



DURHAM
AT **WAR**



DIARY OF 4½ YEARS IN THE BRITISH ARMY DURING THE GREAT WAR

by Samuel Robert Wyld

The story of the war service of Second Lieutenant Samuel Wyld, 18th,
22nd, and 7th Battalions, Durham Light Infantry

Diary

19 September 1914-19 March 1919



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Diary of
4½ years in the
British Army during
the Great War.

by

Samuel Robert Wyld.
47, Arnccliffe Gardens.
West Hartlepool



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Diary of 4½years in the British Army during the Great War

By Samuel Robert Wyld

47, Arncliffe Gardens, West Hartlepool

ENGLAND declared war on Germany on August 4th 1914, the day I cycled to Hedon near Hull to spend a holiday with Rhoda.

1914

Earl Kitchener appealed for Volunteers and on **19 September** I became Private Samuel R Wyld of the 18th (Service) Battalion, Durham Light Infantry and joined my regiment on **2 October** at Cocken Hall Durham where, for the first week or so I slept and lived in an old badly lit loft.

15 October was the date when I was initiated into the duties of

a guard, on that occasion I was armed with a thick stick and placed as sentry in a wood. Being a non-conformist I “clicked” fatigue duty on the first Sunday in the Army i.e. spent the time in picking up rubbish and off the lawn, the date was 11 October and I went with Ernest W Bardon to Lumley where we had tea at Mrs Franks.

17 October 1914

I met Rhoda in Sunderland and we had a good time. During the 7 months at Cocken Hall I frequently visited home. Fred Bowman arranging each week a Motor charabanc which brought between 30/40 West Hartlepool lads home for Sunday dinner.

22-28 November 1914

Saw Mr Grey and bought the engagement ring.



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16 December 1914

West Hartlepool bombarded by German cruisers – 500 of the 18th Durham Light Infantry were on duty at Hartlepool, 11 casualties.

1 May 1915

Left Cocken Hall for Cramlington (under canvas for 3 wet weeks). Brigaded with Northumberland Fusiliers, 122nd Brigade. Inspected by King George V and Earl Kitchener at Gosforth Park.

22 May 1915

Came to South camp Ripon and made many good friends at the Zion Chapel –
Joined the

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Choir and C.E. [Church of England]. Altogether spent just over 3 months at Ripon
93rd Infantry Brigade Durhams and West Yorkshires.

6 September 1915

Moved to Fovant, Salisbury.

October 1915

Visited Walthamstow, London and spent a happy few days with Uncle F. and Aunt J.
Old fossil in railway carriage objected to khaki.

7 November 1915

Visit to Swindon for weekend with Reverend and Mrs H.H. Curden.

2 December 1915

Last leave before going abroad CANCELLED.

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3 December 1915

Gas helmets withdrawn and Battalion equipped for the East.



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6 December 1915

3am Left Fovant Camp in pouring rain for Dinton Railway Station carrying kit bags and pith helmets.

Embarked the "Empress of Britain" Steerage. Sailed under escort.

8 December 1915

Inoculated against cholera.

11 December 1915

Escort left us at Gibraltar.

Danger zone – slept on deck.

12 December 1915

Cling to North Coast of Africa. Service on board.

Page 7

14 December 1915

Collision with S.S. Djurdjura which sank within 15 minutes. Crew, 63 saved, 2 killed. About 8000 on board "Empress of Britain". Entered Valetta Harbour, Malta. Divers etc.

17 December 1915

Left Malta.

18 December 1915

4pm sighted and fired on submarine. Empty ship's lifeboat afloat. Cards, money and beer left in steerage.

Good time for Taylor.

19 December 1915

Sacrament in smoke room. Anchored in harbour at Alexandria.

Full moon.



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20 December 1915

Left Alexandria at 6pm.

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21 December 1915

Orderly with Coverdale. C. slips down stairs with tea aided by sea sickness and diarrhoea.

Enter Suez Canal.

22 December 1915

Disembarked at Port Said. Pitched tents on desert near Arab Town, Port Said.

4pm Visited European district of Port Said with Harry Chapman (Jerry).

23 December 1915

Bathed. Sing in tent.

25 December 1915

Xmas day. Service on sands. No 6 Section dine at Zizzi's, Kursaal – Port Said.

