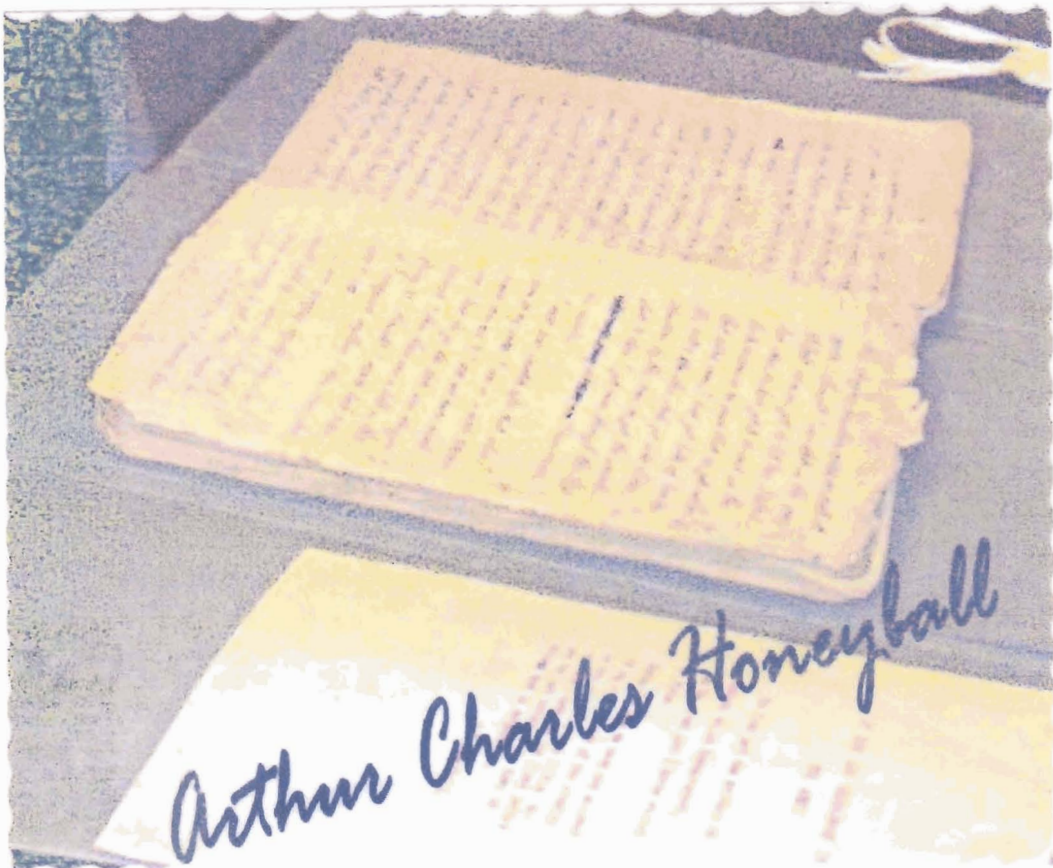


My Life & Experience in the Army

1906 1918



Dear friends
I have been asked to relate my life & experience in the service. I do not know if it will interest you, & I must mention that I am not very good at composition. I was working for Mr Bishop Coleman, 39 Clapham Rd. (he was a member of the U. F. Church, so no doubt some of you know him) & in August 1905, I left him to go & join the Army, I was not tall

I think this is all I have to tell you, I hope it will interest one & all, please excuse the mistakes I have made, because I am not very good at writing, you will find the sketch on the next page
from
Yours Truly

Cpl Arthur Charles Honeyball
3rd Scottish Rifles
Nigg Camp
Ross-shire
P.T.O

When my father wrote the original manuscript, he was not allowed to write the names of places. Thanks to the Records Office at Kew, I have been able to view the official daily records which were written in the trenches, therefore I was able to follow the tours, and fill in the gaps

so the Hun was which we called we gave them the you heard the I had my man I thought he the dug-out. & to him As soon had no sooner sent a shell a part of it & causing some of, hardly necessary went up in the wounded in also cornered but we mixed with dug over the ground as could & men platoons. but no sea for the We stayed in couple of days then forward of

MY LIFE AND EXPERIENCE IN THE ARMY 1906 - 1918
by Arthur Charles Honeyball d.o.b. 4th Feb 1887 dec. 20th Jan.1954

Dear friends,

I have been asked to write my life and experience in the service. I do not know if it will interest you, and I must mention that I am not very good at composition. I was working for Mr Bishop Coleman, 39 Clapham Park Rd. (He was a member of the U.R.Church, so no doubt many of you know him) and in August 1905, I left him to go and join the army. I was not tall enough for the line regiment, so I went into the militia (now called the special reserve) it was the East Surrey Militia that I joined, and I was sent to Kingston-on-Thames for 6 weeks training. When my training was finished they asked me if I wanted to join the regulars. I told them I would think it over. I went back to work for Mr Coleman. I left work again on 6th Jan 1906 I went to the recruiting office in New Kent Road with my chum, on Monday Jan. 8th 1906 and wanted to join the Queens (Royal West Surrey's) but they were closed for recruits, so I joined the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) I was sent to the Depot Hamilton Scotland. I arrived in Hamilton about 7pm. 11th Jan. I found different kinds of men there, some men had enlisted because they thought there was nothing to do in the service, but these kind were greatly mistaken. There were also men who had been driven away from their parents.

All recruits do 3 months training at the Depot.

The parades daily are-- -

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1) 7am till 8am. | Drill on Barrack Square |
| 2) 9am " 10am | Drill on Barrack Square |
| 3) 11am " 12 noon | Physical drill in Gymnasium |
| 4) 2 pm " 3pm | Drill on Barrack Square |

Meals---	8am.	Breakfast
	1 pm	Dinner
	4-45pm	Tea
	7pm	Soup for those men that want any

All recruits are advised to go to school and get the 3rd class certificate, so I went and got mine. The certificate makes a difference of 2d. per day in a soldiers pay, viz;

- a) Soldiers that are 1st class shots and are without 3rd class certificate are only entitled to service pay at the rate of 4d per diem.
- b) Soldiers that are 1st class shots and are with a 3rd class certificate are entitled to service pay at the rate of 6d per diem.

I am pleased to say that I was one of the men that received 6d per day, that brought my pay up to 1 /6 per day. I was amongst the squad that finished their training at the Depot we were inspected by the Commanding Officer, then we were sent to the regt. . My regiment at this time was in 2 sections.4 Companies were in Aberdeen, and 4 Companies were in Glasgow. My squad was sent to Aberdeen and we found it a very nice place. Shortly after my arrival a sergeant asked me if I would care to join the RATA(Royal Army Temperance Association) so I joined it and had to pay 4d per month

About July 1906 my company went to Scotstown Moor for Coy. training. It was here that an accident happened to me, it was only a trivial affair, we were retiring down the side of a hill when I ran into a small bog, it frightened me at first I managed to struggle out, but I was a grimy looking object when I was marching back to barracks and I did not feel very comfortable. I always kept an eye open for bogs after that. When we finished coy. Training the detachment I was with went to Barry camp for annual training. The 4 companies that were in Glasgow joined us at Barry. Barry is only about 11 miles from Dundee, and it is a very nice place, only about a mile from the sea. The training finished, each detachment went back to their barracks. In October or November 1906 (I am not sure of the date) I was amongst the party that formed the Guard of Honour when King Edward V 11 came to Aberdeen to open Marischall College. The town was well decorated and one could hardly move about the streets, people came from all parts. My detachment moved from Aberdeen and joined the other part of the battalion in Glasgow. The whole battalion moved from Glasgow on November 22nd. for Talvera Bks., in Aldershot. It took us 11 hrs to get to Aldershot. When we arrived in Aldershot I was given a "staff billet" as assistant company cook.

