered by these same Conservatives. They nearly lost the war for us but thank heaven "the old order changeth yielding place to new."

Had letters from Reg's nursing sister in France but it was ten days late. Also had word from one of Reg's gun-mates regarding Reg's valuables which have been sent on to me. Wrote letters to Reg and Ross of the Gordons and Willf.

Wednesday, November 21

Did rotten work on the ranges today except on my firing at the aeroplane target. The weather was "muggy" so there was no flying.

Had a bad night of it last night - one of my old time sleepless nights that I had for so many months at the beginning of the year. The roar of the sea - we are just about 100 feet off the beach was likely the cause. Then the blind knob kept ticking on the window and at each tick some friend of mine was dying. When will I ever get over such weird dreams??

The British have made another push, this time in the St. Quentin direction. That is splendid work and no doubt we caught the Boche asleep. We have daily gains in the Palestine and it is splendid work. The Royal Scots - our territorials - some in for a lot of praise in today's dispatch. General Mandle's death of two days ago is a distinct loss to the Empire. A conference of American and British leaders, naval, military and political took place at Downing Street yesterday. It is interesting to think what this will mean in the future centuries.

Received Reg's parcel from France and wrote to Cpl. Mundy thanking him.

Thursday, November 22

The news today made great reading. The attack by the British from the St. Quentin line to the scarp was carried out without artillery preparation of any sort - an event unheard of in this war. The tanks - "and there were hundreds of them" - opened the way through the belts of wire. Our cavalry pushed on after the first system had been occupied by our good old "foot-sloggers". 8000 prisoners are reported so far. Over 100 of our low flying planes did great work in demoralizing enemy troops and luckily only eleven are missing. I felt better all day.

Carried on with range work. Fired about 600 rounds and managed to pass the "surprise" and "application" tests.

Received no mail but wrote a letter to Reg. I must be so lonesome for him and wish I could think of some way of "bucking him up".

Went for a long walk tonight with Norden along the seafront on the long promenade. The long deserted place seems to remind one of war as much as if one were in the trenches. The night was very warm and I was thinking of the once happy crowd that must have promenaded here in the good old days of peace.

Friday, November 23

More news of the great victory. Over 10,000 Boche prisoners and more coming. We are within $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles of Cambrai but from the look of the country we have some hard fighting to take it. An old custom has been brought back to life. The bells all over England were rung today. We need something like that in these dull winter days full of misery for most families. Worked all day on the ranges and did fairly well. Fired about 400 rounds. Am enjoying it all very much.

Weather - very warm and summerlike. There was plenty of flying from our aerodrome.

Saturday, November 24

Went on with the range work. The weather was cold so did not enjoy it as usual. Went into Hythe at tea-time for we had a half holiday - our only one for the week. Did some shopping and managed to secure some Can. and American magazines for Reg. Came home before dinner and wrote to Reg. After dinner spent the evening in writing to Beth and father.

The Italians are now holding the enemy on the Piane River line. Franco-British troops are assisting them. The Russians are out of it. The Bolsheviks held the balance of power and they are nothing but a gang of blackguards. They are offering peace terms to the Boche but the enemy is too wary a breast to ever pay much attention to him. He is sure - as we are - that the Bolsheviks will not last long as a government.

Sunday, November 25

On the ranges all day and made some fairly good scores. Received a letter from Mrs. Thomas and answered it. She is very good to me.

Monday, November 26

Carried on with the Lewis gun on the ranges and made a good score again on the "surprise" target. Finished my tests on the "stoppages" and short surprise target. This finishes my tests with the ground section.

Nothing of importance reported in today's papers. Col. House and the American mission to Paris are doing good work in coming to a complete understanding with the French. The American Mission was very successful in England.

Lord Northcliffe has refused the offer of Air Minister and his brother Lord Rothermere has been appointed and accepted.

Wrote to Reg and Beth.

Tuesday, November 27

Spent the day at the Lympne Aerodrome and at Aircraft Park. The latter is a huge place. Studied the different types of machines and watched dozens landing and starting on the take-off. Am very pleased with the "bus" that we shall have - the Bristol Fighter or the DH4. They are both "peaches" and the look of them gives one plenty of confidence. Some of our chaps took their first joy ride on the RE7's provided for that purpose. It was a most interesting day - probably the most interesting I have spent in the Army.

The Italians seem to be holding the line steadily now and I think the worst is over. The British are putting up a great fight in front of Cambrai and it was lively for us that we carried Bowman Wood in such a way the first day.

Wednesday, November 28

Spent the day at the aerodrome and it was quite as interesting as yesterday. In the late afternoon witnessed the most marvellous stunts I have ever seen in the air. A chap in a Sopwith Baby looped, side rolled, did the spinning nose dive and everything that I suppose one can do in the air.

Received a letter from Wilf dated November 3rd - somewhat belated. Also one from Inmy who is now well into the mud with the 78th Canadians. I pity him.

Wonderful flying weather. Bright and clear and just enough wind to be comfortable. Wrote to Reg that he may expect me on Saturday for sure. I am so anxious to see him. Also wrote to Mrs. Weste.

Thursday, November 29

Up before daylight as usual and caught the car-aaaaa to the aerodrome. Was left to myself all day so just wandered around making a note of things. Saw the new DH5 at close quarters for the first time. It is a dandy looking bus. Could not get a flight for the class is rather large as the last one was. But some of the chaps were sent to their squadrons today.

Friday, November 30 - London

Had a ceremonial parade at 10a.m. and it was a complete farce as it should have been.

Caught train at Hythe at 1:40 and arrived London 5 p.m... Had a room at the Regent Palace. Went to the Corner House for tea and met Oby O'Brien of Queens and the R.F.C. He has just had a crash with four hours more flying to do for his wings. As a result he now has 3 weeks leave and 2 months rest but he feels fed up about it.

Met Len Smith M.C. (S(Se. Queens)) and now a lieut. in the Can. Railway Troops. He is just going on leave to Canada after nearly 3 years in France. Oby, Len and I had dinner together at the Troisiers (?). Then went to the Coliseum and saw a good show.

Went back to the Jernyn Court Hotel and met Alex Fournier (Queens & 6th F. Co.) and Charlie Gage who used to captain the Warsity Rugby F. Team. Alex is a sub in the Can.

Engineers and Charlie in the Railway Troops. We chatted until about 3 a.m.

Saturday, Dec. 1 - Birmingham

Caught the 9 a.m. train and arrived at noon. Registered at the Queens and immediately went out to Reg - the hospital was about 6 miles out.

It was a very happy time for both of us - a time I've looked forward to for years. He was still in bed for the wound is still discharging. He looks older but fairly well. We talked of everything under the sun for we had not seen one another since Sept. 1914. It was the happiest time I have spent since leaving Edmonton last May and I think Reg felt the same. I stayed with him until I was afraid they were going to kick me out. Got into town late and went to bed.

Sunday, December 2

Up at 9 a.m. and after a late breakfast spent another day with Reg. I remained till 10 p.m. and even then the time seemed to fly so quickly that it seemed as though we only had a few minutes together. Reg has orders to be moved to the Canadian Convalescent Camp at Epsom so I've made arrangements so that I can take him down as he has to change trains in London and we may as well have the time together. Reg has changed a lot and has the right stuff in him. He will make good after the war. I can't understand Wilf's attitude at all but perhaps it is because I know Reg better.