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26 December 1915

Services – Kursaal. Trench performance.

27 December 1915

Bathe in the Suez Canal.

28 December 1915

Move to Kantara. First experience with camel transport.

29 December 1915

Struck tents and marched 7 miles into desert. Outpost duty.



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30 December 1915

Visited Kantara. Bathe. Very hot day, setting water pipes.

31 December 1915

Bathe. Hot work digging.

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1 January 1916

Bathe.

2 January 1916

Service. Tents pitched on track where probably Joseph and his brethren walked.

Queen Sheeba to Solomon, Joseph with Christ as a child.

Two Aeroplanes missing.

3 January 1916 Monday

Moved to Ballah, 6/7 miles South of Kantara, by means of barges on tow. Tents pitched on side of canal.

5 January 1916

Left Ballah and pitched tents amongst hills 3 or 4 miles in desert. Moved per military railway.

Sand-storm.

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6 January 1916

Sighted party of 25 camels. Arab traders.

7 January 1916

On observation party with Corporal Dan Wood (killed 1 July 1916, Somme).

8 January 1916

Name of place Ber Abu, Raidhan. (Well of the laughter of Raidhan).



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Excitement over cigarette rations. Sight of enemy reported. Extra ammunition.

9 January 1916

On guard.

10 January 1916

Stood to – “Observation Post”.

Visited date palm trees.

12 January 1916

Heavy gunfire in distance. Enemy cavalry reported to be 12 miles away.

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13 January 1916

Charles Sargent accidentally shot.

14 January 1916

George Duthie fell into Canal. Saw a chameleon.

16 January 1916

Attacked by Camel lice. Visited Medical Officer's tent.

19 January 1916

14 Platoon sent 5 miles into desert. Reported enemies approach.

Parcel post arrived. Pork pie and ham from Blighty.

20 January 1916

Returned to Kantara to cleanse clothes etc.

28 January 1916

Sammy old Blue Knobs horse buried.



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30 January 1916

Bagnall and George pay F.H. a visit.

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1 February 1916

15th West Yorkshire band give a performance.

2 February 1916

Saw H.M.S. "Jupiter" Cruiser.

4 February 1916

Saw H.M.S. "Picton".

5 February 1916

Buzzard put the wind up some of us.

Arab family prisoners.

11 February 1916

Guard 29 Bedouins, 1 man, 7 wives, umpteen kids.

12 February 1916

Birthday. Escort Arabs to 31st Division Headquarters.

13 February 1916

Left Kantara par barge to El Ersh Spit Point.

15 February 1916

Escort for Charles Coverdale.

16 February 1916

Escort for Cably Thornton.



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17 February 1916

March to point 34. Very hot and fatiguing march. Fed up.

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19 February 1916

Storm (Sand).

22 February 1916

Bathed in Salt Lake once bitten twice shy salted.

27 February 1916

Rumour of move to France.

28 February 1916

Received Princess Mary 1914 Gift.

29 February 1916

Camel escort Point 34 (Spit Point – Kantara) 12 miles.

2 March 1916

Rumours prove correct. Move to Port Said – Tea at Hotel du Poste. Received 10/- from stranger Captain Knox.

3 March 1916

Saw Harold Taylor, Royal Army Medical Corps and Green, Army Ordnance Corps.

4 March 1916

Guard. Slept on railway truck on wharf side.

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5 March 1916

Boarded H.M.T. "Ivernia". Good berth. C.C. [Charles Coverdale], Dennis Hudson, and Self.



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Heat spots??

?

Teddy Bewick dived into sea with wristlet watch on and also loses false teeth whilst bathing at Port Said.

6 March 1916

Orderly with C.C. – Saw two Austrian submarines in tow.

7 March 1916

Physical Drill on board. Nightly concert.

9 March 1916

Rough sea. Passed Malta. Night view of what we thought was Mount Etna. – Really was (Pantelaris?) [Pantelleria].

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10 March 1916

Travelling close to Sardinia and Corsica at about noon.

11 March 1916

Disembarked at Marseilles and marched to point of entraining. Saw batch of German prisoners.

12 March 1916 (Sun)

Train journey through the Rhone Valley – Gorgeous scenery, green fields, mountains white capped, contrast between Egyptian deserts.

Billy Blake ill.

