

DIARY OF A SECOND LIEUTENANT.
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1st BATTALION, THE LOYAL REGIMENT.
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5th AUGUST, 1914.
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TO

15th NOVEMBER, 1914.
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AUGUST 5th.

First day of mobilization. I am posted to "B" Company, and command No. 8 Platoon. Other officers in "B" Company are Captains Allason, Wakley, Lieutenants Goldie and Loomes. We are in the 2nd Brigade, 1st Division, at North Camp, Aldershot.

AUGUST 6th to 11th.

Everyone very busy. We route march every day and drill reserves, who came up in two batches each about 300 strong. We entrain at Farnborough, and embark at Southampton.

AUGUST 12th.

We start to cross over, but run into a ship in the Solent, giving her a nasty bash; one man is injured. We cross at night to Le Havre.

AUGUST 13th.

The French gave us a hearty reception. Their soldiers looked very quaint in their red trousers. We landed at 9-a.m., and spend all day getting stores and transport ashore. We are one of the first regiments to land. Towards night we march through the town to camp above Havre.

I find my equipment heavy for me - one Greatcoat strapped on the back (after to-day our Greatcoats are carried in the transport vehicles for the remainder of the campaign), one revolver with 12 rounds, field glasses, sword, Sam Browne belt, wire cutters, iron rations, note book, water bottle, and haversack with oddments inside.

We get a great reception on our way through town; all the French damsels want to shake hands with us, and many are pulled into the ranks by the excited men. The men sing all the way up to camp, eliciting remarks from the French: "Ils sont très Sais", etc. It is dark when we at last reach camp, only to find that the place has not been straightened out; however, we settle down. After partaking of a somewhat rude meal, I spend a very good night in a tent with Goldie and Loomes. Next day we spend a hard day getting the camp marked out, though some of us are able to go into town to buy a few things. French soldiers are busy in the fields clearing up the last of the harvest. About six o'clock we parade and march down to the station, where we entrain about midnight; we are very crowded and do not have a very pleasant journey.

AUGUST 14th.

We eventually land up at Le Nouvion, passing on the way Rouen, Paris, Amiens, Arras and Cambrai; at Amiens the General (Bulfin) is presented with a bouquet by a small girl on behalf of the townspeople, while the same hearty reception is noticeable the whole way up the line. At Le Nouvion we billet in the school and next morning march to Esqueheries and are distributed along the road in the various scattered houses; Battalion H.Q. is quite a mile and a half away.

AUGUST 16th
to 21st.

We spend a very pleasant week, and the men are hardened by route marching. My farm is a cheese dairy kept by an old man and woman, with their son to help; he was very hospitable, in fact, so much so that at times he was a bit of a nuisance. The men are very happy in two comfortable barns.

One man, rubbing a quid of tobacco in his hand, went up to the French madame and wanted to buy some potatoes. After a great deal of talking in pigeon English he got the good lady to understand him; she replied, "N'ai pas", and the man, understanding her to say the French for potatoes, promptly replied, "Aye thats 'em, Give me some of those 'N'aipas"! On another occasion, several of the men, leaning against a gate, caused it to bend outwards, when an excited farmer rushed up, gesticulated, and talked a lot of unintelligible language. Happening to be on the spot, I more or less understood what was the matter, so I ordered the men to climb over and bend the gate back by leaning on the other side; this, however, did not suit Monsieur, who only became more excited. It was forbidden to touch the fruit, but we got permission, and were able to have a good deal.

AUGUST 21st.

On the 21st of August we commenced our march towards Belgium, and on the first day covered 16 miles. When we finally arrived at our billets I had to stand and issue beer to the Company, and, as the good lady had to go down into a cellar with two jugs, it took some time. I suggested to her that she should allow me to fetch up the barrel, but she would not hear of it. Evidently she thought we might take it without paying! Another of the jobs of the officer was to see to the sanitary arrangement of his Platoon; we had to be very careful, and I think it is due to our care at the beginning that so little ill-health has resulted.