Monday, December 3 - London

Had breakfast and phoned the hospital. They informed me that Reg's orders had been cancelled. Doubting this I went to the train at 11 a.m. and was told by the medical orderly that his name was not on the list. I bought a big box of chocolates and went out to the hospital only to find that Reg had been moved. I went to orderly room and tried to have the telephone orderly "crimed" but they would not tell me his name. I demanded to be paraded to the commandant but he was out (the liars).

Caught the first train to London feeling pretty sick over it all. Found I was too late to get to Birmingham. Had dinner with Oby and a naval officer who is working on a flying invention - a parachute from an aeroplane. Last month he experimented by dropping out of an R.E.8 first at 1200 and next at 5000 feet. He showed me the photos taken during his drop. He expects to perfect it for it is an invention that would have saved hundreds of airmen's lives by this time. He was an interesting as well as a courageous man.

The three of us went to the Coliseum after dinner. At about midnight met ~~000~~ Edge Reynolds (now a sub in the Pioneers) who was badly wounded and is now getting back to duty. The hotels were all filled up so slept in Len Smith's bed.

Tuesday, December 4 London-Epsom-Hythe

Up at 6 a.m. and out to Epsom to see Reg. Found him lying huddled up in bed, sick, in a miserable dirty hut without heat and no attention. Soon got the doctor and had a talk with him. As a result Reg was moved to the Manor War Hospital at noon. Had a short talk with Reg who seemed in good spirits before I left him. I certainly hated to leave him.

Arrived in London and had lunch with ~~000~~ Bill Armstrong, and Frank Jones of the 6th Co. Got all the news of the old boys. Just had time to get something for Beth for Christmas and catch the train at Charing Cross at 3 p.m. Arrived Hythe with all the bunch at 6:30 p.m. and went to bed right after dinner as I was feeling unwell with a cold.

The Russians have agreed on an armistice with the Germans and it looks like a truce between them.

Weather - cold & miserable.

Wednesday, December 5 - Hythe

Up at 6:45 and to work at 8 a.m. Just loitered about the aerodrome doing little of anything. To bed early as was feeling sick.

Received a nice letter from Beth. She seems to be the only one in Canada who has not forgotten me.

Thursday, December 6

My day for a flight - my first one. Had Lieut. Smith - a Canadian - for pilot. Left the Lympne Aerodrome in an R.E.7 at 9:15. Proceeded via Folkestone, Dover, Deal, Margate, Whitstable, inland over Canterbury, Ashford, Rye and home. The flight took over 2½ hours and we must have covered about 200 miles. Took quite a few notes during the first hour but it was cold work as we were at 8000 - 10000 feet altitude. The last part of the flight was off my map so uninteresting. But I enjoyed it all very much and am going to like it even better when I get into the fighting lines - the D.H.4 or Bristol Fighter.

Received a letter from Reg as I do every day now. He is in a good hospital now and enjoying it. Feeling unwell.

Friday, December 7

Did nothing all day except hang around the aerodrome. Had a lecture on the aerial camera after lunch. Went to bed early as my cold gets worse.

No news of any importance. The Boche caught us napping when they attacked on Nov. 30th. Someone is to blame and I hope he is well punished for it. The Italians are fighting well now. The Boche are concentrating their eastern troops on our front now and we are going to have an awful "do" there soon.

Saturday, December 8

Had the morning off to go to Hythe and cast my vote in the Can. elections. Of course I voted for Gen. Greisbach and Conscription. It seems curious that my first vote should have been for the Borden gov't. But if they always have as good a platform I shall always vote Conservative. There is no doubt about Can. opinion on this side.

Paraded to the M.O. who gave me medicine. Went to bed at noon as I felt pretty poorly - a bad cold and neuralgia in the head.

Monday, December 10

Have been in bed for the last two days. Felt better this p.m. and got up for awhile. Wrote to Beth, Reg., Aileen, Marj., and John.

Tuesday, December 11

Still feeling groggy but went up to the drome and did absolutely nothing but freeze all day. It is cold even in our flying coats. Felt very fed up.

Wednesday, December 12

Just hung around the drome. Learned nothing and did nothing. Had a game of bridge in the evening.

Weather still cold.

Thursday, December 13

The same as yesterday. Some of Group I were removed to Group II at the Redoubt. Kept warm all evening by the fire for my cough is very bad.

Parliament is making a full inquiry into the disaster of Nov. 30th when some senior officers were certainly to blame.

But this is Sir Douglas Haig's job. It is not the work of a lot of squealing politicians who overestimate a victory and are the first to squeal when we have a reverse. Such men think they know more about it than the man at the front.

Friday, December 14

Stayed around the Lymne Aerodrome all day. Read "Vanity Fair" most of the time. Examined our newest machine, the RTL, but its ability is still a guess.

Wrote letters to Reg and the girls. Weather - very cold.

Saturday, December 15

Transferred to Group II so went to the Lower Aerodrome at the Redoubt. Spent the first part of the morning shooting at clay pigeons with a repeater shot gun. At 11 a.m. had a 40 minute flight in a Big A.W. Think the pilot tried to put the wind up me and he nearly succeeded. Got into a sham-fight with another bus and we did a lot of stunting - none too pleasant for I had to stand up through it all.

Norden came down from the Redoubt after lunch. Went into Hythe for tea together and did some shopping. Met "Lizzie" MacDonalid who used to be in the 6th C.E.'s now a sub in the Can. Inf. Sat by the fire and read during the evening. Wrote a letter to Grandpa and one to Reg. It does not look as though I would get Christmas leave.

Sunday, December 16

Ready "Vanity Fair" all morning as after 12 hours flying duty we have 24 hours rest(?). Went to the drone in the afternoon but there was no flying as the weather was "dud" once again.

Played bridge all evening as there's absolutely nothing else to do.

There seems to be no movement on the various fronts except for our occupation of Jerusalem. But the fighting on the Italian and Western fronts is especially fierce and the suffering must be very terrible. The Russo-German armistice has begun and lasts until January 12th. The Russians will find themselves in a trap but I believe that its government will be overthrown again and then anything may happen. In the meantime it is quite evident that the Germans are transferring their troops to France and Italy and the masses are going to be great.

Monday, December 17

Went to the Lower drome but the flying weather is again a wash out. Lounged around the mess at the Redoubt. Had the chance of examining the Boche aerial machine gun which was on the Albatross brought down in England recently. I don't think it can touch our Lewis gun.

Played bridge in the afternoon and took a walk into Hythe. Had a lecture in the evening on "Aerial Fighting is 2' seaters'" by a Squadron Commander just back from the front. It was a poor lecture and a waste of time. Read till late.

Received a long letter from Wilf today and he seems to be determined on the change back to a combatant unit.

Tuesday, December 18

Having a morning's rest when we were informed that the remainder of Group II (Aerial Section) was to move to the Redoubt near the Lower Aerodrome to finish our flying. We all felt pretty sick about it, the hotel has been so comfortable. Packed up by noon and proceeded to the Redoubt by motor. The weather was "dud" so we spent the afternoon shooting at clay pigeons and at the small surprise targets. It was very cold and we came near freezing.