In January 1907 a draft was leaving Aldershot to join the 1st Battalion in India. The Sgt. came round for volunteer's, and I volunteered for the draft, but the medical officer rejected me as unfit for foreign service, he said that I would undergo an operation before I would be fit, (I had strained myself while I was I the cook house) I went under an operation in April 1907, when I came out of hospital I was given another staff billet as company store man. Another draft was leaving in September 1907 so I volunteered and went to India by the T.S. Dongola, and had a nice voyage. It was very hot when we crossed the line. We arrived in Bombay about November 16th. Then we had 3 days train ride to Cawnpore. The Somerset Light Infantry was stationed in Cawnpore, when we got there our regiment was in Chakrata. (hill station) so we had to go into tents until the regiment came to Cawnpore.

Cawnpore is a very interesting place, anyone who has read about the Indian Mutiny, will remember that a great many European's were massacred here, there is a well, where all the bodies were thrown down. Over this well is a statue of an angel, a person can stand and look at the face of the statue from the right, front. and left and one can see the different facial expressions of Faith, Hope, and Charity. Another place is the memorial Church. Inside the church, the roof represents the sky with stars and moon, and around the walls of the church are names of all whom lost their lives during the Indian Mutiny.

My regiment came down on 29th December 1907, and I went to "E" Company. I met two of my chums, and we had a chat about the folks at home. My advice to any young soldier going to India is to take plenty of exercise, that helps to keep sickness away, and never go out in the sun without a helmet on, because the sun is very strong, and he is liable to get the "tap" (sunstroke), another dangerous time is when the sun seems to be behind a cloud, because he gets sunstroke just the same. In some cases I have seen the sunstroke does not affect the person, or rather the person does not feel the effects until just after sunset. I kept myself fit by playing hockey, football, cricket, and at night time by having a paper chase. In the summer 1908, my company was sent (with men attached as invalids) to Kailana a hill station near Chakrata, each company takes their turn of going to a hill station, if the regiment is on the plains, the place we went to is on the Himalayas

I went on a shooting pass while I was in Kailana with two friends named William Weyman and Sonny McInnes, Weyman was always boasting about his shooting abilities, so I and Sonny thought we would have a joke at Weymans expense. we left barracks to go shooting foxes or cheaters about 10 p.m. and got to the polo ground about 11 -30 pm., we placed the meat that we had brought with us in the centre of the polo ground and then retired to the bushes out of sight. Weyman said that he was going to sleep and he told me to wake him if anything came near the bait. He then went to sleep and that was our chance. I whispered to Sonny to go into the target shed and bring out some rope and a log of wood, he came back with a ball of string and a lump of wood, then we tied one end of the string to the wood, and placed it the other side of the bait to where we were, then Sonny came back behind the bush and gradually pulled the wood towards the bait. I woke Weyman up and told him that there was something coming near the bait. of course he had a couple of shots with his 459 bore and when he found out it was a lump of wood he had been firing at , he went home, he said he would not go out with us again, but changed his mind afterwards. We left Kailana in November 1908 and rejoined the regiment at Cawnpore. The day after we joined the battalion, I got another "staff billet" as Wesleyan Chapel (WC)!! orderly, while a man went on a pass. When he came back he took his job back again, and on 14th December, I was put in charge of the library as Regimental Librarian and Billiard Marker. In India it rains a certain time of the year, they call it the monsoons, that is time one see's Bullfrogs, they are the size of a mans head.

It was in June 1909 that I got a surprise, I being in charge of the library, had a small bunk (room) to myself, and instead of sleeping in the bunk, I used to make my bed up outside. The kind of bed we had was a coir mattress, on a bed stead of galvanised iron on trestles, and one morning I was taking the mattress off to take in my bunk, I found a grass snake in the crevice of the galvanised iron. It got away before I had a chance to kill it, and it was a long time before I slept outside after that.

In November I put in a pass, and Weyman and a chap of our band named Teddy Beck, put in for one as well, for to go out shooting. We got them signed, then we set out for a place named Achalda we got there early in the morning, we went about 2 miles from the station and started shooting pea-fowl. We had used about 5 rounds between the three of us when a crowd of natives were making their way towards us from our right, they were shouting and they had sticks, so we thought we had better go back to the station. When we got there, we told the station master about it, and he said we were lucky to get back, as the pea-fowl was a sacred bird in that village The next day we made up our minds to go in the opposite direction, this time we took a native with us, everything was all right after that. In three days we had 38 pea-fowl, we then made our way back to Cawnpore. We distributed the birds amongst the people in the married quarters, the Sgts. Mess, and gave the remainder into the cook-house, so we had a good dinner the next day.

My regiment left India December 12th for Bloemfontein, South Africa, we had a pretty good voyage up till Christmas and boxing day,. These two days nearly everyone was sea-sick. I was laughing at one chap that was sea-sick, -- but --he that laughs last, laughs best, because then I had to look over the side of the boat !!! We arrived in Durban, South Africa, on December 28th. Then two days in the train took us to Bloemfontein. South Africa is a nice place, but not very good for a soldier as everything is very dear, and a soldier does not get very much pay.

When I got to Bloemfontein I was still in charge of the library, and besides this I had to do Regtl. postman as well, but that was too much for one, so I got another man in the library. I used to go to the post office at 7am every morning except Thursday mornings. I used to go about 6am on Thursday's to get the English mail I used to envy some of the men who got letters from home as I never got many letters. Some men used to ask me if I had a letter for them, when I told them I had not, they would walk away looking very downhearted. There is nothing like a letter to cheer anyone up when one is abroad.

In August 1910 my regiment went to Pretoria for manoeuvres and from there we went to Zeerust. Having finished manoeuvres we went back to Bloemfontein. I learned to skate (roller skate) while I was there, I also learned dancing (ballroom) so I enjoyed myself while I was there. In July 1911 I entered a novice roller skating race at the Royal Rink Bloemfontein, and was getting on well, when I had a wheel come off my skate and I fell, and the chap in the rear of me was too near to stop himself, therefore his skate caught me just below the left eye, the scar is there yet. Strange to say I did not know my face was cut, until I heard someone say "take him to the dressing room" I was only attending hospital for a week with it.

In August 1911 I picked up an old newspaper, The headline that attracted my attention was Clapham Common "S" Murder I started reading it because I thought I would come across my father's name, Sure enough it was there, the body of Leon Beron was found by my father "Park keeper Honeyball", Soon after, he found the watch on the edge of the mount pond He told me afterwards that a tall ,dark man offered him 2/6 for it, But he handed the watch over to the Police, but more about this later.

My regiment left Africa on 12th February 1912 bound for Maryhill Barracks Glasgow We arrived in Glasgow on March 12th 1912. I was expecting (as well as a good many men) to get away on furlough, but owing to the great coal strike we were held back on strike duty. I managed to get a furlough for 6 weeks and I had a very jolly time, those 6 weeks seemed like 6 minutes, they passed too quick. I left for Glasgow on Saturday 19th May. I had only been back in barracks 4 days when I was greatly upset by receiving a letter saying that my poor father had died on 22nd May. I showed the letter to my Commanding Officer and he let me away for another 10 days. I came down to London and done what I could, and then went back again.

When I got back I tried to get out of the service as only support, but I had a young brother and two sisters at home. So I waited another opportunity to get out of the service which was not long in coming. In the meantime I made an attempt to regain the gold watch my father found. I only tried because, in the "S" Murder case, it was said that the number on the gold watch that was found, did not correspond with the number of the watch that Leon Beron should have been wearing. I was in correspondence with Scotland yard, they said the watch was in the London County Council Offices, I wrote to them, they said it was sent back to Scotland Yard, I wrote to Scotland Yard, they said it had been claimed, so I told them if there was any reward to send it to my mother and gave them the address, but there was nothing more heard about it.

In February 1913 I made another attempt to get away, this time I succeeded, I was transferred on to the Army reserve, with my own consent before the expiration of my army service" I came down to London on 5th April 1913 I made an application at the London County Council Offices for Tramcar driver, but I was 1/2inch too short, they took me on as a conductor.

