

I appealed against this treatment, and Sergeant Bennett was moved next day to the German Military Hospital, but it was then too late, his system was absolutely ruined. I left the foodstuffs and promised to get him some change of linen, &c.

On my return to Altauz I reported the stealing of the boots, kit and foodstuffs, but could receive no satisfaction.

On the day Sergeant Bennett died I again went to Mitau. I stayed with Sergeant Bennett until 5.0 p.m.—he died at midnight the same night. One Englishman was in the hospital with him at the time of his death—Private Wriggleworth, of the Durham Light Infantry. He was cured, but volunteered to stay with Sergeant Bennett and to look after him. With the exception of Sergeant Bennett he was the only Englishman in the place.

My candid opinion is that from the day Sergeant Bennett was admitted to hospital in Mitau he never had a chance whatsoever. If he had received anything like proper treatment, I am certain he would have recovered.

Attached is a copy of the last letter we received from Sergeant Bennett, written about three days before his death, also an extract from his diary. This was brought us by a Russian prisoner of war who was discharged from hospital. The originals were sent to Mrs. Bennett on my arrival in Holland.

R. CONARON, Sergeant,
Scheveningen, 1st Battalion Rifle Brigade.
12th November 1918.

I consider this witness intelligent and reliable.

H. MURRAY, Captain,
President Inquiry Committee.

Extract from Letter by Sergeant Bennett.

“Dear pals, I am trying to write a few lines, the last, I am afraid, I shall write in this life. It is hard to lie here waiting for the end, when a little effort on the part of these people could save me. I asked them a fortnight ago to send me away, but they only laughed at me. They have nothing here to help me. It is simply lingering on. I am the only Englishman here among the lot. That makes it so much harder. I can only get myself washed when I pay a Russian to do it. I have not seen an interpreter since I have been here. If this should drop into your hands, I should like if you would let my father, Mr. John Bennett, Public Hall, Newtown, or my wife, know how I have been treated as an honourable prisoner of war. I am not in any pain, boys; what I feel most is being here all on my own, cared for no more than a beast. My last thoughts are of my dear wife and little boy. We loved each other so well. Also my parents and brothers and old pals. I forgot to mention, boys, if you get this, give it to Private H. Beadles, South Wales Borderers. He comes from my place and knows all my people.”

Extract from Diary of Sergeant Bennett.

“One month, no sleep; very bad.”

Precis of a Statement by Company Sergeant-Major A. Gibb, 2nd Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, who was the Senior 2nd Class W.O. of one party of 1,000 British N.C.O.'s and Men sent to Russia in 1916, as a Reprisal for the Employment of German Prisoners in France.

No. 2806

One thousand N.C.O.'s and men left Doeberitz for Russia on 8th May 1916. At Frankfort-am-Oder another 1,000 N.C.O.'s and men were collected. The 2,000 left Frankfort for Russia on 11th May 1916. Thereafter, Company Sergeant-Major Gibb's statement concerns only one of the four parties or companies into which the men were divided (each 500 strong).

No. 4 Company, to which the statement refers, was employed in the docks at Libau from 14th May 1916

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to February 1917. No special complaints are brought forward concerning this period.

On 23rd February 1917 the company, strength 500, left Libau for Mitau, and on 25th marched along the frozen River Aa to the village of Latchen, near Kelzien, a distance of about 28 kilometres. The escort of the party, a squadron of Uhlans, drove the party along all day in the most brutal manner possible, and only about 80 of the 500 were able to reach Latchen in any sort of formation. The remainder were scattered along the route for several kilometres, being thrashed along by the Uhlans by means of lances and whips.

Accommodation at the new camp was one tent, about 70 yards by 7, for all the 500 N.C.O.'s and men, pitched on a frozen swamp. No fuel for heating the tent, no light, no proper means of obtaining water for cooking or washing, and rations barely sufficient to keep the men alive. No parcels allowed, no smoking; this tent was under Russian shell fire, which, however, was not serious.