Next day.../

Next day we continued the advance, passing through Avesnes, a very neat little town almost deserted already. Early in the afternoon we went into billets at La Fontaine. Thinking we shall remain there for the night, we commence to get ready a repast of somewhat better bread than usual; we had bought a fowl, but in the middle of preparing it we were suddenly told to fall in and we move forward in a great hurry. Ammunition boxes are burst open and left on the road for the men to take an extra 50 rounds per man. We pass Fort Hautmont and watch the French preparing trenches all round; the Fort looks strong and able to resist. We pass through Maubeuge and see some of the Guards' Brigade, who seem to have settled down for the night, but there is no rest for us and we push on through the town. We halt in the main street for a short time, and I am able, through the aid of a Flying Officer, to buy a packet of chocolates (2s/-). He tells me that our cavalry have had a successful meeting with the Uhlans and got the best of it. He also says he has been up in his 'plane and seen thousands of Germans; these we are to meet with four Divisions! We go on and billet about 1-a.m. in Villers Sire Nicol. My Company is billeted in a barn, and are packed as tight as sardines; however, we have had such a long march that we are thankful to get down. A very kind lady gave us some coffee, bread and jam, and I then turn in and sleep on a bundle of straw in a pig-stye. The smell is not of the sweetest, but I pass a good three hours in sleep.

23rd AUGUST. Next morning we are hurried out at day break and rushed into Belgium; we cross the frontier about 7-30.a.m., and shortly afterwards turn into a field and stay there for several hours. We see the enemy for the first time in the shape of a Taube; he hovers over us for about five minutes, and we all rush into the sides of the hedge until he disappears in the German direction.

One of the difficulties of the march was that the men, when they got tired, on halting simply throw down their rifles on the road and fall down to seize what rest they can; this is liable to damage the rifles. They also carry the day's ration on them, in addition to their iron ration and 150 rounds of ammunition per man, while if a fight was expected an extra 50 or 100 rounds were dished out.

Towards evening../

23rd. AUGUST.
(continued).

Towards evening we move forward and go into billets at Givry. Guns have been distinctly audible since leaving La Fontaine, and we know that soon we shall be in battle. We settle down, and I go buying bread at the Marie, where I manage to obtain a few loaves and we have a fair meal. The village is wild with excitement and all the inhabitants have been ordered to leave. The Greatcoats are taken away from the men and stored in this place; it is a good thing as they are nearly too much for them to carry in addition to their other kit. Towards dusk guns begin to fire just behind our village and we all go out to see the fun; it is a very pretty sight.

We can see right down the valley for miles, and the guns are going for each other; soon fires start at various points, night is drawing in, and the sight is very impressive. One of our batteries seems to be getting a bad time - heard afterwards that it had suffered pretty heavily. We are also given the opportunity of seeing the 3rd Brigade entrenching; they are busy just below the spur making breastworks and trenches which, however, they were not destined to use; I should say it is just as well.

We are suddenly hurriedly recalled and told to fall in, then we push out of the village down the main road towards Mons. Night has now caused the firing on both sides to cease. We only go a few hundred yards and then lie on the right side of the road facing the enemy. The whole country is now lit up by burning farms and haystacks. Allason goes to see the C.O. for orders, and on coming back tells us we are to have a "Bloody battle" on the morrow. We then explain all we have heard to our platoons, snatch a hasty meal of bully and biscuit, and then lie down to try and get some sleep. Personally, I find it almost impossible, for the thought of fighting my first battle on the morrow has made me far too excited, so that I do not get more than an hour. I think that my only wish was that I should not turn about and run - I felt very like it just about then.

During the night two pack animals run away, just missing a score of men; as it was one man had his leg badly broken and three others were hurt. Motor cars continually ran up and down the road the whole night; sometimes they contain a General, sometimes a Staff Officer. Twice there is sharp rifle fire over on our left; we afterwards heard that the Germans had attempted to surprise the 6th Brigade but were repulsed.

AUGUST 24th. At daybreak we got ready for the attack. The Guns commenced at the first streak of dawn, and I ~~particularly~~ particularly noticed one of our batteries on ahead of us. The Germans had found the range and were planting their shells just over the battery; it was being corrected each time and they were gradually getting right on the guns. It was the first and last time I saw our guns in the open without any cover.