Came back to the Redoubt and got settled. We are isolated more or less - about four miles up the coast, and a bleak looking coast at that. The Redoubt was built in Napoleon's time for the purpose of repelling the then threatened invasion of England. Our room - Noble, Linford, Speakman and I - has concrete walls but we have a fireplace so that helps. The mess is just as rough but the food is very good. It is not comfortable to get back to a sleeping bag once again but I suppose we shall get used to it. I've experienced worse.

Sat around the fireplace all evening and chatted. An air raid but no news.

Wednesday, December 19

Had a strafe first thing for the servants had nothing ready in the morning. Result - we were severely strafed by the O.C.. Had a flight at 11 a.m. but it was too cold to be enjoyed. Just worked the gun on numerous targets and got rather fed up standing up in the "cold blast".

Off duty at noon. Was greatly encouraged when I saw the news that conscription had passed in Canada by a large majority. Had letters from Reg and Marj and a card from Beth who was just en route for Los Angeles. It seems ages since I last

heard from her.

Went down to the hotel for prep. but had a bath instead. An air raid was on at 6:30 so they calmly gave the order that we must walk to the Redoubt and must not have dinner at the hotel. The air was blue for awhile. We started out to get taxis but the bus arrived unexpectedly.

After dinner I was informed that the orderly officers had not arrived and I was "it". More gnashing of teeth. Visited my sentries and then sat down and wrote letters to Beth and Reg. Went to bed late after a long talk with Noble and Lunford of the Wasurcks.

The Russians have agreed on an armistice with the Boche and I rather hope that they get theirs. A great deal of air fighting as the weather is good for flying.

Last night a Gotha was brought down off Folkestone. One of our patrols went out to the rescue. The Boche put a time bomb under the wreckage. When it was being towed in the bomb exploded killing 2 or 3 of the sailors. The Boche should have been shot then and there. What would have happened to one of us in similar circumstances.

Thursday, December 20

Just got up in time for breakfast. Weather "dud" so no flying in afternoon. Did shooting at clay pigeons, a rather uninteresting job. Had a joy ride for 40 minutes with Walkington on an A.W.

Friday, December 21

Read "Vanity Fair" part of the morning and wrote a long letter to Beth. Received word from Reg. Had flying in the afternoon but did not get up there is such a crowd of us. Was much interested in a Bristol Fighter which was doing some stunting. Wrote to Reg and to father. Nothing happening on any front. Weather very cold. Air raid over us.

Saturday, December 22

Weather again unfit for flying. Went down to the Imperial for physical jerks in the afternoon and they kept us in the rain. Could not get a transport back till 6:45. Had tea with Norden in Hythe. Met Harry Spring who is with the Kiltie Bn. from Queens. Had mail from Reg. Don't know what I'd do if he didn't write often for he's the only one who ever takes the trouble to write. Air raid over us and we could not get back to the Redoubt until long after the dinner hour.

Sunday, December 23

Up before daylight and had two flights - one with Gt. Bolton and the other with Lieut. Lamb on the A.W.'s. Did not feel any too well for the smoke from the exhaust was pretty awful.

Sat around all afternoon and read Robert Service's "The Pretender". Another air-raid but the Boche put nothing our way.

Monday, December 24

Lounged around all morning for flying duty does not commence until noon. Read "The Pretender" and I like the moral of the story. But I'm afraid that even Robert Service himself cannot practice what he preaches. Like most ideals it is beyond the grasp.

Had six flights in the afternoon and enjoyed them though one of the tests was difficult. The joy-riding was splendid for there was a thin haze which seemed to cause a calm and settled feeling even when flying. Felt very tired by tea-time.

Just sat around my fire after dinner and thought of other Christmas eves - 1914, in which I sat by myself all evening in my room at Kingston - 1915 when I had a working party in the trenches at Kemmel Hill, how it rained and we got home after midnight to find most of the crowd in our hut at Louchoff Farm trying to keep up their spirits. About one third of them have "Gone West" - 1916 when I was in bed in the Samedson Hospital and very ill and not caring whether I also went West. Thank Heaven! Beth and the people have never known how close I was to it. - 1917 Received a lovely long letter from Beth and it has turned a miserable Christmas into a comparatively happy one. How I wish I were with her!

The crowd in the mess are "making merry" and here's hoping that next Christmas Eve we'll begin to practice what they are now singing "Peace on Earth and good will towards men". It has been a keen disappointment to be separated from Reg on this night.

Tuesday, December 25 - Christmas Day

Was up before daylight and was soon flying - finishing my test in Group II. Had an aerial combat (using my camera gun) with No. 5 machine. Then went for a joy-ride so as to get in my time. It was a treat to be able to sit down in my cockpit and get partially out of the wind. The day was gloriously bright but very "lumpy" below 3000 feet. Who ever imagined that I would ever be starting a Christmas day in this way!

Came back early and got cleaned up. Had Christmas dinner at noon - not a very hilarious affair for the majority of the boys were out. I don't blame them for wanting to get away from this redoubt. Such a God-forsaken place!

Sat by my fire alone all afternoon and thought and dreamed a lot. Finished my letter to Beth and started to read "Dear Enemy".

Was very ill in the evening - it must have been the plum pudding - and went to bed quite early. And so ended another Christmas day - my seventh from home and all that that means. I wonder where the next will be!

Wednesday, December 26

Still felt pretty rocky so just stayed by the fire all day as there was no flying. News has just come of our first raid on the German town just beyond the Rhine - Mornheim. It was a sorry day for the Hun when he struck at the British people rather than at the army. We will pay him back in his own coin with interest.

Had a letter from Reg and answered it. He was very disappointed at Christmas over my inability to obtain leave.

Thursday, December 27

Weather too "dud" for flying so had contests in stripping the M.G.. Had letter from Wilf who expects leave about the 6th of January.

The Russians are still carrying on with peace negotiations with the Huns. The former are going to be badly bitten. Weather - extremely cold and raw. Wrote to Aunt Vic.

Friday, December 28

Weather fit for flying but the group was too crowded to work me in. Saw the snap-shots taken during my aerial combat and they are fair. Heard from Reg and answered his letter.

Saturday, December 29

Had to take physical training on the sea front and it was very cold work. Sat by the fire all afternoon and evening and read Maeterlinck's "The Double Garden". His essay on "Sincerity" is especially fine but too idealistic for our human imperfect world. Also finished reading Robert Service's "The Pretender" - an interesting yarn with a splendid moral.

Sunday, December 30

Received a letter from Beth from California and was so glad to hear that they are enjoying the life there so much. Also heard from Reg. Answered both letters. I wonder why I don't hear from home. Have they forgotten us altogether?

After lunch had a flight with Kennedy for 80 minutes. Did 100 rounds at the ground silhouettes and then went inland for a joy-ride.

Played bridge in the evening. Weather misty and miserable.

Monday, December 31

The last day of 1917 and what a year! I only wish that I could live the first five months of it over again.

After lunch had a flight with Kennedy. Had an aerial combat with my camera gun and a long joy-ride. Went inland but had a difficult time getting back it was so "bumpy". The bus was never steady for two seconds at a time. Had gun-stripping contests in the mess.

Received a wire from Hoogterp(?) now on leave in London but it is impossible for me to get away. Wrote to father, Hoogterp and Inmy and at last got a letter off to Clayt. Butchart.

Tuesday, January 1, 1918

Did practically nothing all day. Weather dud for flying. Just sat by the fire by myself reading and between times thinking of the New Years' days of the past years.