Orders were read, stating that the British had been brought to this place as a reprisal for the employment of Germans in France, where they were being ill-treated, starved, and made to work under fire. The orders to the guard stated that no mercy was to be shown to the prisoners, every one of whom had assisted to stop the Kaiser's army from reaching Paris. The hours of work were from 5.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m., during which they were employed within from 1½ kilometres to 60 metres of the Russian lines (a stockade).

The working parties were constantly under Russian shell fire, but there was little rifle or machine-gun fire. The treatment was so brutal that the men soon became mere living skeletons, too weak to move about. Nevertheless, they were kicked and beaten out to work morning after morning by the medical feldwebel; their comrades had to help them to walk out, lead them about all day, and very often carry them home at night. Hospital accommodation was quite inadequate at the camp, and medical comforts or attention almost non-existent. The result, in figures, was that 14 men died at the camp, and eight more in hospital at Mitau, all from exhaustion and starvation, except one, who was murdered. The death took place shortly after the party returned to Libau from the same cause. 77 N.C.O.'s and men lasted out the period out of the total of 500, but had it not been for an improvement in the weather about the end of April, and the receipt at the time of the first consignment of parcels, it is doubtful if any would have been left at all. About 20,000 parcels of food from home were collected during this period, and had they been allowed to be issued to the prisoners, probably they would have saved all these 23 lives. Instead, they were stopped at Mitau, where they were stored and looted by the Germans, as well as allowed to waste by perishing. Clothing and other personal property, chiefly food, brought by the party from Libau, were similarly held back during these three months at Mitau. In addition to starvation and exhaustion, frostbite and vermin ravaged the men's bodies. The camp was broken up on the 10th June 1917, and, after a month's rest at Libau, the party was employed in light work and occupied good quarters until November 1917, when it was sent back to Germany. 276 N.C.O.'s and men returned of the original strength of 500 from the front line to Libau. Of the remainder most had already been sent back to Germany incapacitated for any other work, some of these probably for the remainder of their lives.

Company Sergeant-Major A. Gibb, No. 6826, 2nd Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, having been duly sworn, states:—

I was the senior 2nd class W.O. of a party of 1,000 N.C.O.'s and men (25 per cent. N.C.O.'s) who left Doeberitz Camp on 8th May 1916 for Russia. We knew nothing at that time of our destination, or the reason of the move, and as it was very warm weather we left our warm clothing and half our food to follow us. We arrived at Frankfort-am-Oder the same day, and by 11th May 1916 another 1,000 N.C.O.'s and men, from a number of camps in Germany, had also come into Frankfort. On 11th May 1916, four parties

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Libau. May 13, 1916—
Feb. 20, 1917.