On 4th August 1914 I read the Mobilisation Order calling all reserves to the colours.-- Before I go any further, I must tell you that I left the service with "Exemplary Character" I left London for Hamilton on 5th August and arrived on 6th. we went to the mobilisation shed and got everything that was needed for active service. My regiment left for France on 13th August and I was amongst the party of about 100 left behind as "Base details" The "base details" left for France on 19th August (6 days after the battalion) we arrived at Le-Havre on 21st. we had a nice time marching to the camp (about 5 miles away) A lot of French children were wanting us to give them buttons, and numerals, for souvenirs, we were at Le-Havre for 2 days, then we went to Amiens thence to Rouen, from there to Coulomeirs, via Paris (by train) then we marched from Coulomeirs, to within 8 Kilometres (5 miles) of Paris to join the battalion, so I missed the great retirement from Mons. The day I joined the Btn. orders came that the Germans were retiring and that we had to advance, when the order was read, there was a rousing cheer.

My "baptism of fire" was at a place called Singy Signet, the troops afterwards gave it the name of "ration hill" because the Middlesex regiment were getting their rations when they got a few "shrapnel shells" instead of rations, we had a couple of men wounded at this place, this happened about 10 o'clock in the morning.

My Platoon Commander placed 3 sections as observers, and I went with my section out to the left. The Officer said to me "Corporal Honeyball, leave your section there in charge of the Lance Corporals." I went with him to find a decent place for observation for my section, and we saw (what the officer called a good sight) we were looking through field glasses, and about a mile away we saw a lot of German cavalry leave a small wood, then we saw a shell from our Artillery catch them in the rear, and emptied a few saddles, then another shell went right into the centre of them , then the cavalry went in all directions. We were there for a few days, then advanced again. We had two or three stops like this. We kept advancing until we reached the river Aisne, we were in a small wood near Venezal. and I reckon my regiment was very lucky because the shells were falling in front, on the right and left as well as over the wood and we never had any casualties, It sounds strange, but none the less, true. Anyone that was in the regiment at the time will verify my statement, we were there as reserves to a couple of regiments that were in front of us. We were taken away from there, after being there for 10 days.

In the retirement from Mons, nearly every man in the regiment had thrown their overcoats off. So when I joined the regiment someone thought they were more entitled to my greatcoat, than what I was, that is how I lost my coat, and the 10 days that we were in the wood, it rained pretty hard. If it did not rain during the day, it rained at night to make up for it, and I and the majority of us only had a waterproof sheet each (waterproof in name only, because water came through it) to lay on and cover us, so a good number of us contracted Rheumatism. I amongst that number, but I did not get rheumatism as bad as others did at that time.

I was saying we were taken away from that wood and sent to a place called Septmonts, we were there for a fortnight, and we were glad to get a rest. From there we had 4 night marches to a place called Pont St. Maeuse, then we entrained to St. Omar via Amiens, Bologne and Calais. Then we marched through Cassel to Balleul to Vlamertings (in Belgium we were billeted in a mill for a couple of days then we had an order to move on, so they moved my regiment in M.E.T. motor omnibuses to Laventie. The battalion "billeted in this town for the night, and to see the destruction caused by the enemy in this town made one's "blood boil" so to speak.

It was a common thing to meet an aged person pushing a perambulator with their only belongings in, and all they could say was "Allemande" (Germans)

My company went into a private convent to sleep, in Laventie and everything in this place was strewn about, all the children's knitting, and sewing machines were battered, and, the only thing that I noticed was undamaged, was a statue of the Virgin Mary on a pedestal. We left Laventie, and went digging trenches, a few miles further on, we had another order to move on.

In the division we were in was the Argyle and Sutherland Hrs. the Middlesex Rgt. and Royal Welsh Fusiliers, and every day each regiment takes it in turns of leading the column. It was 21st October, and the A. + S.H. were in front, and we were second. That night the Argyles got shelled, they had a few killed and wounded, as also did my regiment. We went into a field and built head cover in case of attack, but the enemy drew off. Early next morning my company was sent out as a covering party, so the company in rear could dig trenches. We went to the front for about 800 yards, and we got to some wire fencing, the enemy opened fire on us, my platoon was on the left of the road, and we got it thick, I shall draw, or rather make a small sketch of our position we went into. We had a good many killed and wounded and the enemy was too strong for us to check their advance, so we had to retire.

So my platoon retired to a barn about 100 yds. away and we placed the wounded behind a hay-stack. Captain Rose told me to stay with the chaps that were wounded and he retired with the company another 100yds. further back into a ditch. I bandaged a couple of chaps up that had got shot in the leg, and a chum of mine Sgt Sadler was shot in the abdomen. I done what I could for him, but he succumbed to his wound. I tried to get a message from him but he could not speak. Soon after that, a man named Potter came back and he said that he was sent to look after the wounded, so I went back to where Captain Rose was. We then retired from the ditch for about 50 yds. because the Germans were advancing again and we were not strong enough to hold them, Captain Rose said that he would see where we could retire to next time, and as he looked round he was shot in the back I, and another young chap that was near, went over to Captain Rose and as I got up my rifle was hit, the stinging sensation made me drop it quick. I thought I was shot in the arm at first, when we got to Captain Rose I asked him where he had got it, he said in the back, as soon as he said that, he got another that killed him. I had got hold of him by the feet, and the other chap had got hold of his shoulders, by the time he got the second shot. And then I got mine through the thigh, I must have fainted after that, because when I came to my senses I was in a ditch and no one seemed near me, and I did not know which way to go. The shots were whizzing overhead, and then there was a lull in the firing, so I thought I would look and see if I recognised anything. I then knew which way to go.

I was dragging myself along, when I caught sight of a house, so I thought if I could manage to get there I might be alright. So I kept on and it seemed like hours, although the distance was not more than 500 yards from where I was wounded. I got to within 50 yards of the house when I caught sight of some of my regiment in the trenches they had made. When I saw them I said "Thank God" Mr Rooke a young Lieutenant came and helped me up to the house that I was trying to get to, then he called the stretcher bearers and they carried me back to where the doctor was, and even then we were not out of danger, a "Jack Johnson" came over and killed 2 ammunition ponies, also the doctors horse.

I was wounded at 10 am. 22 October, and I left the place where the doctor was about 6pm. I was taken to the Field Hospital for an injection to prevent blood poisoning, from there I was taken to the train at Ballral Station, from there I went to Bologne, from there I crossed to Southampton on the Yacht 'Albion' a very nice yacht lent to the government by a Mr Loufler of London. I was taken to Cambridge Hospital Aldershot.