Wednesday, January 2

Flying as usual. Mostly joy riding just to get in flying time. Kennedy, my pilot is a decent fellow and we enjoy our runs in the air together. Wish that I could go overseas with just such a fellow.

Thursday, January 3

Did 2 hours flying in morning so as to finish my Group 2 flying. Was informed that I was to be drafted overseas about the 9th and to leave the school about the 5th. Have 1½ hours to finish yet. Had about 10 minutes for lunch and then went back to the drone to do my hour's height and m. gun test at 10,000' on the Bristol Fighter. Started the run at 3 p.m. and we climbed

like a bird. To be behind such an engine as the 200 H.P. Rolls Royce was a treat. The speed is so great that I found it impossible to stand up in the cockpit. It simply threw me back over the fuselage. I was nearly frozen before I landed.

Friday, January 4

Up before daylight and had my choice of the Bristol Fighter or D.H. 4. Took the former. Noble on the D.H.4 was to have an aerial combat with me at 10,000'. Our bus rose and about 9000' our engine broke out in flames. We dived and side-slipped to 3000'. The fire died out, so the engine was started and once again we rose to 10,000'. Just beginning to work my gun I noticed shavings coming out from underneath my tail but could not make my pilot understand. Carried on with the combat and after firing rocket dived for home. Landed but bounced about 40 so started up again. Went around drone but engine conked. Nearly took the top of a hangar but managed to land right side up. Bus declared dud for the day.

After lunch went up with the rest of the draft to Sandling and went through the gas chamber and finished the test.

Played bridge in the evening. "The End of a Perfect Day"

Saturday, January 5 - London

Up at daylight and packed up. Went down to Hythe and wired to Reg to meet me in London. Wrote the exam (did fairly well) and caught the 11 o'clock train for London.

Met Reg at 2 p.m. at the Regent Palace Hotel. He was looking very well and was awfully glad to see him once more. Had lunch and we spent the rest of the day chatting.

Sunday, January 6 - February 5

Up at 6:30 but did not get to the Manor War Hospital at Epsom until 10 o'clock. Saw Reg's Sw.C.O. and obtained four days' leave for him. Came into town and Reg and I got a room together.

For the next month our times together were happy ones. I reported to go overseas three times but each time was turned down. On Jan. 26th I even got as far as the boat at Folkestone.

Reg had to go back to Epsom - to the Canadian Convalescent Camp, this time - on the 15th but when he could not get into town for the day I went out and spent the day with him. Altogether, it was the happiest time I've had since leaving home.

Saw many old friends in the month - Doc Preston, Doc Edwards, Cal Lawrence, Barney Langford, Bill Emery, Soup Jardine, Rae Smith, Paul Scammell and many other friends and acquaintances.

Wilf arrived in London on Jan. 25th but we saw very little of him. He showed Reg little consideration and neither of us could understand his attitude. But Wilf has always looked at things from a different view point from I and I suppose that shall always be the same. It's both our faults, I suppose.

Reg's arm is still stiff and to me it looks as though he had a permanent injury. But it might have been a whole lot worse.

Tuesday, February 5

Went down to see Mrs. Thomas with Reg. We explained our absence to her dinner of the previous night and we only have Wilf to blame for it. Mrs. Thomas is certainly a real mother.

Reported to H.Q.R.F.C.C. at Mason's Yard and along with 15 other F.O.O's I'm to be sent to No. 1 School, Navigation and Bomb-Dropping, Stonehenge, Salisbury Plain. The place has a bad rep. and I would much rather have gone to France. Reg and I had our last tea together then I sent him off to Epsom for we had decided that he should stay in town with me the previous night. Was very sorry to part.

In the evening I wrote to Beth, Iman, and Norden. Went to bed early.

Wednesday, February 6 - Stonehenge Beth's Birthday

Up early and packed. Took the 11 a.m. train from Waterloo Station to Amesbury. Had to wait around the latter place for three hours awaiting a transport.

Arrived at the Aerodrome in a pouring rain and such a woeeful, god-forsaken looking piece of country I've not seen in a dog's age. Six miles from civilization. Our camp is at Larkhill - two miles from the drome. Got settled in the hut (about 15 in each hut) by dinner time and although I met many of my friends from Hythe and they all had a welcome hand for me even that could not buck me up at all. The mess is also rotten.

Thursday, February 7

Up at daylight with a severe headache. Went over to the drome and was detailed to no. 2 night flying squad with a pilot by the name of Inglesby - a R.N.A.S. man. Did nothing all day so came home early in the afternoon as I was absolutely fed

up. Had a sleep before dinner and felt better.

Weather = still raining. Wrote to Reg.

Friday, February 8

Felt better today. Went over to the drone and had an hour's run in a F.E. with a pilot named Hornsby. Went over Salisbury, Warrminster and Beechingstone. Enjoyed it very much. Had a slight crash on landing, for our engine went dud and we landed too hard. Stopped inside 30'.

Came home early in the afternoon and after a shower bath and dinner I went to bed early.

Saturday, February 9

Over to the drone by 8:30 and took a short lecture on aerial navigation. Was ordered to take a flight (cross-country) with Sub-Lieut. Clarke (R.N.A.S.) to Bournemouth. Six of us in F.E.'s started out but we soon lost track of them. Later we learned that they landed for there was a wind of over 40 m.p.h. at 1500'. A snowstorm came on but we ascended above the clouds to 5200'. For the next half hour we flew by compass but a W.S.W. wind was causing us to drift considerably from our course. We dove to below 1000' and our troubles started. It was extremely bumpy and we never flew even for a moment. I was thrown from my seat three times. Arrived at Bournemouth and came back with the wind in record time. But ground mists prevented us from going above 10000'. We made a bad landing up wind and crashed our machine. Neither of us was hurt - a very lucky event. The bus was pretty badly smashed. The other five had never flown and with a dud pilot we should never have got back.

News came in of Smith and Jewell two of our fellows who had to make a forced landing yesterday at noon. They were both killed and the machine burned. I remember Smith at Hythe. He was just a kid.

SaSa around in the afternoon awaiting orders which never came. Received a letter from Reg and it looks as though his wound was more or less permanent.

Sunday, February 10

Had an early lecture on meteorology by Capt. Cave R.E. Attended a lecture on parachute flares for night work. Paraded to the Chief Instructor to see if I could not get back to day-work and DH4's or DH9's. There seems to be little chance. Came home early and had the usual bath, shave and dinner and read Emerson all evening.

Received welcome letters from Beth and Mrs. Waste and a card from Reg. At home I'm afraid they have forgotten that I exist.

Weather = dud for flying. Gale 60 m.p.h. at 2000' and cloudy.

Monday, February 11

Took a lecture on air navigation in morning. Had some formation flying after lunch = my first (and I hope, my last) in one of the old BE2E buses. They are certainly rattle traps as compared with our present machines and did good service the first two years of the war. Weather = clear but 30 mile wind at 2000'.

Tuesday, Feb. 12 and 13th

Nothing happens = just the day-to-day do-nothingness which gives one time to think what damn fools we all are. In the long-ago we thought of war as a great adventure as in the romantic past. How little we know in this apparently enlightened age!

Wednesday, February 14th

Came back to the hut at noon to learn that the dozen of us in this hut are isolated. Turner has the measles. By tea-time we were all like a crowd of school boys in the same predicament but I'm afraid we shall all sicken of it before our ten days is over.