of 500 each left for Russia. We had learned by this time that Russia was our destination, but we knew nothing of the reason for the move. I was the senior British prisoner of war of No. 4 of these parties, and we reached Libau by train on 13th May 1916. The party commenced work on 14th May 1916 and continued until February 1917, being employed for the most part in the docks of Libau. At first the men found the work very heavy, under the conditions of short rations and bad accommodation, but on the arrival of our parcels, which were forwarded fairly regularly, we were able to carry out the heavy work in better condition. We were informed on arrival at Libau that we were here as a reprisal for the employment of German prisoners of war in France by the British. On 20th February 1917 my party, which had been brought up to the strength of 500 again, was ordered to be ready to leave Libau for an unknown destination. We were ordered to take with us only such kit and food as we would require on the journey, the rest being packed in separate waggons and carried on the same train. We left Libau about 10 p.m. on 23rd February 1917, and arrived at Mitau the following evening, being accommodated in a Russian prisoners' camp. At 5 a.m. on 25th we were paraded and handed over to a squadron of Uhlans. We were cautioned that we were under active service troops now; that no one was to leave the ranks under any consideration; all orders must be at once obeyed; no reports (complaints) would be listened to. &c. We marched along the River Aa, in about 6 inches of snow, to the village of Latchen, near Kelzien, which was then 5 or 6 kilometres behind the German front lines, where we arrived about 5 p.m. The distance was about 28 kilometres. The whole way lances and whips were freely used upon us; anyone falling down was beaten to his feet again, and many of the men abandoned their food or blankets, which were looted by the rear guard or by the German soldiers in the billets we passed. The Uhlan escort gave exhibitions of "cattle driving" as we were passing these billets all along the route, encouraged by the cheers of the German soldiers. On arrival at Latchen we numbered about 80 in the column, the remainder being scattered over several kilometres were being knocked along. Lieutenant Prael, the new German commander, was waiting to receive us, and kept us standing in the snow for two hours until all the stragglers had come in. We were then allotted quarters in one large tent, about 70 yards by 7, which was pitched on a frozen swamp. There were 10 small stoves in the camp, but no fuel for them; no light in the tent. A barbed-wire fence closely encircled this tent. There was no drinking or washing water; we had to do what we could with snow for these purposes, nor were there any buckets or anything to store water in. Cooking water was brought from the river daily by a fatigue party in the field cookers. Rations were just enough to keep us alive. Coffee at 5.0 a.m., soup at 6.0 p.m., one-sixth of a 1,500 gramme loaf of bread one day, one-fifth the next day alternately. About one tablespoonful of jam every four days, and two ounces of sausage weekly. The soup was simply hot water with about 7 litres of barley in it for 500 men. The meat in the soup could not have been more than 20 lbs. in a week. The German guard had the remainder. We remained in this camp until 2nd April 1917. Russian shells occasionally fell in the neighbourhood of it, but only one man was hit by a spent splinter. A large number of the men had no blankets. We slept in two layers on wire netting stretched on poles, the lower one about 1 foot from the ground, and the upper one about 3 feet above that. Loose wood fibre, which had been lying in the snow and was all wet, was spread over the wire netting. I asked for blankets to be supplied to the men who had none, but was told there were none to give us. I also reported the want of boots by many men, and was told that these would be supplied when they arrived from Mitau. They were, however, never issued, and this was the cause of most of the frostbite. The day after our arrival orders were read to us. These stated that we had been brought here as a reprisal for the employment by Great Britain of German prisoners of war in the front line in France, where they were being ill-treated,

Latchen. Feb. 25—April
2, 1917.

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starved, and made to work under fire. We were to be subjected to the same treatment. Smoking was prohibited, the punishment for this being 14 days' arrest—which consisted in being tied up with field telegraph wire to a post outside the fence, but inside the wire, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. after return from work. We were ordered to write to England and tell our people the situation we were in. Orders were issued to the guard, of which we obtained a copy, and which stated that no mercy was to be shown to us; we were the men who had, every one of us, assisted in stopping the Kaiser's army from going to Paris, and they were to think of their comrades who were being brutally treated in France, and be strong. Any soldier failing to carry out these orders was to be severely punished. If anyone of us tried to escape he and two others would be punished. Hours of work daily, Sundays included, were as follows:—Parade at 5.30 a.m., move off 6 a.m. Return to the camp about 5.30 p.m. No food between these hours. Two pauses of 20 minutes during the day, 10 to 10.20 a.m., 1.30 to 1.50 p.m. Any one reporting sick had to do so after return to camp in the evening. The work was felling and carrying timber, which the pioneer troops used for the machine-gun emplacements, road making, &c., ice breaking, trench digging, &c. The British N.C.O.'s merely accompanied the men everywhere; they were not forced to work. The trench parties were constantly under Russian shell fire, and had to stop work frequently on account of it. There was little rifle or machine-gun fire from the Russian trenches during this period. Our work lay within from 1½ kilometres to 60 metres distance from the Russian stockade. Everybody who could be made to work had to go out daily.