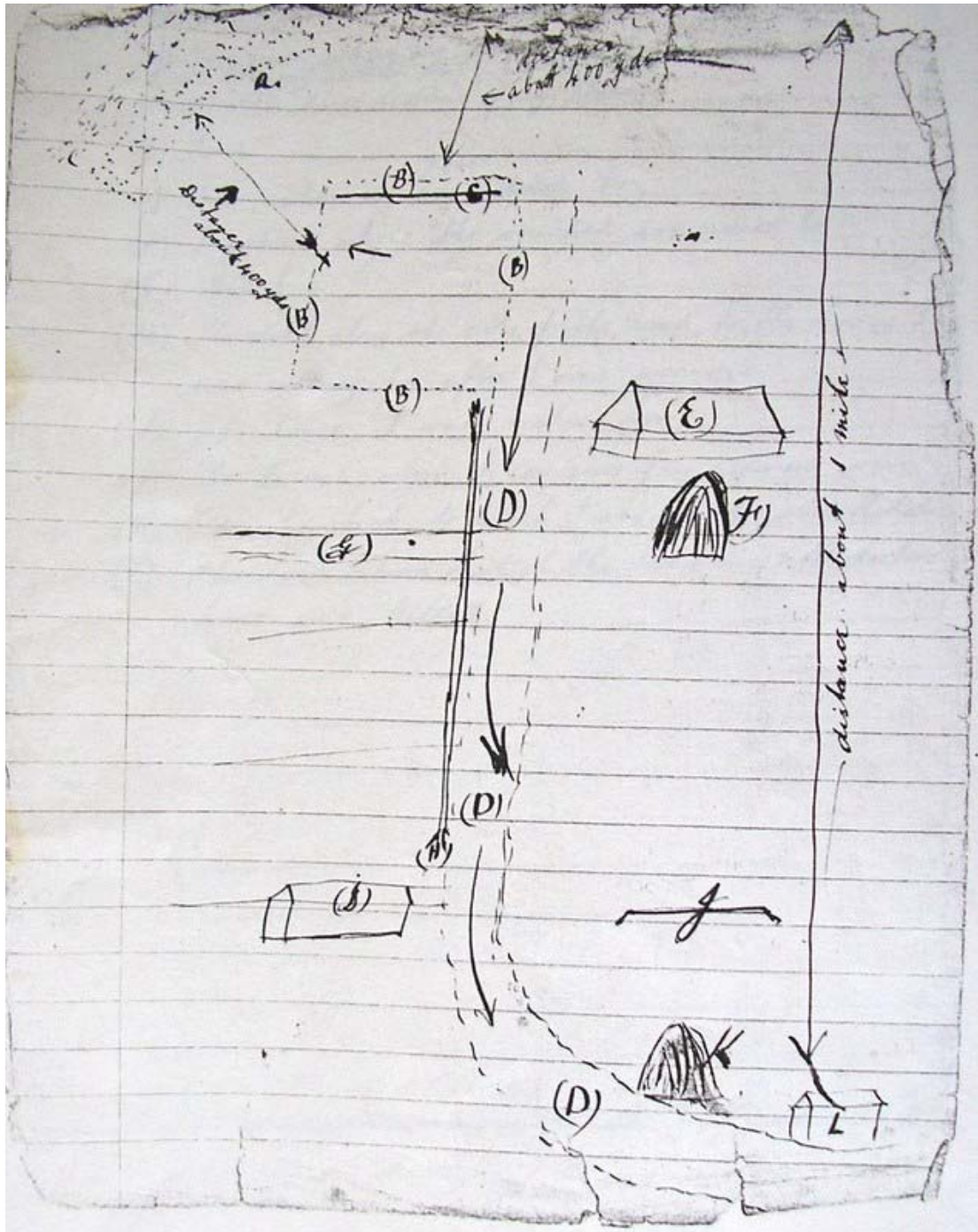
When I was well enough to be moved I was sent to Thorncombe Military Hospital Bramley Surrey.

This place is a private house belonging to Colonel Fisher Rowe of the Grenadier Guards, I soon got better and I received 14 days sick furlough.

I rejoined at the Depot Hamilton on 16th December 1914, and I got light duty for 3 weeks and then sent to this place Nigg,

I think this is all I have to tell you, I hope it will interest one and all, please excuse the mistakes I have made because I am not very good at writing. You will find the sketch on the next page ..from yours truly,

Cpl. Arthur Charles
Honeyball 3rd
Scottish Rifles Nigg
Camp
Ross-shire.



- a) Wood where enemy were
- b) Wire fence where my platoon was,, X... I had my section this side
- c) The other three sections of my platoon
- d) Road
- e) Barn, where my company retired to
- f) Haystack where the wounded were carried to
- g) Ditch
- h) Ditch along side of the road (to the house I was making for after I was wounded)
- i) The house I was making for
- j) The trench where I saw some of my regiment were
- k) The haystack to which I was carried, and some of my regiment were
- l) The house behind which the two ponies and the doctors horse was killed

PART TWO

Here we are again! Almost at an end of another year of war. How it has gone in a ding-dong kind of manner, First one side pushing and then the other, but I think we have got the upper hand at the present time.

I must go back to the beginning of 1915. After being wounded, I was taken to Cambridge Hospital, Aldershot. The wound healed enough for me to be sent to Convalescent Home, in Bramley. I was sent on leave for 10 days when I was fit to travel, and after 10 days I joined my Depot. From there I was sent to Nigg, Scotland. I was sent before several Medical Boards, and was found unfit, on account of Rheumatism, and D.A.H.(which means Disorderly Action of the Heart) About September 11th 1915.

I was made Sgt. and transferred to 13th Scottish Rifles, which was a Bantam Btn. just being formed. When I had been in the Battalion for about 2 months, a vacancy occurred for a Coy. Quarter Master Sergeant, and I was asked to fill the position. I took the rank and the Officers were satisfied with my work.

A few months elapsed and then there was word that we were to be amalgamated with the 14th Btn. Highland Light Infantry. I and a few others that had been in Scottish Rifles for a few years, did not like the idea of it, but we could not alter orders, so- here I am. It was 3rd June 1916, that I arrived in France for the second time. Having been unfit, and was still unfit in my estimation. But the doctor's word was better than mine, so I was handicapped.

The Btn. that I came with was as I said before, the Bantams. They had come from all over the British Isles. Only small men, average height 5 ft. 1 inch, but with a heart as big as themselves.

We arrived in France all merry and bright. We knew that some of us had come over, never to return to our homes. Still, we looked always on the bright side.

After a little training in Lillers we went to a small village named Esquedeques, a little more training and went forward to Bethune. And then each company was attached to a different Regiment. for 4 days in the trenches, 4 days in supports, and 4 days in reserves which made 12 days in all. They went into the trenches in front of Vermelles.

During this 12 days I found it very hard work, but I put my mind to it. I was suffering with neuralgia for the best part of the time, anyone that has had that complaint, knows how bad it is to have it and do the work as well. The Coy. Q.M.Sgts were left with the transport, and stores, and we had to get food up to the men the line.

The rations used to arrive about 9am. and we would set to work, getting them made up for companies. Having them distributed to companies, each C.Q.M.Sgt. would make his comp. rations up in sand-bags, for transportation to the trenches. By the time we got the rations ready it would be 1.30pm and we would "snatch" (there is no other word for it) a

meal, and load the limbers and start from Bethune at 2-30pm. arriving at Saille-La Bourse about 5- 30pm. I had to wait there till dusk and go as far as Vermelles, there we would transfer the rations from the limbers to small trucks on a light railway, then we had to push these trucks, walking sometimes up to our knees in mud, for about one and a half kilometres. The worst of it was that the Hun could hear the trucks on the line, and would occasionally sweep the line with his machine gun.

I had one man helping me to push the small truck to the front line, and even then being two of us we found it very hard work.

Having arrived at the place, I handed the rations over, and went along the trench to report to Capt. Sheppard who was then my Coy Officer. He asked me whose orders it was that I had to report to him. I told him, and he told me to tell that individual, that he could trust me to hand the rations over alright, without having to report.

I then made my way back with my assistant pushing the empty truck back, so that it would be ready to use the following night. After a weary walk we found ourselves at the ration store at 4 am.

I had between 4am and 9am to myself. This little time I made use of sleeping. This went on for another 2 days when I thought I would take a bicycle as far as Saille-La-Bourse which I found very useful.

I stored the cycle at this place and proceeded on foot the remainder of the journey. It was the same routine as I have written on the previous page, excepting I did not take my man with me, as I received word that 2 men were being sent from the company for the purpose of pushing the truck.

I was on my way back from reporting when I heard a ... WHIZ--PHITT ... I laid down thinking I had been seen. I started off again when there came another Bullet, which was very close.

Then I thought that I might as well keep going. It was very unpleasant, coming across a piece of ground, and every minute one is expecting to get hit with a piece of lead, coming from some place that one cannot see.

Coming through Vermelles, I saw Q.M.Sgt. Beany sitting on a stone. He said that he had been waiting there for Q.M.S. Munro for one and a half hours, but Munro had not turned up. He decided to walk back with me, I got my cycle from the place where I had put it, on my way up I started walking back with Beany. I was pushing the cycle as he hadn't got one. After a bit, we had a rest, both being very tired. I told him to jump on the back of the cycle and see if we could get on a bit faster. He got on and we managed to go about a dozen yard when we ran into a curb stone and came a "cropper" After we had said something about curb stones and the darkness we started off again, we had not got very far, when into a ditch we went, then we had something to say about mud and water. We gave the riding up as a bad job and walked the remainder of the distance.