13 March 1916

Breakfast at Montreal. Continue journey. Saw King's Castle and Eiffel Tower. Two large airships manoeuvring.

10.30pm – detrained at



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Pont Remy, after 50 hours in cattle truck containing 40 men. March 10 Kilometres to billets in Citerne.

Hear our artillery

14 March 1916

Day's rest in Citerne very much appreciated. Some sport at the house of Madame Bice.

22 March 1916

Officers and Non Commissioned Officers leave to reconnoitre the trenches.

25 March 1916

Left Citerne for Longpres (14K) – Rotten roads.

26 March 1916

Longpres (Fresselles?) [Flesselles] 26 kilometres – decent billet in barn.

27 March 1916

Flesselles/Beauquesne (10 Kilometres)

28 March 1916

Beauquesnes/B. Arrive 10pm.

29 March 1916

German aeroplane dropped 2 bombs on village. – Armstrong, B Company killed. $\frac{3}{4}$ wounded. Farmer with white horse.

MARCHED TO TRENCHES

Relieved Royal Irish Rifles at Colincamps – Frank Reay Lance Corporal on ration fatigue to White City.



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31 March 1916

Captain Hutchence wounded. Royal Irish Rifles Corporal killed.

Wet night – Snow!

1 Apr 1916

18th West Yorkshire in for instructions “Gie it ti T’Corporal aa noa nowt about bombs.” [Give it to the Corporal I know nothing about bombs]

2 Apr 1916

Glorious day.

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3 Apr 1916

Shaved in line by Isaac Newton.

Relieved.

4 Apr 1916

After night at Beaussart left, for Bus wood [Bus-les-Artois]. – Huts.

6 Apr 1916

Night alarm – Drum fire.

14 Apr 1916

Working party ride to trenches.

20 Apr 1916

Took over in trenches.

21 Apr 1916

Good Friday – Captain Lowe say “Good God”. Wet and muddy. Rain for 5 days.

Up to the waist in mud and slime.



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22 Apr 1916

4 ill in one fire bay. Ned Toole, George Duthy, C.C. [Charles Coverdale] and self.

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24 Apr 1916

Relieved. An awful spell.

25 Apr 1916

Bath. Night work.

28 Apr 1916

Attached to Royal Engineers at Courcelles. Ration with West Yorkshires.

1 May 1916

Germans shell Royal Engineers Park. Many casualties. Scratch on neck. Met Reverend Field.

14 May 1916

Trenches.

15 May 1916

Heavy bombardment, C.C., A.S.M. and I in shelter. Roof blown off.

23 May 1916

Heavily shelled.

May to December 1916

The papers relating to the period to Jan 1917, were captured by the Germans on the Aisne in 1918.

23rd May, however, there are days in this period which shall never be



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forgotten. 7.30am on July 1st 1916 when the British attacked on the Somme. Serre the village we were going to take, was not taken. Our casualties which General Hunter Weston estimated beforehand at 7% were nearer 70%. Lost many good pals. The few left were relieved. 'D' Company was badly depleted.

27 July 1916

Marched to Neuve Chapelle and on the first night the enemy raided and consequently we lost 100 men and many of them new reinforcements.

1916

I was promoted to Lance Corporal for July attack and helped with the Stoke's Gun team. Reduced? and promoted to Corporal. Made many friends around Neuve Chapelle district, "Lacotour" [La Couture], La Fosse, Madame [J?glle B?lly] – Julie. Had some good times with Benneworth, Hart, Scougal, and Oldridge. Went into the line at Neuve Chapelle, Festubert and Givenchy (Red Dragon crater). Shot a German 6 o'clock in the forehead?

1916

Visited Bethune and Merville before these places had been shelled. Marched back to Hebuterne district. Hot spot, and in December, enjoyed my first leave from abroad. 10 days. Met a Quaker on my way back with Jack Chapman, tracts re death.

Rejoined Battalion two days after Xmas Day.

Gas Course. 48 hours. Arrived 24 hours late.

2 January 1917

Heard news of Ernest's death.



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3 January 1917

Promoted to Lance Sergeant.

18 January 1917

Wrote last letter to Gladys G.

25 January 1917

Bernaville with George Wright.

2 February 1917

Promoted to Sergeant.

16 February 1917

Saw Colonel re: commission.