The medical under officer had a free hand in his treatment of us, and was invariably brutal. If a man could not rise from his bed, this under officer would pull him out, draw his bayonet and strike him, and kick him to his feet. On one occasion he spent about 20 minutes trying to get a man awake and out of bed, and finally found that he had died in his bed during the night. He had been dead for some hours. A man fainting away on the march between the camp and work, had to be carried by his comrades, and if a man fainted whilst turning out in the morning, he was left lying in the snow, and no one allowed to go near him. The work as a rule lay from 4 to 5½ kilometres from the camp. Toward the end of March the party was in a terrible state. The men were so weak from starvation that they were simply crawling about, and many were covered with sores, chiefly on the face and hands, from frostbite. Several had died already. The house used as a hospital, a peasant cottage outside the wire, in which the night guard was also housed, with a machine gun, and full of our sick. It only held about 20, and little or no medical treatment was given to them. Any sick over this number were left in our tent and treated like the rest of us. About 20th March 1917 the Germans began sending the worst cases to Mitau by sledge, a distance of 26 or 30 kilometres, where they were accommodated in temporary hospitals, under German doctors, the personnel of the hospitals being mostly Russian volunteers, probably either deserters or prisoners. By the end of March parties of from 3 to 10 daily were being moved to Mitau hospital. About 25 per cent. of the remainder had to be assisted to their work in the morning, and we had to carry most of them home in the evenings. Seaman Ireland died on 26th while his comrades were carrying him home.

On 28th March I had a party of 16 N.C.O.'s and 11 men, the last to be hunted out of the tent. We took about three hours to cover the 3 kilometres to our work, which was carrying fascines. After the first pause at 10.20 a.m., 8 of the 16 were absolutely unfit to work and almost incapable of walking. The "work" feldwebel ordered the sentries to compel them to continue, and two N.C.O.'s were detailed to lead the worst four or five of the men. I think we made about eight journeys all day, the distance being about a kilometre. Bandsman Smith, Scottish Rifles, and Private Walker, Northumberland Fusiliers, were the worst cases. I assisted to lead Private Walker all day, and to carry him home at night. These two cases are noted as an example of what was taking place almost

daily about this time. The interpreter repeatedly told us to write home. After delaying for a fortnight to see if matters would improve, I did so, and stated the actual circumstances in which we were. The following day I received the letter back with the words "five days' strong arrest" written across it. I was tied to the pole daily, on return from work, from 7 to 9 p.m., in a temperature of many degrees of frost, for five consecutive evenings.

Pinner. April 2—June 10,
1917.

On 2nd April 1917, owing to the melting of the ice on the swamp where our tent was pitched, we moved across the Aa to a new ground about 4 kilometres off, near the village of Pinner. The new tent was pitched on a foot of snow, which had not been cleared away, and the inside of the tent was soon under water, in some places about a foot deep, in the shell holes still deeper. This tent was also surrounded by a barbed-wire fence, the enclosure being about 100 yards by 60. There were German batteries on three sides of us, and several times the Russian shells directed at these batteries fell in and near our enclosure. The Russians apparently knew we were there, as the day after we left (10th June 1917) the whole place was blown to bits by the Russian artillery. I heard this from a reliable German under officer. None of us, however, were hit during the period.

Sanitary arrangements were if anything worse than in our old place. For water for cooking and washing we simply removed the turf and dug a hole. When the weather improved towards the end of April we were able to drain our enclosure into the big shell holes outside.

On 6th April 1917 Private Skett, Coldstream Guards, was shot under the following circumstances. About 20 or 25 men, too weak to go to work, were left in camp in the morning. About 10 a.m. some 10 of them were taken outside by the Germans for fatigue. This consisted in moving the guards' and officers' property from the old camp at Latchen to the new one. A hand cart was used for this purpose, and the road was deep in mud. They completed one trip in the forenoon, and while returning from a second in the afternoon Private Skett collapsed several times from weakness. At last he was quite incapable of rising, and one of the German sentries went to him, put the muzzle of his rifle close to his breast, and fired, killing Private Skett where he lay. I was not a witness of this. I heard the shot from our tent, and the case was reported to me when the party came in 20 minutes later, bringing the body on the cart. No. 645, Lance-Corporal M. Purdon, Gordon Highlanders, was with him at the time. The body of Private Skett lay outside the enclosure for two days more. Private Carruthers, 12th London Regiment, who had also been left in that morning, too weak to go out and work, died during the 6th April. His body was placed beside that of Private Skett, and both covered with a sheet of tin. I buried them both on the morning of the 9th about 100 yards from the hut. They were both simply human skeletons. I saw the wound in Private Skett's body just by the heart.