I was not sorry when the Btn came out to this area for 4 days, as that was a little easier for us at the stores. After that things was not so bad, -but- bad enough. After the 12 days instruction, we marched to Bruay, where we spent a very enjoyable 8 days. From there we went to Billets in Fosse, I was in a billet here with the C.S.M. I think the woman in this place was not always in her right senses! Her husband appeared of an 'age' and seemed fit for military service, these people had a bit of a garden, and the garden had a pathway leading to the next street where some of my men were billeted. I sent a man with a message along this path to a Sgt. I required. The woman saw this man going round to the back of the house, and she was under the impression that the man was going to the garden to steal potatoes, and she started making a fuss, which was uncalled for. Her language became so strong that I told her to 'Tez-ey-vous' (shut-up) and that made her worse, and

she was going to hit me with a poker. Needless to say I and the C.S.M. changed our billet, which caused the woman to lose a few franc that we generally gave to anyone that treated us well.

We had been in these billets for about 3 days when I was called out about 2am to go to a place about 2 kilometres away to collect ammunition. I arrived back about 4-30am. A few days later our boys were in trenches at Maroc For the first time as a battalion with a ration store, and those connected with it at Le-Brebis.

We found it much easier here, to get the rations. One night taking the rations up in limbers, the next night taking them up in trucks, with sometimes a horse pulling the trucks, and sometimes with a small petrol engine. Le-Brebis was occupied by civilians, and we were surprised to find places inhabited, being so near the front line. During our tour here we used to take turn about with other btns. in taking over the trenches at Maroc, Callone, and Loos. We had exciting times getting rations up in this sector. The Hun used to put an occasional shell over. I was in a billet with C.Q.M.S. Munro one morning. He had just been writing a letter, and got up from the table so that I could write one, when the Hun started putting shrapnel over, A piece came through the window without asking our permission, and went through the table and stuck in the floor. It would have caught Munro nicely in the leg if he had stayed there another minute, or it would have got me if it had come over a bit later. I did not write my letter at the table after that in case anymore came.

Another experience of a lucky escape of some person happened shortly after this. It was a Sunday morning, and there was a church army hut about 50 yds in rear of my billet. The church service had just finished, and another party was getting ready to go in when over came a shell which fortunately happened to be a "dud" it went right through the roof of the hut, and right through the seat breaking into a thousand small pieces and landed in the ground.

We done a tour of about three and a half months here. During that time we made two bombing raids. The first one was carried out by 'A' Coy. in which they done a good bit of damage to the Hun, and capturing a prisoner The second one was carried out by my company (C. Coy.) The only thing they brought back was a rifle. I asked the man that had it, how he managed to get it. Oh! said he "The German wouldn't come, so I killed him and bought his rifle back as a souvenir" Although they did not get any prisoners, it came out afterwards, that they had stopped a raid, that the Hun was going to make. Lt. Gordon Ritchie who was the Officer in charge of the raiding party received 15 wounds, and was carried back, by a man standing 4 ft. 9 inches named McLauchlin.

About a fortnight after this raid we left Le-Brebis and moved for the 2nd time to Bruay. The civilians here were glad to see us, as some of us had made friends amongst them when we had been here before. We stayed one night here, and moved from village to village, staying sometimes 1 night and 2 nights at different villages until we reached Doullens, we were billeted in a school there for 2 days then our Btn. went to Sousastre. The ration store was kept in this place, and the btn. moved forward to Hebuterne, where they were kept in reserve. They had a very lively time there The Hun was very busy with gas shells. We were in reserve to a division that attacked and captured Beaumont Hamel. The first night we took up rations, I had a terrible job, I was responsible for the rations, the travelling field kitchen, and a load of sheepskin jackets, and each limber had an interval of about 100 yards. We arrived at Hebuterne, and there met guides for every

company, except mine, and the guides of the other companies had no idea where 'C; Coy. was situated. I was wandering about the village for about an hour and saw no one.

The Germans were putting their shells over pretty thick, and I expect everyone thought it advisable to get under cover. After walking for about another 10 minutes, I met a man belonging to the Royal Engineers. "Have you seen any company of the 14th Highland Light Infantry about here ?" I asked him. He said "No" I said "Where does this road go to?" He said another 400 yards would take me to the German front line. I said that I did not want to go as far as that with my load.

So I made my way back to where Btn. Headquarters were, and I was told to stack all my articles there, and they would send out to the company to get a party to take them away. The next night a guide met me and took me to the company. I handed over the rations to the C.S.M. and took 2 jars of Rum and handed them to the Company Officer. I was informed that 1/2 hour after I left, Capt. Blackledge was issuing the rum to the company, when the Hun landed a tear-gas shell close by, which by the way, was not approved of, because it caused the Captain to drop the jar of rum, and instead of it bouncing up again it broke, and the boys were short of their rum issue that night.

I hardly remember what happened that night. I just remember being told to jump into the limber, but remember nothing more except that a doctor was standing beside me in the ration store, asking me how I felt. I fancy that either the cold weather had affected me, or the excitement. However I got over it and carried on with my work.

For about 6 exciting days and night we remained there. Then as the Division captured Beaumont Hamel without our assistance, we were sent back .Halting for a night at one village and a night at another village, we arrived at Gorenflos about 15 Kilometres from Abbeville. We stayed at this place for about fortnight. We had a few singers in the company. So I got up a company concert, to which I invited all the Officers of the company. Capt. Blackledge was greatly pleased with it, that he asked me to get another concert, and he invited the Colonel.

I arranged everything and then had an idea (which did not hurt) of giving the audience a surprise. I thought of a double turn, which I had seen several times, and by the way of a change, I thought I would work this into the programme. I arranged the programme accordingly. Leaving no.'9' on the programme thus:-..... No. 9 ???!!!!...

The evening of the concert came and along came Capt. Blackledge to see if everything was ready.

I said we were ready, and he went along to bring Col.Dick. After an absent arrived with Col Dick, Major Foster, Capt. Mamford (the Adjutant) and Capt Bingham (the Doctor) and a few other Officers. We got through the programme to the turn no. 8. Then came my turn no,9 I was doing M.C. introducing the turns as per programme. So the audience was not looking forward to what followed. The man taking part with me was Sgt. Aitkin who was at the back of the hall. I will just write a little of what the 'turn' was. I got up from my seat and went forward in the usual manner, and started ...

Gentlemen,---- The next item on the programme is :- erer (Here I scratched my head as if I had forgotten).... 'after a pause I started again'.. The next item on the programme is :- er ... er... (Sgt. Aitken from the back as arranged shouted) Here I say Mr Chairman, Why don't you "spit it out " and let us know what it is? Then there was great

excitement The audience looked back to see who had interrupted

The Colonel looked down to the ground, Capt. Blackledge, turned a bit white to think the concert was going to be spoiled by someone interrupting and the C.S.M. called for order. After order being restored I started again... Gentlemen, the next item

(partner from back) Yes we have already had that----

I saidNow look here, whoever you are If you
keep interrupting, I will have you put
outside ...

(partner) Well, Let us know what is next !

(myself)..... Who is running this programme, you or I?

(partner) Well I think I could run it as good as you

(myself)..... Well come up here and carry on

(partner coming forward) Yes, I will carry on

(partner arriving on platform.>.....< As I step forward to address the audience)

He says..... What are you going to do now ?

(myself)..... I am going to make a speech

(partner) Well I can make speeches as well

(then both together) After a long consideration, I have come to the
conclusion, and with great justification (We both stop
speaking -and look at each other)

(then together)..... Are you going to make this speech, or am I
?

Alright you make it and I will stand over here.

(each of us going to one side, After a pause both together we go forward and
say....