19 February 1917

Left Heuzecourt after a 4 weeks rest. Sad parting Madame and Leone Lefebre.

20 February 1917

Saw Jack English's grave at Beauval. Marched to Couin.

22 February 1917

Caves at Hebuterne.

26 February 1917

Mouse trap at Hebuterne. It was in the Mousetrap trench that we had such a warm time with trench mortars on the night prior

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to going to leave in December 1916 George (Helsdon?) was buried and when liberated expressed his opinion strongly against the Bosche.



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1 March 1917

Gommecourt taken British press forward.

3 March 1917

With slight casualties 18th Durham Light Infantry take 1st and 2nd Guards Stellung in the Germans 5th line.

A rat ate one of my pockets way.

4 March 1917

Relieved after 10 days attacking.

9 March 1917

Working near Serre. Terrible sights – Corpses littered all over. Moonlight night and thousands of

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skeletons in “No man’s Land”.

12 March 1917

Visited what was once Serre. View Germans had over British – wonderful. Skeleton chained to Machine Gun.

18 March 1917

March from Saily Dell to Beauquesne 16 kilometres.

19 March 1917

Beauquesne/Fienvillers 16 kilometres.

20 March 1917

Fienvillers/Neuvillette 16 kilometres.

Visited Bouquemaison with Frank Reay and got into trouble for leaving billeting area.



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21 March 1917

Neuville/Hautescote 16 kilometres.

22 March 1917

Nuncq/Bours 19 kilometres.

Decent billet.

23 March 1917

Rested and visited Pernes.

24 March 1917

Bours/Westrehem 10 kilometres.

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25 March 1917

Westrehem/Bethune. Passed through Lillers. Billeted in tobacco factory.

Sergeants Mess. Madam Lillie, Mademoiselle Alice Vendenbusche. Much fun – “My mite”.

1 April 1917

Saw Reverend JW Pattinson and had a walk.

5 April 1917

Pictures, Old Vendenbusche raised “L” in Bethune market place – “Je suis peine”.

9 April 1917

Bethune shelled. Confined to Barracks. Vimy Ridge taken.

12 April 1917

Left Bethune/Hallicourt. Passed 863 German prisoners. Scrappy lot.

13 April 1917

Slept in C and Headquarter’s, Hallicourt.



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14 April 1917

Hallicourt/Heripre (Caucourt).

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19 April 1917

Gauchin Legal with Frank Reay.

20 April 1917

Move Heripre/Mont St Eloy (Ecoivres).

21 April 1917

Ecoivres/St Catherine (Arras). Terrific bombardment. Under canvas.

22 April 1917

Railway constructing. Visited Arras with Norman Fawcett.

23 April 1917

Heavy British bombardment along Arras front.

24 April 1917

Look round old German lines. Camp shelled, hit. Tent on fire. Officers kits burnt. 6 prematures. Lloyd George's son. Asquith's son at Gavrelle. Very plucky.

25 April 1917

Three enemy planes down, one in flames.

26 April 1917

British balloon in flames.

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Big ammunition dump on fire.



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27 April 1917

Working on railway Arras cutting. 3 Bombs dropped near to working party.

28 April 1917

Sudden call from working party to trenches.

29 April 1917

H. Chapman wounded.

30 April 1917

Battery on fire. Wonderful sight.

1 May 1917

Lost with party on Arras plains. Wagnall at sea.

2 May 1917

Into front line.

3 May 1917

Big attack. Rough time. Over the top 3 times. Jack Bennett, Norman Fawcett, Sam Jones, Billy Pitt, all killed. Many German dead in sunken road.

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4 May 1917

Battalion relieved at midnight.

6 May 1917

Visit Arras with Bill Tarran.

7 May 1917

Trenches. Self in charge of 13 Platoon.



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8 May 1917

Humphries and Marley killed. Wet day.

9 May 1917

Relieved by 'C' Company.

11 May 1917

Saw Brigadier General Inglis re: Commission. Roclincourt

12 May 1917

Big attack on South of our position.

16 May 1917

7.30pm leave for trenches. Serious talk with Alex Davidson.

17 May 1917

Left trenches alone just before midnight attack. Ordered to England for Commission.

18 May 1917

Left Arras for Aubigny with Alf Fraser. Certificate re: lice etc. not in order.