Thursday, Feb. 15 - Tuesday, February 19

"Still going Strong" but wish that I could have been flying during the glorious weather of this last four days.

Have been walking and seen the Druids' Temple, or what remains of it, at Stonehenge. Have also seen the famous oaks in their forest SSE of Larkhill. But in these walks we can never seem to get away from Salisbury Plain and the military hustle and bustle which is a part of it. We have played cards but life is too short to spend much time on such a game. My greatest enjoyment has been in answering Beth's, Mrs. Waste's and Reg's letters which I have been receiving day by day = besides writing to others; and reading. Have especially enjoyed reading Emerson's "English Traits and Representative Men" though the latter part is too solid to do justice to it in a noisy hut such as ours. Am now reading Thackeray's "The Virginians". How have I ever reached this age of life without becoming a lover of Thackeray. Every page of it is worth its weight.

No one has the measles yet but I feel certain that

somebody is "for it" - hope that I'm not the victim.

Wednesday, Feb. 20 - Saturday, Feb. 23

The same old round of getting up late, a walk, a read, lunch, write letters, tea, a walk and then settled down for the evening and late to bed.

Have managed to pass the time pleasantly enough reading Emerson and Thackeray, writing letters to Beth and home.

Nothing happens at the front but the air-fighting becomes more and more intense (thank heaven!) and for the first time during the war I think we can truthfully say that we are gaining the superiority.

We get out of quarantine tomorrow and seven go to 98 sqdm. including Dardiss, MacDonald, and Odium. I am sorry to see them go. No word from home yet but am thankful that Beth & Reg keep up the correspondence.

Sunday, February 24

Up early and over to the drome at 8:30. Was sorry to hear that Evans was killed while nightflying last night.

Ossett (London Scottish and R.F.C.) have managed to get together so we started out first thing for some cloud flying. The B.E.2E was dual control so I took my first lesson in running a bus by myself. My faults were that I climbed too much - we were already at 4000' but I had few instruments. A mist came up, we were lost, landed and found ourselves at the Central Flying School at Upavon. I took control coming home but dived too much when banking and turning. However that's only my first lesson.

In the afternoon flying was washed out but we obtained a bus, went over to Old Sarum and landed at 98th Squadron. Met some friends and we had tea. Did not get home until 5:40 (nearly dark) and were posted as missing.

Received letter from Jim & Eva.

Monday, February 25

Weather was "dud" so we had no flying. Received letters from Reg and Mrs. McIntosh (Princess Rupert) the lady whom I met the day I left Edmonton. Attended a couple of lectures on meteorology and navigation.

Tuesday, February 16

Up before 6 a.m and was flying before 8. Scott and I went for cloud-flying but they were too high. Got into a sham fight over Salisbury with a DH9 but our old BE2E was too slow. Had some more lessons and managed to fly even though I did a lot of side slipping as I had no bubble in my seat. Went home after an hour's joy-ride. Obtained another bus (BE2E) at 09:50 and did another 45 minutes. The wind was blowing a gale and it was very bumpy so was not keen on taking control.

From noon there was a 24 hours holiday so sat around the hut during the afternoon. Received a letter from Aunt Vick which I answered. Read Thackeray's "The Virginians". Also received a letter from Reg who seems to be well but "fed up".

Weather = raining and cold.

Wednesday, February 27

No flying - the weather dud. Received a letter from Mrs. MacIntosh of Price Rupert, the woman whom I met on the day I left Edmonton last May. It is cheering to know that people remember one.

Thursday, February 28

The last day of a none too profitable month. Was out early in the morning on a BE2E and formation of seven machines. There was a 40 mile wind at 2500 feet so we had none too pleasant a time. At 5 o'clock Scott and I obtained a BE2E and worked dual for half an hour. Did some stall turns and landed before dark. The evening calm made the run very enjoyable.

Friday, March 1

March came in like a lion so there are hopes for the future. Had the lectures on navigation and meteorology until we were absolutely fed up. Had further word from Reg.

Saturday, March 2

Weather dud for flying and did not feel well so paraded sick. Took a short walk but felt all in. Played cards with Turner, Scott, and Henderson, the Canadian who has just arrived.

Sunday, March 3

Another dud day. The Russians have finally made peace on the German terms. We shall be fighting them before the end.

Monday, March 4

Splendid flying weather so got in four flights. The last one was on a BE2D (Old Black Joe) - my first run on this type. Just before we went up a DH4 crashed (went into a spinning nose dive at 200 feet), caught on fire and killed Collins and Mears. It was a very unfortunate accident. I wonder what there is about the flying game that makes one so peculiar?? @ "taking off" we could see the crash right in front of us but it did not unnerve us. I think that, after the first flight, an airman, by some strange process becomes an extreme fatalist. My pilot has had numerous crashes but today, his nerve is as good as ever. I mean that consciously his nerve is as good but no doubt, sub-consciously it is affected. But it's a case of "the last straw" and if a man flies for a lengthy period the breaking point will be reached some day. On days of much flying I have felt like a wet rag at the end but up until the time that I had made my final landing I have felt as "right as rain". It is a puzzle which the doctors of the next few years will have to solve.

March 5th, 6th and 7th

Three days of dud weather as we have been having a gale - the result of cyclones and anti-cyclones in Norway, Humland and the Atlantic. Spent the time in taking lectures on navigation, bombs and bomb-dropping, meteorology, etc. Received two letters from Beth and one from Mrs. Waste.

Friday, March 8

Low clouds but little wind. At 3 o'clock Scott and I started in a DH4 (Rolls Royce) to climb above the clouds on a compass course, fly on a course and dive through on back-bearing. We were alone at 4300 feet but in diving took a northerly course and saw a piece of country which neither of us had seen before. We buzzed around and I had a hard time signalling to Scott. I finally pin-pointed a railway junction at Danizes(?) both on ground and map and signalled the bearing to Scott. We were just about to make a forced landing as our petrol was getting short. We made the aerodrome all right after a 100 mile jaunt. The two other DH4's were still lost so, bad as we were we did better than the others. We learned later that Newman had a forced landing (lost) and crashed.

Saturday, March 9

The weather was lovely - clear and a 15 mile wind. Got a BE2E and had aerial combat with Barnett in a 2E. He got on our tail and sat there the whole time. Had a short time in control.

At noon Scott and I got a BE2D, climbed to 2000 feet and looped the loop - my first. We stuck on the top and left our

seats but our belts held us. It was a rotten moment, upside down but Scott turned on his engine too soon. Did a spinning nose dive and rambled to the drone for lunch.

Had another letter from Reg and one of his from Marj. It was good to hear from home though it was second hand. Also received two huge bundles of magazines from Beth and Mrs. Waste.

Sunday March 10

Lectures in morning, flying in afternoon. Five of us (DH4s) started a long distance bombing raid on Marlborough. Crossed the enemy line at Devizes. Were immediately attacked by five scouts (SEs, camels and pups) and they got the better of us. Scott was ill so flew with Newman. Got some good shots with my camera gun at the scouts at 9000 feet.

Had a lecture from a colonel who had been doing spy work in Germany from 1903 till 1911. It was one of the most interesting talks I have ever heard.

Campbell in a BE2E was zooming on some people when he went too low, killed two R.F.C. boys and seriously injured another and crashed. He is now under arrest for manslaughter. I feel extremely sorry for them all.