(together) Well If you wont make the speech I will----

(Facing the audience and both together) After a long consideration etc etc

We carry this out 3 times, and then after an argument, we tell each other a tale causing great laughter in the hall and show each other tricks, then finish up with a little chorus ... VIZ-- Come let us join in the chorus and Sing--Sing--Sing

The verse doesn't matter, It's all idle chatter

The chorus is the thing

Come let us join the chorus and let your voices ring

Make any old noise, be one of the B-hoys, and

Sing - Sing—Sing

After singing this through twice we decide to divide the hall in half, making a bet that my half would beat his

(myself) I will take this half and call them the chickens

(partner) Why ?

(self)..... Because I can see a few Bantams over there (Laughter)

(partner) I will take this half and call them the Parrots

(self)..... Why ?

(partner) Because there area few 'red noses' over there

(Great laughter)

This was a bit unfortunate because the doctor was in his half, and he liked his drop of whiskey, But I do not know if the redness of his nasal organ was due to that. Anyway it was taken in good part. We then proceeded, I sang the chorus with my half, needless to

say I had to sing it myself, as my partner got at the back of me, and motioned the audience not to sing. Then he sang and the whole lot joined in, and he won the bet. We were called back onto the platform, and as I had not got anything else to say. I carried on with the programme, announcing no 10.. Everyone present enjoyed the concert and were looking forward to the next one

Our next move was to the Somme, we took over the line at Bouchevenes. There used to be trenches, but at the time we were there, the only time one would know there had been a trench there was by taking a step in the wrong direction and sink into the mud. The men of the Btn. had a terrible time. The front line consisted of holes made by shells, and during their period in the front line they had to keep down as low as they could to save the Germans catching sight of them And could only move about at night. If a man was wounded through the day, he had to get his wound dressed by his comrade, and would have to wait till night before he could be got out. Our Ration store was at Echelon B. It was only about 4 miles from the line as the crow flies, but to go up with the rations it would be about 12 kilometres.

We would load the rations on the limbers and take them up as far as Asquith Flats. Then we transferred them on to pack mules. These mules have been a great help in this war, and they have done and gone, where a horse would not be able to go.

We had to use the pack mules in this case because there was no possible way to take a limber. Off we would go. Shells falling sometimes very close and we would feel our way, as it was too dark to see anything, and would arrive after dark travelling through mud and slush (sometimes up to our waist) At Amplier Parc, there we would hand the rations over to the C.S.M. of the company that was kept in reserve. The company in reserve would take them to the company in support, and the company in support would deliver them to the other two companies in the front line. It would take us from 2-30pm to get rations from the store to Amplier Parc to 11 pm. and we would arrive back at the store sometimes at 6 am and lam. Just in time to take a couple of hours sleep and to scrape some mud off. I had a pair of Gum Boots reaching to my thighs, But that would not keep the mud and water from getting in, as it used to get through the tops. No matter how one tried to explain the condition of the ground at this particular sector, one would never be able to state it clearly. The men were not sorry to get out of this place.

We moved back to camp 17 near Sousatre for 8 days. Then went back to the left of the last position. The-condition was just the same here at Rancourt as at Bouchevenes except that we could get the ration to the support line by limber. It was in this sector that I had a bit of unluck with my rations. On the 3rd.day my coy. was moving from the shell holes in the front line to the support line, being relieved by the coy that were in support line. I got the rations unloaded from the limber and the party carried hem to the C.S.M.'s `dug-out' There were box's of Bombs, standing outside and as there was plenty of mud, and as the 'dugout' was only big enough to hold 2 men we had the rations put on these box's to keep them a bit dry. The party went to their respective 'dug-outs' as the Hun were busy with their shell which we called ..." Whiz-Bangs" ... The reason why we gave them that name was because you heard the Whiz and the Bang together. I had my man with me at this time, and I thought he had followed me into the `dug-out', he had not so I called him to come under cover, he had no sooner got inside, when the Hun sent a shell quite near us, it burst and a part of it penetrated the Bomb Box's, causing some of the bombs to explode. it is hardly necessary to add that the rations went up in the air. The bacon and meat was wounded in about 50 places, the tins of corned beef were burst open and the tea was

mixed with sugar and mud and scattered all over the ground. We collected what stuff we could and made a fresh distribution to the platoons, but unfortunately the men had no tea the following day.

We stayed in this sector for another couple of days, then went back for 4 days, then forward again to the front line. We had about a month in and out, then went back to Combie for a rest. After being re-equipped we went forward to Clery sector, which was on the right of Bouchevenes. That was about 8th. March. The Hun was very busy with his guns, and when the Btn. moved forward to Howitzer Wood. The shells coming over made things very unpleasant. The Btn. got into position after losing a few men through shellfire there, they remained in reserve for a couple of days, then went forward to take over the front line. The heavy shell fire appeared to be a little German frightfulness, as on our making a raid, we found that the Hun had retired, then the word came from HdQtrs. (after confirmation) that the men would go "over the top"

There was great excitement amongst them and they waited for the signal which came eventually, and away they went, and they continued on until they came in contact with the Hun. After a day or so they were relieved.

They left this part and then went to Peronne, where they helped to make a light railway which lead to Fins. Over the ground which the Germans had evacuated, we found Peronne in an awful state, It had been destroyed by the Hun before he was driven out. To give some idea, anyone who knows London, can imagine a quarter of it levelled to the ground. All the big buildings and Churches in that quarter destroyed, and then they can imagine what state Peronne was in.

From there the Btn. went forward to Equancourt, thence to Heudicourt, after being there for a night, they went forward and attacked the Germans and captured Villers Plouich which was done after strenuous fighting as the Hun did not let us have it all our way. We had a trying time getting rations up to them, but we managed every time. The Btn. done a tour of about 8 mths. in this part, never seeing a civilian all the time we was there. I only saw a French soldier in this sector. He told me that he was on leave, and his home used to be at Heudicourt, that was where we had our ration store. He greatly surprised us by saying that he had come here to get his money. He borrowed a pick and shovel and set to work removing the debris that was in what used to be his garden. He moved the bricks and mortar, then set to work digging a hole near an apple tree, after working for about an hour, he dug up a box which he told us contained 900 francs and he was very contented at finding it, He said that he had buried it about June 1914 and never expected to see it again. We wished him luck, and away he went with his treasure.

About the end of June 1917. A corporal was hunting about Gouzeaucourt to get some wood and he came to where a very big house had been knocked down by shells, and started collecting lumps of wood. He came across a statue of cast iron, and weighing 16 lb. it was too big for him to carry about, so I managed to get it for myself. I kept it until it came my turn for leave, Then I took it home with me. I have it at home now, standing on the mantle shelf in the front room. It was a fine statue of a great man in France of the 17th. century (that was the only information I could gather about it) I also took home a small piece of a German aeroplane that was brought down in this place. We had an observation balloon near us and the Hun made 7 attempts to destroy it while we were

there. The 7th. time was unlucky for him as the aeroplane got caught by our machine gun fire and came down. When it reached the ground we found there were 2 Germans in it. The force of the machine coming in contact with the ground caused a complete 'smash up' and both men were killed.

After about 8 mths we went back to Bethune, from there to Bapaume. From there I was sent on a catering course for 4 days at Albert, out of that 4 days, I got a pass to Amiens for one day. My course being finished I was sent to rejoin the Btn. which had moved to Pommera. The Btn. moved shortly after my arrival to Bapaume. We stayed there for one night, and then on to Beaulencourt where we waited for the order to move forward. The order came that our division was to make an attack in front of Cambrai. The ration store and transport lines were at Hermies.

The first night we took the rations to the Btn. who were situated in the Hindenburg support trench. This was the position that, a few days before that, the Hun thought was impregnable. But the British troops had captured, and driven the Hun from it. We arrived at the barn with the rations (on pack mules) and found them ready to move forward to support a Btn. that was being heavily counter attacked. So we followed them. The Btn. got as far as the village of Graincourt, when orders came for them to return to their last position, as the Germans had been repulsed.