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19 May 1917

Arrived in London. Stay at Walthamstow. Learn that our attack of 17th instant was unsuccessful. Frank Reay, Charlie Forster, Alex Davidson, Richardson, killed.

21 May 1917

Report at Parliament Street. Sent to Newcastle Barracks. Sleep at Y.M.C.A.

22 May 1917

14 days leave.



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4 June 1917

Ordered to Brocton. Met Arthur Dance.

9 June 1917

Met Reverend, Mrs, and Misses Portnell. The best of friends.

13 June 1917

Big air raid over London.

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1917

During my stay in Brocton of 9 weeks, I made many friends and had some good times with the P.M's at places such as Great Haywood (with Reverend Teale and George Roe), Hednesford, Coton, Stafford, Milford, and Gnosall (where I made an attempt to "hold forth.")

2 July 1917

Granted 48 hours leave and called for the 2nd time upon Uncle Harry Drury. Motored with Enoch Tonks, Thursa's husband. Billiards at Thursa's home.

4 July 1917

Warned for Lichfield but order was cancelled thereby giving me another

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month near Stafford. "The Gitanos". Hilda jumped and missed.
Brother Portnell on "What seest thou?"

8 July 1917

Reverend Faulkner discusses royalty.

14 July 1917

Teule took photographs of Sergeants Parker, Kennedy, and Wyld, Corporals Roe, Wetherbred, and Hunter, Lance Corporal Treebury. S.N. Anniversary at High Offley.



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21 July 1917

Garden Party at Mrs Joynes. Stafford. Salt Works.

22 July 1917

"Rainbow" at Gnosall. Solo by Hilda.

27 July 1917

Miss Smith B.A. (London) at 76 Corporation Street, also Bessie Lloyd.

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25 July 1917

Trip to Gnosall. Tea in field. Puncture. Train home. Marjorie Knightsbridge.

27 July 1917

Brooke Street. S of S. "The Torn Bible", assist in choir.

30 July 1917

Brocton Club. Whist and Billiards. Lane etc.

31 July 1917

Stafford. Pictures with H.M. and P.

1 August 1917

Raining. Night in Sergeants' Mess, Baggott, Lane, Street and Jolly.

2 August 1917

Boxing match at the Club.

3 August 1917

Stafford. Motor with T. Lloyd.



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4 August 1917

Rode to Stafford on Jack Lane's bike. Rev and Mrs Y. visited Arrowsmith.

5 August 1917

High Offley on Lane's bike. Hilda, soloist. J.L. into supper at 76. Motor bike back to camp. Tea Mrs [?inson] and Rhoda?

6 August 1917

Bank Holiday. Trip to Gnosall. Tea with Mr and Mrs Owen. Met Mr and Mrs Hen.

7 August 1917

Passes cancelled. Night in Milford with Jack Stansfield.

8 August 1917

Bessie Lloyd at 76. Heavy rain. Walk back with Jimmy Sheddick.

9 August 1917

Night at Sheradon. Home on Jones's bike.

10 August 1917

Left Brocton. Marched to Lichfield Cadet School.

11 August 1917

Fine day. Medical inspection. Measured for Cadet uniform. Lichfield.

12 August 1917

Tea with Mr and Mrs Moore, Miss Thora Bateman (Now Mrs Bob Emmerson).

17 August 1917

Half day holiday. Cross country run.



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19 August 1917

Parade service. Walk with Hetherington to Hopwas. Tea at Tamworth. Service in Hopwas.

22 August 1917

Barnes in charge of our room. Full of B's bed.

25 August 1917

Wilnecote Sports. 1 mile. 1st J.A. Sheddick. Tea with Street? Pictures with Parkin, Tamworth.

Page 37

30 August 1917

Old Cadets left Lichfield.

31 August 1917

Inspection and presentation of Medals. Sports.

1 September 1917

'Posh togs', Lichfield with J. Lane. "Swan".

2 September 1917

Lichfield. Howie, Parkin, Lane – [R.S.M.s?] and Mrs Brown.

4 September 1917

9th in cross country race.

6 September 1917

Sergeant Hazeldene left Whittington Barracks.

8 September 1917

Supply Ordnance Officer. Fire at hospital.



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9 September 1917

Cathedral service, Green, Hill (Wesleyan), Parky.

13 September 1917

Boxing (Finals).