We were told to retire about half a mile, and thus we began the famous retreat. We went back through Villers Sire Nicole, then forward again to cover the retirement of the 2nd Division. Passing through, the people were very kind and gave us wine and coffee. I had a splendid cup of good coffee. We proceeded to Havay and entrench; my Company has to dig shelter trenches, and I go to a neighbouring farm and take what is required in the shape of doors, spades, etc. We dig in a turnip field, and on completion are sent to a small village and placed in reserve. Only one shell comes near us, and we catch but one glimpse of some enemy cavalry, for though heavy fighting is going on in front we spend the rest of the day there and are not called upon. We are able to get any amount of fruit from a farm and have a good tuck-in. About mid-day the 6th Brigade pass us; the men are in a terrible state of exhaustion, and Doll tells me they have had to march and counter-march under shell fire the whole day; their casualties, however, were only a few wounded. I meet several of my old friends, and notice that Sheppard's mount has been washed over with a kind of coffee stain. At night fall the remainder of the Regiment comes in, and we march to Feignes, where we billet for the night. We are lucky to find an empty house and plenty of eatables. Wakley, who has been complaining of his foot for some days, gives in and is sent to hospital with a sore heel. I set at liberty several horses which the inhabitants had left shut up in their hurry to fly.

AUGUST 25th. The next morning we are up at dawn and move backward in the direction of Maubeuge, which we pass on the outskirts, leaving the city and all its forts on the left. I think the men began to see that something was wrong, as just about this time they began to grouse a good deal. Before we got to Maubeuge our billeting party had to repulse a small party of German cavalry who had got in behind us, and as we pass the fortress its great guns had already begun to fire. We march on well into the night and take up billets at Marbaix, very tired. A French column crosses our front, and this delays us; whenever we meet the French at these times cheers are exchanged. We are billeted in a very dirty part of the town, and I spend the best part of an hour issuing water to the Company.

AUGUST 26th. We are called out before daybreak and move off in a breakneck hurry. We are told that the Germans have captured Landrecies and crossings; we are to attack and open up the way. Our Armourer-Sergeant was not warned and was left behind. (He afterwards turned up in England after wandering about France in disguise). We picked up our rations as we went - biscuits in one part of the road, bully in another, ammunition in another, and so on. We pass some of the 6th Brigade, who are looking very war-worn; they have had heavy fighting. We learn soon afterwards that the 4th Guards' Brigade have succeeded in turning the enemy out of Landrecies, and our line of retreat is secure; the Irish Guards did most of the damage and bayoneted about 800 in the town itself. We are not required and turn in to a field near Landrecies. Terrific cannonading is going on all round, and we know a big fight is going on. It seems principally to the North-East. Once an aeroplane came sailing over us - one of our own. She is heavily shelled and we think the bits will fall on us; they don't and she goes off untouched. One shell burst amongst us, but did not do any damage. Towards dusk we move off and continue the retirement. The firing is still heavy and rather more round to the north. On darkness coming over us we see many fires, which seem to be all round us. Firing has died down considerably, but occasional shew us fighting is still going on. We come to a village and put out outposts; shortly afterwards a wounded Scots Grey soldier is brought in. We are all anxious to see a wounded man. He was the first we saw and we took him along with us when we moved on a little later. I lead the Brigade as Advance Guard, but shortly afterwards we meet our own cavalry, so there is no need and I join up again. It has now begun to rain, and we bivouac in a field in the pouring rain. Manage to obtain chicken for dinner and pass a fair night.

AUGUST 27th. Before dawn we are pushed out - "B" Company to relieve a Guards' Company on outpost duty. There are only a few inhabitants left in the town; we talk with them and find out that Germans dressed as British cavalry had been through, but had been discovered and cleared. They had been brutal to the inhabitants and had taken what they wanted. About 9-a.m. we moved off and joined up with the rest of the Battalion. Marching on we came to a village where we were to stay a short time; we then continue the retreat in the direction of Guise. We pass through Veraddis(?) and see signs of fighting - empty cartridges are scattered all over the villages and the wires are cut. We push on. German aeroplanes are flying overhead. The Northampton Regiment are doing rearguard, and before dark they are engaged with the enemy cavalry, though without casualties. We move into billets in a village north of Guise, and Knowles' platoon does outpost duty.

AUGUST 28th. Before daybreak we are hurried out, and occupy the surrounding heights; the whole Brigade is to entrench, and we expect to have a fight. We are made to ford a river and the bank on the other side is so steep that an ammunition mule falls down and has to be shot. I am all wet and spend a most unpleasant time until the sun comes out. A lot of French cavalry comes through us; they did not see us until they got within a few score yards, and then got rather a fright - I think they thought we were the Germans. We hear firing; The Sussex on our left are engaged. They took a prisoner, and we are all anxious to see him; he is a fine fellow - a Prussian Dragoon.