Monday, March 11

Scott and I went up with a formation (DH4) at 9:40 a.m.. Obtained splendid shots with my camera gun. At 2000 feet it was good flying and enjoyed the fine day. Thirty-six hours leave started at noon so we came back to Larkhill and completed our days' cleaning up.

Have just decided to take a good rest for am not feeling up to the mark tonight. Would like to have gone to see Reg but feel that I cannot afford it.

The Germans are attacking in different places - with no success. We are steadily gaining supremacy of the air. Lately we have bagged 273 Boches machines and lost 88.

Tuesday, March 12

Every bone aching so got up late. No doctor arrived so went over to the drone at noon and saw the naval surgeon. Just a bad attack of la grippe with a high temperature. Crawled home and after a good hot bath, went to bed and read as long as possible. A new crowd of F.O.'s arrived so the noise did not help my head to any extent.

Weather - very warm.

Wednesday, March 13

Feeling worse than ever so remained in all day. Read the magazines which Mrs. Waste so kindly sent me. Wrote to Mrs. Waste. Weather - dull.

Thursday, March 14

Feeling badly but reported on parade and spent the morning at the ranges. Made 10 shillings in a sweepstake - not that my shooting was excellent but that of the others was bad. Could not continue after lunch so the doctor ordered me 24 hours in billets.

Received a letter from Reg enclosing Marj's of Nov 1st.

Weather - clear but cold and raw.

Friday, March 15

Sat around hut and felt better by evening but still feeling sore.

Saturday, March 16

Went over to the drome but weather dud for flying so took things easy at lectures.

Sunday, March 17

Had a formation flight in the afternoon. We started for a 200 mile flight but washed out as the machines were pretty dud. Weather - cold.

Monday, March 18

Went on a formation in the morning and had a good run for 45 minutes.

After lunch was told to pack up and proceed to Old Sarum to join 98 squadron for overseas immediately. I was certainly glad; in fact could have wished for nothing better. With five other observers arrived at Old Sarum and then on to Salisbury for the night. Had a bad time getting accommodation with a result that I slept in the bath room of a hotel. But anything felt good after the Larkhill huts.

Tuesday, March 19 - Salisbury

Went up to the drome at Old Sarum and met all the old crowd and got a welcome. Went back to town and packed kit. Obtained a billet with Charlie de Grise and it certainly felt

like home. Sat in front of the fireplace after dinner and wrote to Beth and Reg. The feathers felt good.

Wednesday, March 20

Went up to the drone. Met George Raitt and Red Doidge just back from Italy. Ran into Towelles(?) with whom I had such a good time in Sepp., 1916 at Boulogne. He is now taking his wings. The C.O. (who is a price in disguise) granted me 48 hours leave and run up to London and out to Epsom. Met Truman in London who told me that Wilf was still in town.

Was glad to see Reg again. The day was beautiful and we walked in the country until dark and had a good talk. Then went and had tea to the picture show and then had dinner at the Spread Eagle. Was sorry when I had to catch the last train to London at 10 p.m. It was such an enjoyable day for both of us.

Went round to the R.A.C. and saw Doc Edwards who is back in England for both wings. He is just the same old Doc. Went around to the Savoy Hotel and tried to locate Wilf but he was still out. Went back to my room at the Golden Cross Hotel and had a long talk with Inmy before turning in.

Thursday, March 21

Up at 9 a.m. and had breakfast with Inmy. Wilf called up so we walked till noon in Hyde Park and watched the bloods riding in Rotten Row. Met Reg at 1:30 p.m. when he came in to see me. He just had good news- his M.O. had just marked him 179 which means home and probably total discharge. It was splendid news. Got Wilf and Inmy and the four of us went around to the Au Petit Riche in Sobo Square where we had a good lunch. Inmy, Reg, and I then took in the show at the Palladium for Wilf had to catch his train for Bramshott Camp. Reg and I had tea at the Corner House, a walk and dinner at the Helborn Restaurant which we enjoyed very thoroughly. Saw Reg off on his train from Waterloo Station and then caught my train at 9:20. Did not arrive home until 3 a.m. and felt very tired.

Friday, March 22

Up at 8 a.m. and out to the drone. Came home before noon and had a good lunch and a rest. Went out to the drone in the evening for orders.

In the evening talked to Red Doidge and wrote letters to father and Reg. We move tomorrow.

Saturday, March 23

Went to the drome and then back to St. Mark's Road. Packed and left after lunch. Did not like to leave the motherly old landlady - the first landlady or billet mother I've ever met who can really be called a friend. She was an Irishwoman with a big heart. Caught the train and arrived at Southampton at 4 p.m. Sailed at 7 p.m. onboard a transport which was carrying 1000 Americans (men and officers).

Sunday, March 24 - Le Havre

Woke near Southampton at 6:30 a.m. after having snatched a couple of hours sleep. Docked at 10 a.m. Visited Tortovis(?) with Charlie de Grise and old Mac. Arrived at No. 1 Rest Camp for lunch and learned that our transport had been commandeered up the line. The great Boche offensive is now in full swing and we have been forced to yield ground though a stouter resistance has never been put up by any troops. Our fellows are being massacred in the thousands but the Hun casualty list is also heavy.

Had a splendid dinner at Tortovis and saw more food than I've seen in the last ten months. Our kit has gone astray so we do not know where we stand. The blankets with which we were issued felt cold on the tent floor.

Monday, March 25 - Wednesday, March 27

Still no signs of our transport and now we are informed that we have to return to England. No one knows what the future has in store for us.

Spent the four days in wandering around like lost sheep, walking the promenades, the boulevards and stopping at the cafes for meals. It certainly gave me an insight into French life. Le Havre is typically French so they say but can't say that I would ever enjoy the life of the average Frenchman.

The battle still rages and the Boche now have us pushed back beyond Albert and nine miles from Amiens. There has been splendid organization on their part but they have not reckoned on the moral of the British Army and just as of old that is the first and most important factor in the fighting efficiency of any army. The worst part is over.

The 9th and 51st (Highland) Divisions in which are the 11th, 12th and 8th Royal Scots have especially distinguished themselves and it was good news. I hate though to think of the friends which I am losing.

Received news of our drome near Aire which we were to occupy. The Boche has bombed it out of existence.

Thursday, March 28

Had breakfast at the British Officers' Club for I simply can't stick that Rest Camp any longer.

We have word that we are to embark for England at 8:30 p.m. Had a farewell dinner at Tortorviss and really felt sorry when I had to leave Le Havre for I like the place. And now for England with no lights, gloomy money-grabbing people and shortage of food and good fellowship.

Embarked at 9 p.m. and went to sleep at 4 a.m. on a seat in the smoking saloon.

Friday, March 29

Landed at Southampton at 10:30 a.m. Had breakfast and waited around the docks till 1:30 p.m. when we entrained. Arrived London 4 P.M.; had tea at the Corner House and met Immy at the Strand Palace Hotel. Learned that Wilf was still in town. Left London, arrived Sandling Junction at 8:30 p.m. Finally got a billet in Hythe with de Grise and MacDonald. The bed certainly felt good after our wanderings.

Saturday, March 30

Got my gun into shape and had a couple of flips with Holiday, my pilot. He is certainly a good one and with the luck he has had with crashes and fines in the air I ought to be alright.