Men were still being sent away to hospital at Mitau, and about the middle of April our strength was only 77 out of the original 500; 47 of these were marked by the doctor not fit to leave their beds, and only 5 men and 11 N.C.O.'s were left available for work. Every man of the party, except perhaps the N.C.O.'s and two men who were always left in camp as cooks, were absolutely at the end of their tether, and I am certain that another 10 days of bad weather would have killed the whole lot. I do not wish to give details of the state that some of us were reduced to in their craving for food, or of what they picked up to eat. About the end of April an improvement set in in the weather, the ice was breaking up, and we were informed that parcels would be allowed.

On 29th April the first consignment of parcels reached us. They were opened by the Germans outside the enclosure and not in our presence, all tins being opened, and about one parcel being issued to each of us every two days, after the contents had been picked over by the Germans.

A new German officer now took command of us and a new medical under officer, and conditions improved greatly. The officer visited our tent daily. I was

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ordered to remain in camp with three or four men, and we were able to improve the inside of our enclosure. He did what he could for the sick, and all ranks were marked "no work for 10 days." Our men began to return from the hospital at Mitau.

On 20th May I was sent to Mitau with two sergeants to sort out our heavy baggage. We had never seen this since leaving Libau on 23rd February; I found it stowed in rooms of a private house. There had been a German guard over it, and I found that most of the boots and soap and a lot of clothes had been stolen. On return to Pinner after four or five days I reported this verbally to the German officer, and at his suggestion I sent in also a written report, which he said he would forward to Headquarters of the 8th Army. In these reports I mentioned my reasons for suspecting Landsturmmann Logemann, our interpreter, of being concerned in the thefts. I heard no more about it.

While at Mitau, I also saw, I should think, about 20,000 parcels stored in two shops. These had arrived from Libau for us during the last three months, and had they been forwarded on and delivered to us they would have saved every one of the lives that were lost. All the deaths were due to starvation and exhaustion and nothing else. In one of the shops hundreds of wrappers showed that large numbers of parcels had been stolen; in the other everything seemed in order. All the perishable articles in these parcels had of course been wasted.

The weather was now good, and the good supply of food and clothing enabled us to pick up rapidly and clean ourselves up once more. The arrival of our parcels further had the effect of making the German guard much more lenient with the working parties. The work was much easier all round, and the constant use of rifles on the men to drive them about now ceased.

On 9th June orders reached us that we were to be withdrawn. Smoking was again allowed, and on 10th the party, which had now been made up again to 260 N.C.O.'s and men, moved by boat to Mitau.

At Mitau 16 men joined us from hospital, and we left the same evening by train for Libau, arriving there on 11th. The medical officer at once marked us all "no work for 14 days," then "14 days light work," and on 11th July we sailed to Alt-Auz and district, where we had light work and good quarters until November, when we returned to Germany.

The following N.C.O.'s and men of my party (No. 4 Company, Engländer Kommando I.) died during the period of reprisals on the Russian front:—

Private Wilmot, Border Regiment, 17.3.17.
 A. B. Rootham, R.N.D., 21.3.17 (on road to Mitau).
 Seamen Ireland, R.N.D., 26.3.17 (in comrades' arms while being carried back from work).
 Bandsman Smith, Scottish Rifles, 29.3.17.
 Private Leeson, South Lancs Regiment, 29.3.17.
 „ Barlow, West Yorks Regiment, 31.3.17
 „ Carruthers, 12th London Regiment, 6.4.17.
 „ Roberts, K.O. (Royal Lancaster) Regiment, 21.3.17.
 Lance-Corporal Mulholland, Manchester Regiment, 23.3.17.
 Private Sturgeon, Norfolk Regiment, 29.3.17.
 „ Archer, K.O.Y.L.I., 29.3.17.
 „ Knill, Wiltshire Regiment, 30.3.17.
 „ Skett, Coldstream Guards, 6.4.17 (shot)
 „ Boyington, West Yorks Regiment, 22.4.17.