Page 38

15 September 1917

Tamworth, Jack Lane and P. Colloby.

16 September 1917

Lichfield, B. Shaw.

19 September 1917

3 years in Army.

20 September 1917

Lichfield. Museum Park, 6pm.

22 September 1917

L. Gent.

30 September 1917

Rode to Handsacre. H.F. Rugeley on Smarts's bike. Saw Reverend B.B.P. and H.

4 October 1917

Inspection by Sir William Robertson.

5 October 1917

Mid term. Left Lichfield (Trent Valley) for home.

6 October 1917

Elwick with Rhoda. Hutton Avenue.



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7 October 1917

Soloist at E.K. Hull and Ada to supper.

Page 39

8 October 1917

Raining. Tea at Gladys's.

9 October 1917

Left West Hartlepool for Tamworth.

13 October 1917

2nd exam. Tamworth. Flag Day. Busby.

20 October 1917

Cycled to Stafford. Met Rider. Reverends Cooper and Bainton. Meirick's bike.

21 October 1917

Tamworth. Walker.

27 October 1917

H.M.P. at Lichfield. Tea at Seagraves, J Lane and Miss Shuker. Good time.

28 October 1917

Tamworth. Shiddick and Walker. Tasci.

29 October 1917

Walker?

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31 October 1917

Played Hockey for 'A' Company.



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1 November 1917

F and D Company leave. Farewell night. Aldington and I in 'F' Company canteen.

3 November 1917

Dinner with Wake and Dinsdale at the "George" – Lichfield.

4 November 1917

PM. Chapel. J. Stansfield. Mrs Moore's.

7 November 1917

3rd Exam.

10 November 1917

Tamworth. Tea at Adie's. Dinny, Baggott. Walker?

16 November 1917

Repeat 10th.

17 November 1917

On night guard. Women's Army Auxiliary Corps' quarters.

Page 41

18 November 1917

St Editha's, Tamworth. Evensong. Stansfield, Wake and Dinny.

23 November 1917

Final Concert.

27 November 1917

Final Examination. Dinner.

29 November 1917

Exam result. In first 20. 185 – 17th. Good.



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30 November 1917

Leave Whittington Barracks. Lunch with Shaw at the Royal Derby. Met Rhoda in Leeds.

1 December 1917

Leeds . Wet. Roundhay Park.

Page 42

2 December 1917

Visited Mrs Caithness?

6 December 1917

Delivered lecture at Elwick Road, "Life under changed conditions".

7 December 1917

Night at Mr Bullivants.

8 December 1917

Elwick with Mother, Father and Rhoda.

13 December 1917

Greatham with Pa and Rhoda. Speak on War Economy.

1 to 26 December 1917 in West Hartlepool. One of the best holidays of my life with Rhoda.

Page 43

27 December 1917

South Shields. 3 Durham Light Infantry. Slept 7 Logan Terrace. Fairs.

29 December 1917

Left Fairs. Supper at Petersen's.



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1 January 1918

Call home. Rhoda surprised.

5 January 1918

Newcastle. Parkin and Valance.

6 January 1918

South Shields Baptists. Frank Turnbull.

12 January 1918

Rhoda and Gladys Rushton at South Shields for weekend.

14 January 1918

On SICK? 3 days. Excused duty.

17 January 1918

Night at Sunderland. "Wearholme". F.T. Marjorie, Doris and Reg Wilson. Annie Nicholson.

6.56am. Monkwearmouth.

Page 44

19 January 1918

Wet day. Rhoda at Newcastle. "Criterion"?

26 January 1918

R and G at Queens.

27 January 1918

Baring Street. P.M with Rhoda.

2 February 1918

Left South Shields for Clipstone.



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3 February 1918

Visited Mansfield.

4 February 1918

“F” Company No 1 Company. Captain Humble.

8 February 1918

Bob Arrived.

9 February 1918

Captain Picquet. Billy S. Trouble with Assistant Provost Marshall.

10 February 1918

Bob. Mansfield. L. Liley.

14 February 1918

Left for West Hartlepool. Nottingham S. Chedl.

17 February 1918

Returned Clipstone. Bob in.

Page 45

23 February 1918

Called on Reverend W. Taylor, out.

24 February 1918

M.M. Reverend Proudlove. Tea at Bentinck.

2 March 1918

Bob done in. W.C.