Sunday, March 31 - Lympe Castle

The day was lovely, bright and warm - an ideal Easter Sunday. Spent most of my day at our mess at Lympe Castle. The mess is the most comfortable that I have seen of any of the British army messes. Our anteroom is of oak panelling and ceiling and the billiard and card rooms are the same. The old-fashioned huge fireplaces were a treat.

In the morning we heard that the Lympe Aerodrome was to be our base and that we were to do our bombing on Humland from there. But this was found to be only a rumour. In the afternoon we got word to pack off and proceed to France in the morning. Spent the evening in writing to Beth, Reg, father and Immy. Went to sleep in one of the easy chairs in the anteroom for there are no beds.

Monday, April 1st - Boulogne

Up at 6:30 and proceeded to Folkestone. Had a walk on the Leas. Embarked at 1:30 and got to France in time for tea.

Walked to Rest Camp at Outreau and St. Martin's. Felt very tired.

Met Jack Kincaid who just got out of hospital after having been wounded. He was the same old Jack.

Went to bed(?) early. The bed consisted of four blankets and the weather was as cold as that army man - "Billybee-dammed."

Tuesday, April 2 - Boulogne & St. Omer

Was first awakened at 3 a.m. by a Hun aeroplane over us. He dropped his eggs but never hit us. The gunfire was intense from our Archies.

Was again awakened at 4 a.m. by an orderly saying we were to move off at 4:45 a.m. This was unexpected. The walk to the Gare Centrale in the half-morning light was a weary one. Had breakfast(?) at the Louvre. Boulogne is crowded with officers who cannot get up the line.

Entrained for St. Omer and it took us nine hours to travel 80 miles. I was detailed to march the squadron to camp and felt pretty fed up. Had dinner with de Grise and Mac at the Hotel de France. Went back to my billets (not a real one) and slept soundly.

Wednesday, April 3 - Clairmarais

Went out to the aerodrome at Longuevesse and found our machines. My bus is wiped off with a dud engine. Good-bye to 306000 Holiday was given another one - 6154 - which is also dud.

Had lunch and went out to our new aerodrome at Clairmarais. Found our bomb-store on fire and the bombs going off quite merrily. Our huts are pretty awful and the whole aerodrome is not what it might be. Holiday and I go together and got our hut fixed up and managed to steal a stove. There is nothing to eat out here so we went over to a farmhouse and had eggs and potatoes by 10 p.m. It did not take me long to get into bed after that.

Thursday - Friday - April 4 and 5

Weather still dud so spent my time in getting my gun into working order and fixing up my cockpit. The engine is still missing and Holiday's gun dud - a nice outlook for a show.

Had three letters from Beth, one from Mrs. Waste and three from Reg. Answered Beth's and Reg's and hope to have time tomorrow to answer Mrs. Waste's.

The guns for the last two days have set up a terrible roar just east of us on our front. We hear that the Boche are attacking between Messines and south of Armentieres. The Portugesse (those damn dagoes) have retired and left both British flanks in the air so we have been forced to withdraw to the Messines Ridge. It breaks one's heart to have to yield some ground which we have held since the 1st Battle of Ypres, 1914.

Saturday, April 6

The day was fine so we were up bright and early getting our bus and guns into shape. Had three flights but the engine is still dud. It started on a formation to Dunkerque and back but had to fall out. My gun is hopeless and am "fed up" wasting my time on it. The fight still goes on just east of us and messages state that the Boche have Armentieres and Ploegsteert Wood.

Sunday, April 7

Up early again and testing engine and guns in the pair. Am discouraged over it. Boche still advancing slightly but there has been a serious bungle on someone's part.

Monday - Wednesday, April 8 - 10

Weather dud for three days and the aerodrome a sea of mud.

I have held up the Boche advance but things look serious. We have retaken Messines but the enemy protective cavalry has nearly reached Nieppe Wood. We were "standing to" all day waiting for a raid on the Boche but the clouds never lifted.

Thursday, April 11

"Standing to" at daylight and ready for a raid. The weather lifted after lunch. Took off at 3 p.m. and climbed to 14000'. It was very cold. We crossed the lines and immediately got my first experience of Archie and did not like it. We dropped our eggs on Wernicq (2 - 112 pounders to each machine) and immediately turned. Taylor dropped behind coming home so we waited for him. He will have to buck up or some old Hun is going to nab him some day soon. We scored several hits on the town and I managed to get off a good many rounds at the trenches and roads. Altogether it was a good show and A and B flights also did well.

We saw poor old Ypres and there seems to be little left of it - much less than when I saw it last in April, 1916. Strange to say it is just two years ago this evening that I last saw Ypres. But the day was glorious and am glad that I'm

initiated - at last.

Friday, April 12

This was our 'push' day. We were up at daylight and ready to strafe the Hun. Set off on the first trip at 6:40 a.m. with Comines as our objective. Climbed to 11000' going by Dunkerque, Hazebrouck and Bailleul. Dropped bombs at 8 a.m. and scored several good hits. Fired 120 rounds. The Archie's shelled up with a heavy bombardment but never touched us. We landed at 8:40 a.m. and was very cold for the temperature at 10000' is very low.

After lunch we set off on a journey which proved to be one of the most thrilling few minutes which I have ever lived. We took up the usual 2 - 112 pound bombs and climbed to 3000'. The Boche had attacked and taken the village of Neuf Blequin just east of Nieppe Forest. Driving at 130 m.p.h. we got over the village at 1500'-2000' and made 5 hits out of 6 bombs. My right bomb (112 lbs) failed to release. Saw live Hun targets in the village and strafed them with my gun. The Archie shelling was fierce and broke around us very closely, the shrapnel whizzing past us. It was lucky that only three of us made up the formation. As it was one burst so close that the flt.-commander's engine was stopped and thought that he would have to land somewhere near the Huns. We landed at the drone just 20 minutes after we set off but I think it was one of the most if not the most exciting few moments of my life. Found a shrapnel hole through the left wing but no harm done.

Our third show took place after tea when we bombed Steenwercke which the Boche has captured a couple of days ago. This was a comparatively show which we did at 4000'. The whole countryside was in flames and smoke as a result of the day's air work. We made use of the smoke and sun and got in and out without being shelled. Was disappointed to see one of my bombs drop in the centre of a field near the town.

Brown and Odum had their controls shot away and when landing crashed horribly. Neither was killed miraculously, but both were horribly shaken and cut. Brent flying with Flt.-Commander Atkinson was shot through the leg by Hun machine gunners.

Just at dark we were ordered to fly back to another aerodrome west of St. Omer but it was too late. The drone at Marie-Cappell and others were evacuated and the REE's, Bristol Fighters and SE E's took refuge at our drone. About 30 machines came rambling in and it was a wonderful sight. There were lucky landings (it was after dark) and only 6 crashed. We were kept busy cleaning away wreckage, pulling horribly maimed men out to make room for others to land, etc.

Shortly after Hun night machines crossed our lines and bombed St. Omer and knocked a good bit of it to pieces. The Huns were still attacking just east of us. French and British cavalry and infantry in being rushed up with all speed in order to stop the advance.

Got something to eat at a farmhouse, lit the fire and prepared to sit up for the night for all our kit has been packed and sent on. It has been one of my hardest and most exciting days of the war.

Received two letters from Aileen, one from Beth and one from Mrs. Waste. It is hard to realize that there is one spot on the earth where peace reigns. It is another world entirely.