The above all died in the camp at Latchen and Pinner.

The following were removed from camp to hospital at Mitau and died there:—

Private Kingston, Norfolk Regiment, 1.4.17.
 „ Walker, Northumberland Fusiliers, 13.4.17.
 „ Farmer, Coldstream Guards, 15.4.17.
 Bandsman Clarkin, Lincolnshires, 28.4.17.
 Private Starling, Norfolk Regiment (after return to Libau. He had been in hospital at Mitau, and rejoined us in camp before we left Pinner).
 Lance-Corporal Waterman, Hampshires, 5.4.17.
 Private Harvey, Warwickshires, 12.4.17.
 „ McCulloch, Seaforth Highlanders, 17.4.17.
 „ Crockson, Somerset L.I. (In Shaulin Hospital, date uncertain.)

Libau June 11—July 11,
 1917.
 Alt-Auz. July 11—Nov.
 1917.

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The following were severely wounded by Russian snipers while working on the face of an advanced trench:—

Private McCullough, Royal Irish Rifles.
Gunner Mouncey, R.F.A.

I wish to bring forward the name of No. 2150, Rifleman J. Punter, Rifle Brigade, who acted as hospital orderly in the reprisal camp at Latchen and Pinner. He stuck to us the whole time, tended the sick, and worked very hard the whole period without a grumble. It was certainly due to his care and attention in the "hospital" hut and in our tent that many men were saved and able to get back to Mitau, where they recovered. He was originally a stretcher-bearer when captured, and should I believe be repatriated as medical personnel. He was at Chemnitz camp, Saxony, when I left there on 18th January 1918.

I desire also to record the names of the 72 N.C.O.'s and men who lasted out the whole period of reprisals with me. The fact that they did so was entirely due to their determination not to give in, but to see the business through at all costs, and to their efforts to take care of themselves to this end. The list is as follows:—

6826. C.S.M. Gibb, A., 2nd A. and S. Highlanders.
5241. C.S.M. Andrews, W., West Yorks.
5767. Sergeant Allison, J., 11th Hussars.
5032. " McTaggart, Scots Greys.
7108. " Kingdon, H., Lincolns.
11415. " Mellor, H., S.W.B's.
9855. " Forrest, J., 2nd A. and S. Highlanders.
8699. " Forage, G., Cheshires.
6984. " Buchanan, F., Border Regiment.
7415. " Nolan, A., South Lincs.
7787. " Jackson, J., Lincolns.
4787. " Lugg, H., Somerset L.I.
9573. Corporal Smyrk, J., Essex.
6193. " Wright, C., 5th Lancers.
9504. " Thackwray, J., West Yorks.
2833. " Holling, B., Royal Fusiliers.
8263. Lance-Corporal Butler, J., Somerset L.I.
7322. " Harper, S., K.O.Y.L.I.
5718. " Buttrey, W., West Yorks.
8510. " Page, L. A., Suffolk Regiment.
4129. " Reece, A., East Surrey.
6760. A.B. Rundle, L. R., R.N.V.R.
103419. Stoker Smedley, M.L., R.F.R.
70. Recruit Davies, A. E., R.N.D.
13667. Drummer Thompson, T. H., Grenadier Guards.
2150. Rifleman Punter, J., Rifle Brigade.
647. Private Shields, W., Seaforth Highlanders.
9771. " Bain, B., Gordon Highlanders.
10098. " Bennet, J., " "
9205. " McLean, M., Seaforth Highlanders.
8333. " Locker, J., Royal Scots.
10188. " Clark, G., East Surrey.
5680. " Darby, W., Scots Guards.
5963. " Grant, H. J., 15th Hussars.
9759. " Grant, H., East Surrey.
9489. " Hurst, F., Northumberland Fusiliers.
2789. " Logan, J., 20th Hussars.
4145. " MacDonald, J., Royal Scots Greys.
5323. " Parker, J., Coldstreams.
9849. " Taylor, H. B., East Surrey.
10423. " Scholes, T., Grenadier Guards.
6743. " Brooker, T., Wilts.
4573. " Fowles, L., South Lincs.
7002. " Golden, V., Norfolks.
7163. " Idle, W., Lincolns.
5324. " Hawthorne, G., Somerset L.I.
7418. " Hann, G., " "
7917. " Palmer, G., Norfolk. " "
7006. " Smith, E., " "
8927. " Whatley, W., Wilts.
10208. " Breslin, Royal Irish Rifles.
7891. " Ash, A., 2nd Dragoon Guards.
7180. " Bell, G., Lincoln.
5202. " Death, W., 20th Hussars.
7129. " Gillard, H., Somerset L.I.
9621. " Spiers, T. A., 11th Hussars.