14 March 1918

On Fire Picquet. Air raid warning. Billiards with Boyd Smith.



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17 March 1918

Plough Inn. Kit Rogers.

29 March 1918

Good Friday. S – a street. P.B. and I. O.K.

30 March 1918

Empire.

31 March 1918

“Cart and Horse”. Sutton. A.J. and I.

2 April 1918

Berry Hill. H.B.

Page 46

8 April 1918

Milner in cubicle canteen??

10 April 1918

Milner (Scott) Pritchard T.I. S.S. Taxi Ran into lamp post. Back to camp 3 a.m.

Orders for France.

To 14th leave in West – Glorious time.

15 April 1918

Folkestone/Boulogne/Etaples.

16 April 1918

Posted to 22nd DLI. Paris Plage with Parkin, Rowley and Riley.

17 April 1918

Orders to go up line. Pritchard done in by French girl.



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18 April 1918

Pont Remy 12 pm. Slept Hotel de la Gare on floor of billiard room.

19 April 1918

Reinforcement camp, 1 night.

20 April 1918

Left Pont Remy for Amiens. Met a Mr & Mrs Craig of Ailly-sur-Somme – friends of Riley's. Slept in a factory.

21 April 1918

Reported 22 DLI. Reserve Line "B" Company, 5 Platoon. Captain Andrews. Blangy-Tronville.

24 April 1918

3 am. Big Bosche attack. March up – Support line 10 pm.

25 April 1918

Enter Counter attack in Villers-Bretonneaux. Bert Rowley killed on Embankment. Get prisoners.

26 April 1918

A Hossack killed at Bridge Head post. I take over – HOT TIME.

28 April 1918

Relieved at 3am by Australians "Thank God". Strain severe especially upon A and Minor. Heavy casualties.



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1 May 1918

Daours to Boutillierie. 5 Bosche planes down. Germans shell and bomb Boutillierie barracks.

4 May 1918

Entrained 11pm for the Aisne. Pass through gorgeous country, Ourcq valley to Fismes and Villesavoye. Old man's first experience with gramophone.

7 May 1918

Dinner at Fismes. Andrews Minor, Blades, Scott, Elliff etc, good time. Pucker guardsman.

11 May 1918

Left Villesavoye for Montigny 10 miles.

12 May 1918

In charge of Company to march to line. Heavy rain.
Cotton 'A' Company goes to time. Hang back and keep dry (Complimented).
Quiet, too quiet, front. Night patrols, bathing in canal.

20 May 1918

Bank holiday.
3 am for La Butte aux Vents.

24 May 1918

Empire Day. Wet.
Works Report?

25 May 1918

Full moon. Working on railway through woods, see Percy B. A and M come to [text is cut off].



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27 May to 12 June 1918

GERMAN ATTACK

Withdrawn to Roucy. Hell on earth. Only 7 left in platoon of 50. Andrews – Broken jaw. Smart and Armstrong – wounded. Minor – killed. Met John Robinson of R.W.s [?], he was afterwards killed. Colonel James the only officer to escape from H.Q.'s. Major Hall (one of the best) killed.

Blades and Self with 23 men (remains of D Company) hunt for D.H.Q.

27 May to 12 June 1918

ran into German's in Ventelay. Hundreds of dead about.

Lost all kit. Stuck at Lehry and also Romigny. Burned hospital. One road out.

Transport blown to pieces. Germans favoured by weather conditions.

Rush into sunken road. Death trap. Machine Gun fire.

Composite Battalions formed. In charge of No. 23 Company. Windy, Elliff, Howy,

27 May to 12 June 1918

stuck in wood. Bois de Courton. Rotten time with gas. Relieved on 12th June after the worst time of the whole war. Glad to be alive. Parkin and Turnbull of the Wiltshires both killed in same attack.

Ride to Linthes. Howey greasing round Colonel James. Colonel Birchall met James. ???

Glad to horse it to Sezanne and sleep on Railway platform.

12 June to 2 July 1918

After entraining and much marching the remnants of the 8th Division encamped round about Treport. We were at Friaucourt at the house of a rotten Belgian who pinched the electric globe etc.

Hurford got 'D' Company.



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Re-fitted at Abbeville. Riding schools, bathing, visiting [Em?], sports etc. a pleasant change.