We are ordered to retire and move off. We can see shells bursting on our left where some French infantry are being shelled. They are very steady. The town we are to go through is shelled, so we leave it on our right and make a short detour. We march for about two hours without a halt and manage to get clear of the shelling; we have to thank our Colonel (Knight) for having had no casualties. We halt and get water. The water question was very serious. The men always started drinking it at the first halt, and the result was that they were always short. Orders were issued that no one was allowed to drink until the fourth halt, that is, after four or five hours' marching. We continued to retreat and made the longest march of all. I am very tired and use Allason's horse for a few of the miles. My platoon turned up trumps, and not a man fell out; we are the only platoon in the Brigade which had no one fallen out.

AUGUST 29th. We are so dead beat that a whole day's rest is given. "B" Company are moved into billets. (Arrecourt?). Spent the whole of the day getting clean and resting. We have a good meal or two.

AUGUST 30th. We continue retreat, and I am left as rear guard. I am told that Knowles' platoon failed to keep touch with the main body. We nearly wander off in a wrong direction. We halt opposite a nunnery, and all the nuns come out and give us wine, grapes fruit and cheese; they are awfully kind, and afterwards I was to hear that the Germans when they came there took everything eatable and drinkable, and also ill-treated the nuns. We pass shortly afterwards a house, and the lady held up the prettiest little girl I have ever seen. I said then and there I would try one day to get back and see if they were safe; they waved to me and I waved back. We went on and soon arrived at the town where we were to billet, but there was no rest for me. I was pushed out on outpost duty. I made a barricade across the road, but was not alarmed during the night. Managed to get eggs and hot drinks at a house near, both for myself and the men.

AUGUST 31.

At daybreak we continued the retreat and took up a position in a field. A German aeroplane flew over us, and Lieut. Spread let off his machine guns for the first time in earnest. We heard afterwards it had been forced to come down, but whether due to him or not I cannot say. We moved off again and about 11-a.m. for the night about 18 miles short of Soissons.

SEPTEMBER 1st.

Next day we marched through Soissons and billeted in a field two and half miles beyond. Loomes left us during the day; he was ill. It was a terrible job getting up the hill outside Soissons. Wallace fainted, and so did several men. It was a case of halting for ten minutes and marching slowly for fifteen. On getting to the top we wheeled off at right angles into a field and lay on our backs for three hours. With the aid of a little tea we were then able to proceed to our camping field a couple of miles on.

SEPTEMBER 2nd.

Next morning we continue and move back as far as Villers-Cotterets, where we halt for an hour and let the 2nd Division pass in front of us; they have been engaged and we expect to be shortly. "B" Company is on outpost duty, and I am put in a wood where I have to guard several roads. I took up a more or less central position where more of the roads joined and got busy making it fit to resist. felled trees and made obstacles with barbed wire. Late in the afternoon we heard firing. It seemed quite close, so I took a man and went to try and find out what it was; I could find nothing, although more firing was heard; I suppose noise is deceiving in a wood. Towards 9 at night Allason sent back and asked about retiring; he was told to do so at once - evidently we had been left a little too long. We crossed a river (the Marne), and scarcely had we done so when the Engineers blew up the bridge; we were the last Regiment to cross. We only go a few miles, then wheel into a field and snatch an hour or two's sleep; we are roused before daybreak and march off once more.

SEPTEMBER 2nd.

Move forward and billet in a village. We are in a Grocery store and take what we want, the agreement being that we left our names and what we took the survivors were to pay for.

SEPTEMBER 3rd.

Move off next morning and pass over most beautiful hilly country - I think the place was St. Denis - ultimately billeting in a farm, where we managed to bag some fowls and eggs.

SEPTEMBER 4th.

Next morning we are rear Guard and take up a position at a farm just outside Coulommiers. The place is a fruit growing establishment, and the owners complained bitterly that the English cavalry had taken all the fruit -, the Germans came next, so I suppose they took the rest. I am sent as escort to the guns; recalled hurriedly and ordered to entrench on the left of the battery, so we dig in with entrenching tools.

I go off to the..../

SEPTEMBER 4th. I go off to the flank to reconnoitre and meet a French cavalry officer; I was suspicious and kept him covered with my revolver while I questioned him; he talked excellent English and asked for the 9th Lancers - as they were only a short way back I directed him to them. I proceeded about a mile before returning, but could find no signs of the enemy or the Brigade who were supposed to be on our left. I report and go back to my platoon. A battery of guns comes through us and comes into action, but does not open fire. Our German friends open fire and "C" Company (Major Burrows) get a shelling. No casualties. At nightfall all is quiet and I am left on outpost while the Regiment retires; towards morning I am ordered to follow. About two miles on I come across dead Germans - five of them and half a dozen horses. I heard they had got round us and tried to break through, but the Black Watch had killed or captured all (10).