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2198. Private Withers, G. F., Royal Warwick-shires.
 5958. „ Wells, J., 12th Lancers.
 9481. „ White, A., Somerset L.I.
 8003. „ Harrison, H., K.O.Y.L.I.
 8693. „ Graham, G., „
 9071. „ Ingleton, D., „
 7186. „ Thompson, F., „
 10364. „ Waterworth, J., „
 9094. „ Williams, J. C., „
 7794. „ Ashby, C. H., West Yorks.
 7374. „ Brain, J. C., „
 7545. „ Butt, R., „
 7621. „ Hempstead, A., „
 6753. „ Marsden, H., „
 7128. „ Thompson, F., „
 7923. „ Walklett, G., „
 9860. „ Petch, H., „
 8341. „ Clark, L., Duke of Wellington's.
 4555. „ Michie, G., Gordon Highlanders.
 15819. „ Webb, E., King's Own.

(Signed) ALEXANDER GIBB, C.S.M.,
 No. 6826, 2nd Battalion
 Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.
 Scheveningen, Holland,
 7th February 1918.

No. 2807.

Sergeant A. J. Parsons, No. 5855, 11th Battalion
 Rifle Brigade.

Russia (E.K. 1), 6th May 1916 to 11th December
 1916.

Cologne Fort, December 1916 to August 1917.

On the 6th May 1916 I left Münster Camp for a kommando, but at that time we did not know where we were going, except that the kommando was to be called the English Commando One. We were put into cattle trucks at Münster Station at 11.30 a.m. and after 24 hours cooped up we reached a place called Frankfurt. We were kept there until the 2,000 Englishmen arrived who were to make up the party. We were then split up into companies, my own being No. 1 Company.

We left Frankfurt on the Thursday morning at about 10.30 and set off to a place unknown, for they would not tell us where we were going. But after travelling day and night, shut up like cattle, and only allowed to get out when it was time for soup, which was once in the morning and again at night, we eventually reached a place called Lerin, and, although it was May, it was bitter cold and snowing heavily at 6 o'clock on the Sunday morning. We were given a cup of coffee and a lump of dry bread, and then we had to march for about 16 kilometres with all our kit, and we slept in big barns at a place named Balgallen. We were called at 6 o'clock the next morning and set off on another cup of coffee and dry bread for a 20-kilometre march through woods infested with mosquitoes. We halted at a place called Kilitseen, and then received a few potatoes and a salt herring, and told to make the best of it. We were supplied with bivouacs, and told to put them up as we were stopping there for a couple of days.

Kilitseen. May—July, 1916.

We were then sent further into the village and shown a lot of barns full up with manure, and told we had got to live there for a month or two, and so we had to set to and try to clean the place up, and the stench was terrible, and the water there was a dirty brownish colour, and the German doctor told us it was full of cholera and we must not touch it until we boiled it. We then had to put barbed wire round the camp.

We were given a loaf of bread weighing about 500 grammes, and told it was our bread ration for three days and that we should get three hot meals per day, but unfortunately they are very poor judges of meals, for they turned out to be: 5.30 a.m., 1 pint of coffee; 10.30 a.m., soup (barley, potatoes, and plenty of water); 5 p.m., 1 pint of coffee; so you can see what I mean by them being very poor judges.

The men in No. 1 Company were numbered 600. They were split up into three parties and told they

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