Saturday, April 13

Up at 5:30 a.m. for I was too uncomfortable and cold. Wandered around in the morning mists trying to collect my thoughts and incidentally to obtain something to eat. Managed to get a piece of bread and a glass of milk at a peasant place after begging for an hour for there is not a solitary thing to eat at our place. Had to start my own machine and we left for our new aerodrome at Alquines (W. of St. Omer) at noon. The C.O. had something ready to eat; we were assigned huts and soon were sleeping on our blankets. We are a war-worm-looking crowd.

Sunday, April 14

Received a letter from Reg and this, along with a good night's sleep, made me feel better. Holiday, de Grise and I went into St. Omer by the tender and had a good meal which set us back 54 francs - a robbery. Could not get into the cashier's so we were all broke.

The enemy is still advancing and the refugees from Baillaul, Hazebrouck, and smaller towns are pouring in by thousands. The St. Omer people have the "wind up" and many are preparing to move. The situation is critical - moreso than at any other time during the war I should say.

Wrote to Beth and Reg. Weather - dud.

Monday, April 15

Weather still dud so spent my time in getting our tin hut and stove fixed up. Wrote a long letter to Aileen and Betty Robinson.

The news is anything but promising. The masses of French and British which we saw passing through St. Omer yesterday are evidently not in action yet.

Set out to bomb Menin at 11:30 but our engine went dud at 4000' and we were forced to come home. (?) split up formation. Fawcus, Dardiss still missing. Welch & de Grisee crashed.

Tuesday, April 16 - 19

Weather did everyday and spend my time in improving my gun and getting the cockpit into shape.

The Boche have been held up on our front. French shock troops and scattered units of Americans have come to help us in the counter attack. Bailloul has been taken by and recaptured from the Boche. He has been also driven out of the East end of Foret de Nieppe where we have been dropping our bombs and machine gunning recently.

Received letters from Beth, Mrs. Waste and Reg.

Saturday, April 20

Up at 4:30 & left the ground at 6 a.m. with the formation. This blinking engine konked at 2000'. We left formation, landed, took off and landed again. Later we found a broken valve spring so that meant the day off. It was disappointing but the weather turned dud anyway.

Sunday, April 21

Up at 4:30 and off at 6:35. Bombed Amantieress with a 230 lb. bomb. Ground mists prevented my observation. Huns were lurking around so fired no rounds into trenches. A flight of 4 machines was attacked by 22 Huns in their new triplane scots. Two of our observers, Harrison and Whigley each got a Hun. It was good work as we were greatly outclassed in every way. Our buses were riddled with bullets and the escape was a marvellous one. The Hun is a rotten skunk for he never attacks us unless he has about three times our number. They did not have the nerve to return and finish off our fellows. Such swine the world has never seen before.

At 6 p.m. nine of us went over again and tried to get the railway and bridge just east of Amantieress. Observed 5 bursts. Saw movements in Nieppe and fired 150 rounds along the road. I only hope that I punctured some one. The Boche with his intense hatred has nothing on some of us at this stage of the war.

Monday, April 22

Up at 5 and started at 6:25. Ground mists were very bad. Forced to leave formation at 6000' as our engine konked.

Tried to land in a field near Boulogne but overshot and nearly crashed a wood. Straggled home and found another valve spring gone.

Proceeded to bomb Steenwerck at 9000' at 1:15 p.m. Observation very poor. Fired 150 rounds at Hun trenches. We were attacked considerably with some close bursts but only one piece hit our machine.

Left ground at 4:30 p.m. and bombed Steenwerck from 6500' with a 230 pounder. Low cloud made observation impossible but saved us from shell fire. Saw one Hun machine at a distance but he soon dived into clouds. He wasn't having any - alone.

Received letters from Beth, Mrs. Waste, Reg and a parcel from Mr. Waste.

Tuesday, April 23 - 24

Weather dud so no flying. On 24th went into Boulogne and did some shopping and had a good dinner. It seemed queer to get into town again for out here we are absolutely out in the country.

Thursday, April 25

Up at 4 a.m. and once again our engine konked at 9000'. These BHP's are not worth any more than the metal in them. It was intimated that our feet must be cold. At noon we found the valve spring again broken, but did not notice any apology.

After lunch seven Huns pounced on three of A flight behind the enemy lines and brought down Gillan and Duce. Whether they are killed we do not know. Stanfield & Dublin crawled back with their machines riddled with bullets.

At 7 p.m. C flight left to bomb Menim. We started 15 minutes later but could not find the formation. At 8 p.m. we crossed the line alone and bombed Wernicq with a 230. I never had my eyes more widely opened. We saw Huns in the distance but put our nose down and went at 140 m.p.h. Reaching Lumbres we ran into thick fog and tried to land in a ploughed field. We hit a sunken road and crashed slightly. Officers from a Prisoners of War camp took us in, gave us a good dinner and made us at home until our tender arrived at midnight for us. We learned that five of our machines are still missing but some have been located behind our lines.

The Huns are advancing again and rumor has it that Kemmel and Mount Kemmel have been taken by the Boche - also Dranoutre and Locré. I wonder what will become of poor Lem's grave in the little churchyard in Locré.

April 26 - April 30

Have received letters from Beth, Reg and an unexpected one from Aunt Mollie. The whole five days have been dud so have done nothing much of anything. Our bus has been dud anyway and assembled tonight. Holiday and I spent one day in Boulogne and had one good big meal in which we made beasts of ourselves. Am not ashamed of it though.

The Hun is being stopped and Loche has been taken and retaken twice. Have wondered what has become of poor Len's and Rus Campbell's grave. We buried the bodies in the little village churchyard at Loche, but do not suppose there is much left of the church now.

This concludes the writings in the second diary. At the back of the diary there is a flight log from December of 1917 and this follows.

FLIGHT LOG - December, 1917

- Dec. 5 9:15 - 11:45 Lieut. Smith, RE7 11 - rec.
- Dec. 15 11:20 - 11:45 - Lieut. Findlay - Big A.W. 9531 - sham
fight
- Dec. 19 10:50 - 11:30 - Lieut. Walkington - Big A.W. 9515 = joy
riding
- Dec. 22 daylight - 25 minutes with Sgt. Bolton, pilot - A.W. -
camera gun at plane - 5551 - 2 side slips - A.W. 25
minutes with Lieut. Lamb, pilot. 100 rounds at plane -
B9506.
- Dec. 24 (noon) - 15 min. with Lieut Manley, pilot - 50 rounds
at plane - A.W. 5551 - misty
30 min. - Lieut. Thompson - stoppages 15 - A.W. B9505
20 min. Lieut Sidgwick - 40 rounds at plane A.W. B9512
Did an Immelman and 2 side slips
20 min. Lieut. Thompson - 50 rounds at plane B9505 A.W.
25 min. at raft at sea and joy riding - Lieut. Sidgwick
- Dec. 25 Aerial combat - 9531 - Lieut. Phillips A.W. - very
bumpy.
- Dec. 30 - 10 a.m. 30 min. Lt. Kennedy - A.W. 12 A firing at
silhouettes. Too bumpy and forced to land.
- Dec. 31 - 1 p.m. - Lt. Kennedy A.W. B8138
Aerial combat and joy ride - 40 min. Extremely bumpy
no further flying for the day.