After delivering the rations we returned to the stores at Hermies. The following day we got rumours through, that our Btn. had gone into attack and had got badly shaken. We got all kinds of news and rumours, but did not pay any particular attention to them. We set off with the rations, and got to the place where the Btn. were the night previous, and found no one there. Enquiries being made we found that they had gone forward to attack Bourlon Wood and village, so we retraced our steps and made our way round by road to Graincourt.

We could not get any information concerning them, and the transport Officer decided to go to Brigade HdQtrs. to get information. He told us to stay where we were so that he could find us when he came back

The shells were coming over thick and fast that we were ordered out of the village. We moved back for about 300yds., which place by the way was not at all safe but we were not going to move back any further until we received information regarding our boy's. After waiting here for about an hour and half, the transport Officer came back and told us that the Btn. was in the wood, and that we would have a hard job to get up there to them. We set off, and I shall never know and cannot realise how we managed to get through the barrage that the Hun was putting over without having a casualty amongst ourselves. It wanted men with strong nerves to go through what we went through that night. There were bodies of Germans and British laying all over the place, also Horses, Mules, Mess Carts, Limbers, and Bags of Rations strewn all over the place, the sight was terrible. After walking for about an hour, we came to a road alongside the wood and we went along this road without seeing anyone, In front of us was a tank it had been put out of action by a couple of shells. We got to this tank and saw a sentry and asked him How far along the road was the H.L.I. (Highland Light Infantry) He answered that another 100yds. would take us to the Germans

We did not want to hand anything over to them , so we turned back

We went back for 200yds. and the transport Officer went into the wood to see if he could find the Btn.

We were waiting for half an hour, with bullets and shells coming in all directions, Fortunately we were in a bit of a sunken road. The Officer came back and told us that he had found HdQtrs and he took us to them.

The Adjutant met us and told us to unload the rations and get back quick, if we valued our lives, as they were surrounded.

It was 7-30am. when we reached the stores at Hermies, So the time it took us to deliver the rations was from 3pm. to 7-30am the following morning (nineteen and a half hours.) We were told then, that the Btn. were being relieved. We took the travelling kitchens as near the lines, as we could with safety and commanded to get a hot meal ready for the Boys coming out. While the meal was being made by the cooks, I and C.Q.M.S. Lambe went and took over the 'dug-outs' that the Btn, would occupy, when they came back. We were waiting all night but they did not come back. What was left of the other Btns. in our Brigade came out, but there was no sign of our Btn., and we could not get any information.

The next day the Brigade got orders to move back and the transport moved back.

The other 3 Q.M.S. and myself did not like the idea of moving unless we got some of our Boys back. So I saw Capt. Oman, and he took me in front of Brigadier General Willoughby, and I explained the case to him and it was decided that Capt Oman and us 4 would stay behind for 1 or 2 days, and we kept the rations with us. Everyone (except the Officer, 4 Q.M.S. and 3 men we kept as scouts) moved back with the Brigade.

All we had to meet the Boys with ('If they came back') was the rations and 11 jars of rum. Nothing to make tea for them if they appeared. So I saw Capt Oman and asked him if they would send a message back for the transport to send up, at least one field kitchen (and that came the following morning)

Soon after the message was sent to the transport, we received information that 3 companies of our Btn. had advanced too far and had lost touch with HdQtrs. and 1 company.

The HdQtrs. and the 1 company had fortified a position and had not intended moving until they had got the other 3 companies back, it was impossible to get them back, so they had orders to come out. When they came out we met them, gave them a meal, and an issue of Rum afterwards and then let them sleep.

The following morning we moved back to Metz There were only 78 of the Btn. that came back. Our division had done good work and had repulsed 7 counter attacks made by the enemy,

We gained an honour here,

Our divisional sign was a white diamond, and we had a couple of things added to the diamond in the form of a bantam and an acorn.

From Metz, we got in buses or lorries and went to Bapaume. We changed lorries here and were taken to Blareville.

I have not given any particulars about what the lads went through. But those that came out of the fight said that "IT WAS HELL UPON EARTH" and that speaks for itself.

After arriving at Blareville, we got re-equipped and was reinforced, then went to Pommier for a rest

Once more being fitted we went to Ervillers. After 8 days the Btn. moved forward and took over the line in front of Croiselles.

It was in this sector that the Hun was very busy with his gas shells. The stores was at Ervillers, and we found it much easier getting the rations up, It was here that an accident happened. Each coy. was in a different part and my coy, was further away than the others and I had to go across country with my limber.

We were going across when the driver got off the track, the result was the front wheels of the limber got into shell holes, and the sudden stop caused the horse that he was riding, to go down and his leg was pinned under the horse. We were struggling to free him when the Hun put over 5 big shells in rapid succession. The horse that the Lance Corporal had been riding was wounded. After working for about 1/2 hour we got the driver up, and carried on. After doing about 2 weeks in this sector, we went to the right sector. The first night we took the rations up in limbers, we arrived at Noreuil, and each coy. branched off in different directions.

I was the unlucky one again, there being no guide for me so I had to find out where the company was. I only know that they were in the front line. I was directed along a certain track, and was told that, where the track met a trench I would find a ration party waiting for me. I went along taking the limber with me and got to the trench . The only man I found there was a man belonging to the A. &S.H. (Argyle & Scottish Highlanders) and he had no idea where 'C' Coy of 14th H.L.I. were. I asked him where his company HdQtrs were, and he told me. I went to that HdQtrs and saw the Officer. He also had no idea where the 'C' coy. 14th H.L.I. were, and suggested that I should go forward to the next trench, and ask someone there. After giving him a piece of my mind (concerning people taking over a trench and not knowing who was near them) I went on, and came to another trench. I got in the trench and could see no-one. I went along and came to another trench leading to the left. After travelling along that trench to the left, I came to the Btn. HdQtrs of another unit. I had an interview with the Colonel, and he got a map and showed me the position of my company. I had to retrace my steps along the trench until I reached the one leading o the left. After walking to about 3/4 of an hour, I reached my company HdQtrs. and greatly surprised them by walking in, The Coy Officer informed me that a party had left about 2 hours before to get the rations, and had presumably got lost. I collected another party and took them to where I had left the limber, and gave them the rations. By this time it was almost on the break of daylight. I told the driver to get on quick, because if it got daylight we would be seen, and the Hun would have his gun set on that spot ready

for us the following night. As Germans were busy with shells, the driver needed no telling to get away. The next night we took the rations up by the light railway. This was not at all pleasant. We loaded the rations on the train at 3pm. starting at sometimes 4pm. or 5pm. arriving at Moray 2 kilometres away at 7pm sometimes staying there till 9& 10 p.m.. From there we would get to a place called "Hospital Loop" and wait for a petrol electric engine to come from Vaultx to take us to Noreuil, where we would hand over the rations. In this sector we used to get the Huns aeroplanes over bombing 4 or 5 nights each week. We done a tour of about 3 months in this sector. when we went back to Blareville for, (as we were told) a months rest. However after 2 weeks of that month we were taken back to Ervillers, as they were expecting the Hun to make an attack in this sector.

We were here for 3 days, when we played a football match for the Brigade Cup. My company won the cup . On 21st March (that was the 5th day) We were supposed to play for the divisional cup, but at 2-50am. Germans opened fire with his long range guns, shelling the back areas, Then came the orders to stand and we knew that the Hun had started his offensive.

The Btn. moved forward and the shelling was very intense. The stores and transport were ordered back to Hamelincourt. We had been in this place for 2 hours when orders came for us to go to Croiselles, Arriving here we started making the rations up ready to take to the Btn.

Darkness came and we moved up with the rations, getting through Gomicourt, Behagnies to Mory. We found the Btn. HdQtrs and was told that we had to take the rations out to the company.

Having received this order from Lt. E.D. Johnston who was acting Adjutant we proceeded to carry them out.