Met men like Bower, Bowmaker and Cheetham.

Farewell dinner of Colonel James's. Scott lost his tooth.

Page 55

2 July 1918

A Rowdy finish – Much pain (pane) felt.

20 July 1918

Left Friaucourt for Tincques.

22 July 1918

18th Corps Pioneer Course. Fressin. ROTTEN. Gregory and Rothery.

4 August 1918

Rejoined Battalion at Neuville St. Vaast now 7th D.L.I. with a fluctuating, itinerant Battalion H.Q.

1st James 1 3 2

2 Birchall 2 2 1

3 Turcan 3 1 3

Etc. etc.

Page 56

August 1918

Round Vimy. Met James (Lieutenant) at dug out in Kootenay Battalion [Canadian unit] boots. Riding schools.

20 August 1918

Left for 6 weeks course at 1st Army School of Musketry (Matringhem) near Fruges.

Lena Ashwell's Party.

- Lively Colonel.

- Good time



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13 September 1918

Battalion left Cellar Camp, found them at Railway embankment Bailleul working on roads.

GAVRELLE and OPPY

Sundry attacks. Met Doctor Percival and Doctor Ryan M.S.A.

Take No. 5 Platoon to rest at Worcester Camp.

27 September 1918

Bath at Ecurie

1 October 1918

Working party near Oppy Wood.

4 October 1918

Ryan leaves Mess for Brough Alley. Shields on leave.

13 October to 26 October 1918

Leave. Capital time with Rhoda. See all friends. Arrange to be married on next leave.

28 October 1918

Met Hill (Lieutenant) of Hartlepool. Breakfast in dug out at Brebières. Motor to St Amand.

30 October 1918

Loading timber. House falls to sleep and mule goes daft.

November 1918

Move from place to place. St Amand, Rue Wimberg, Vred, Busigny, Courbois, Chautragh, Hautrages.



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11 November 1918

At 11am ARMISTICE

12 November 1918

Dined at Notre Dame Chateau with Baron Hon Sireau afterwards look through Mons.

Page 60

11 November to 30 November 1918

Hung about Tournai until sent to Australian Hospital, Pneumonia.

Finished up at Wimereux 14 General Hospital. Man in next bed cut his throat and took two days to die. Cheetham and Shepherd in same hospital.

15 December 1918

Draft to Etaples from Boulogne. Wet, cold and miserable.

Page 61

15 December 1918

8 hours in Boulogne Station with 120 men. Arrive Etaples 15 men short at 3a.m.
Raining hard.

Report to No 3 M.B. [Medical Board] Base depot. Medical Board verdict – R.T.U.
[Return to unit]. 'E' Depot.
Club each night. Pictures.

20 December 1918

Joined Battn at ATH.

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21 December 1918

Ex. Duty (Percival).



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23 December 1918

Filled in Form Z.16 [release slip].

Xmas Celebrated à la mode.

1 January 1919

Toasting the Colours.

3 January 1919

To Silly for cash.

5 January 1919

Teddy Humes and Woody. W. loses his glasses.

8 January 1919

Quartermaster Stores for evening.

12 January 1919

Ride out on "Chestnut". Party of 5 (Scott, Wood, Peroy, [Rothery?] and self).

Page 63

To 20 January 1919

Various farewell dinners.

29 January 1919

Left Battalion at Ath.

5am – Stuck at Tournai. Night at hotel.

30 January 1919

Bethune (ruins), back to Lille.

Met Belgian friend who got me through to Calais.

31 January 1919

Left Calais 10a.m.



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4 February 1919

Married at 2p.m. Alf best man.
Left for Knaresborough 5.14pm.

15 February 1919

Return to unit.
Colonel Birchall's Ship's adjutant.

16 February 1919

6.30am lorry to Courgain.

27 February 1919

Officer commanding 'C' Company.

15 March 1919

Day at Brussels. Slept at Victoria Hotel.

19 March 1919

DEMOBBED

Thank God.

Private, Corporal, Lance Sergeant, Sergeant, Second Lieutenant
Samuel R. Wyld
A.I.S.A.

Copy

"Message from VIII Corps. Hostilities will cease at 11.00 on 11th November. Troops will stand fast on the line then gained. Usual military precautions will continue to be observed. There will be NO INTERCOURSE with the enemy".



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