It was very dark, fortunately for us, as the Hun was firing his machine gun, but was aiming very high. We found out afterwards that the Germans had an enormous amount of troops about 200yds away, and if had only come forward, they would have captured us. After this the Adjutant thought a bit before he sent us to the companies with the ration limbers. We got back to the ration store after running the gauntlet of his machine guns, rifle and shell fire. And for 9 days we were getting shelled from place to place until we received the welcome news that our Btn. was being relieved. Our casualties were heavy, having 78 killed, wounded, and missing out of my company alone.

I have not stated half or a quarter of what happened in that 9 days. I could not put into words, what we had to go through, even us at the back.

The conditions and circumstances under which we had to get rations and ammunition up to the Btn. cannot be imagined by anyone that does not know what warfare is like. I will leave them to imagine, but I'm afraid they won't be able to....

The time came for the Btn. to come out. Just imagine what state anyone would be in, that had hardly had a wink of sleep for 9 days, and that is how we were. Us at the stores were almost the same as the boys regarding sleep,

We were taking the rations up at night, and moving from place to place by day. Being shelled from our positions. But the Boys were the worst as they had the fighting to do. We

were a disreputable looking crowd when we were marching back, but the spirit of them was just as if they had come back from a ... 'picnic'instead of a Battle.
We had lost almost half of them in this fight

The morning following their relief, the Btn. started on a 23 Kilometre march. They managed the march alright, Some of the more sturdy ones going along alright, others walking along half asleep.

Our destination was Warluzel and we stayed there for a few days, getting the people that we had left as details and getting re-inforcements. After being made up to strength, we moved north to Saily Lalys. We were informed that this was a quiet sector, and that we had come here for a rest. The Btn. took over the line and our ration store was at Pont St. Mortier

The first night I had the usual difficulty. I had no guide for my company, so I had to look about to see if I could find them. I was hunting about for about an hour, when I met a party of 'B' Coy. They said they would carry the rations for my company, so I handed the rations to the Sgt. in charge. Strange to say everything was quiet. The Hun made up for it the remaining 5 nights, and I was not sorry when the Btn. came into reserve for 4 days. Strange to say,, I passed over the very place where I was wounded in 1914....

On the 3rd day of my Btn. being in reserve (9th April) The Hun 'woke' us up with his shell, the firing was 'terrific" I said to C.S.M. Veitch, that there would probably be an order come round to 'stand to'. As I had not forgotten the morning of 21st March. Orders came, as I expected, and I told the cooks to get on and make the breakfast. About an hour afterwards came the order to "fall in" so I got a couple of men to help me to issue the rations to the men on parade.

Just as they were moving off. I put a tin of "Bully Beef" into the Captains pack, saying that it might come in handy. It did come in handy too, as he told me afterwards in a letter he sent to me.

The Btn. moved off and the companies took up their respective positions. They had hardly left the square, when the Hun landed a big shell in it which did a bit of damage. I had just been speaking to C.Q.M.S. Beany and got about 6 yds away when the shell came, killing a man that had just come out of the hut, wounding Beany in 4 places, and wounding 2 other men. How I escaped being hit I cannot ay.

After bandaging the wounded and sending into the aid post. I made my way back to Pont St. Mottier with C.Q.M.S. Craig. We arrived just in time to find the Hun shelling that place as well, and the transport were just moving their quarters.

The stores moved back to Steenwerk. Here we stopped and made the rations up ready to take to the line

In this sector we went through almost the same as in the Huns last offensive getting shelled from place to place. We lost a good many in his battle, through the Portuguese running away, I cannot say anything other that 'running' They were running back with

their boots tied round their neck, and with no equipment of rifles.

By the time the Btn. got relieved, there were not many left.

We then went to Tattinghem, near St.Omar and had a bit of a rest. and receive a draft. Then we received orders to send so many Officers and other Ranks to H.L.I. Soon after sending the draft away we went to Aquin, and whilst there we had to amalgamate with the 10/11th H.L.I. to form a composite Btn. To send up the line

We got 3 Kilometres beyond Cappel and stayed there for 4 days, then as we were not required we went back to Walton.

Whilst there we had orders to send all ranks to the Base (with the exception of training staff) We transferred the people to the Base I was left with the training staff and we moved to Esqulbecq. We were there for a few days, then went to La. Capelle.

I stayed there for a few days, then moved to Suques. Here we took over the American Regiment School and began instruction. The Btn. training staff then took over the 3 Btns. of the American Rgt. Each Company N.C.O's (non commissioned officers) were attached to different Btns. of the Regt. My coy. went to the 3rd Btn. at Verval. Whilst here I received a letter from my company Officer. He had been taken prisoner, with a few more of my company, and the letter was as follows:-

is follows



To C.Q.M.S A.0 Honeyball 19-5-18

Dear Honeyball,

I have written this to my sister, and asked her to forward it. It is a complete mystery what became of you people. I heard that Beany was wounded, and I hope you came through alright. I was captured early, along with Mr. Robertson. Mr Dickson was wounded and captured. Mr Henderson I'm sorry to say was killed. I have seen several of the boys over here, though not since 9th April, Osborne, Watson, Roe, Quinn, Duffy, Troup, McIntosh and Morrison were badly wounded. Doherty, Niven, Blackburn I believe was killed. I have heard that Veitch is somewhere over here and Robertson is here wounded and nearly alright again.

Please write soon, as I am full of anxiety to know how you got on. Did any of our kit survive , and did you get away with the Football Cup and dramatic outfit? I owe you a heavy debt for that dramatic outfit, which I will repay when we meet again after this blasted war. It is not uncomfortable here, but it is sad being cut off from the company and all the Boys, and there is nothing to do but study, When feeling bored you can't go round the corner and start the choir singing ... "the Banks of the Yser" (this I may add is a song that my concert party made up for the benefit of Captain Blackledge) I hope the boys

are nearly as comfortable as we are here. Please keep your home address book, and then I can hunt people up after the war. I think there are enough left to set the show on its legs again. Have you heard from Holden, or anything from Winters. Sam and Crookson are somewhere here. I wrote a letter to Mr. Mowat asking for news, but of course no answer is back yet. That tin of bully beef you pushed into my hand came in very useful. I must try to get in touch with Tinning again. "Never refuse your leave when it is offered to you"

Ever yours R. D. Blackledge.

After receiving this letter, I wrote one to him sending it to his sister to send to Germany. I was at Verval for about a month when the staff and American Regt. moved by train to Ludy. The Regimental Headquarters going to Foufflin Recametz. My company stayed with 3rd Btn. at Ternas.

I have left a good lot out, but I have given you an outline of my tour in FRANCE from June 3rd. to July 27th 1918

I have scribbled this through and hope all mistakes will be excused..

A.C.Honeyball C.Q.M.S. (Regtl no 29671)

This is an exact copy of an account written by my father. The original manuscript is held in the documents department at the IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM, Lambeth Rd. where - conservation work was carried out on it. Viewing can be made with a prior telephone appt.

Stella M. Barber (nee Honeyball) Feb. 1997

July 2006..Additional information of interest (mainly for the future generation of my family) My father never spoke about his experiences to us as children, All I knew was that his young brother was killed in action. With the help of today's technology I have been able to find out that his brothers was Private Thomas Frederick Honeyball no. 130592 34th Btn. Machine Gun Corps (inf) who died on Tuesday, 23 rd July 1918. Age 19 When my father left the service , he went back to working with the London Transport. where he worked for the rest of his life. Although he was past the age to be 'called up ". He was always happy to know that he was doing his 'bit' to help the transport system to run fairly smoothly. during the years of WW2 I'm sure that if he had written some of the experiences of that time, it would have made interesting reading. Unfortunately he died suddenly at work just at retiring age

S M Barber

busy with his shells
Whiz bangs. The reason
is that he was because
with me at this time &
had followed me into
I had not so I called
in under cover, he
got inside when the Hun
quite near as it burst &
penetrated the Bomb Boxes
the bombs to explode. It is

er of mind & scattered all
He collected what stuff
a fresh distribution to
unfortunately the men had
following day.
This sector for another
then went back for 4 days
in to the front line. He



19-5-18

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