SEPTEMBER 5th. We move on and about mid-day catch up with the rest of the Battalion. We are all very tired, but march on until 3-p.m. We are now at the village of Bernay, and we are told we shall not retire any more; the Great retreat is ended and we shall move forward soon. We spend the whole of the next day (6th) getting ready.

SEPTEMBER 7th. We move out and the Marne battle begins; we are in reserve and only move a mile or so, then billet(?) for the night in a field, with only our waterproof sheets to cover us.

SEPTEMBER 8th. Next day we move forward in skirmishing order, expecting a fight any time. We come to a farm where all the contents have been thrown out of window over the road; the Huns have taken everything they wanted and damaged all they didn't! We go on and meet a cavalry man, who tells us the Germans are in a wood in front, so we move forward and presently come across a dead German; we advanced up to the wood, and when within 50 yards do the rest with a rush, but find it empty. We push on through the wood and entrench in an open field; the German cavalry can be seen about 2,400 yards in front, but they soon disappear. Towards mid-day we push forward once more and come across many signs of German flight. We billet for the night in a field.

SEPTEMBER 9th. Lieut. Miller joined with a draft of 80 men. We cross the Marne (Digmon?) and push on through hilly country beyond. We come across a field where Germans had slept and billet several miles on in a field.

SEPTEMBER, 10th. Push off in a hurry in the early dawn and advance until about 10-a.m. The guns, which are in front, wheel into a field on left of road and we to right. We are told the Germans are in front and advance to attack. I am anxious about waterproof sheets the men are wearing (it was raining), so order my platoon to remove theirs and carry them on their backs; none of the others did this, with fatal results. We move forward in artillery formation, and soon come under fire; the wonder is that we escape being hit. I am fired at by our own Horse Gunners who mistake us for the enemy on account of the men of other platoons wearing waterproof sheets; I lose one killed (Dr. Richardson) and six wounded. We dig in and our gunners stop shooting at us and turn their attention to some other part of the line. We dig in. We move forward. I see several German mounted men, but they disappear very quickly. We are recalled and move down towards the village of Priez. We shelter under some bank while our gunners fire at the enemy, who are now retreating. About 2-30. We move into the village. Pass several of the Royal Sussex Regiment dead. They suffered heaviest of all, about 60 of 120 casualties in Brigade. We halt for a few hours. I go into a farm and see damage done by Huns. The farm has been striped of everything. In one room there are signs of a feast. Bottles in numbers are still on the table and all the plates are dirty. They had evidently had a royal time. In the kitchen everything had been pulled off the shelves and scattered about, and also the tap turned on and the place flooded. They were also not content with turning everything out on to the floors of the various rooms, but even fired bullets into the ceiling and paper on the wall. The damage done was beyond repair. We captured about 30 wounded Germans in the village. Towards dark we move forward about a mile and billet in a field for night. Move forward next morning (Sept:11th) and pass on march a French cavalry division. The men exchange remarks with ours and seem in excellent spirits. They don't shew much inclination to get off their animals, who look very thin and worn! We billet in a town for the night. Everything has been pillaged by the Germans. We have very good billets. Move forward early next morning (12th) and towards dusk meet French troops. They have evidently been fighting, as a few dead horses are lying about. The Germans had cleared off. We moved through them and worked to our right, where we were billeted in a farm.

SEPTEMBER 13th. Next morning was the commencement of the Aisne battle. We moved forward to a village and halted for several hours. Heavy Guns are just on our left, and have opened already at enemy's position across Aisne. Passage is forced by 1st Brigade and we move down and cross at Bourg. I noticed strong barricades and disguised trenches abandoned by the enemy which, if held, would certainly have cost us casualties. We held just one side of Bourg at Point "A". Just settling down to a meal when we are moved on to hill "X" and lie just beneath the crest. Musketry fire has begun. Sussex and Guards are hard at it. We are shelled and one Sergeant is wounded. Towards dusk the Regiment moved into billets at Moulins, except "A" Company, which is left out on the hill. Pass a good night, but called out hurriedly before daybreak and told to move. We fall in but are ordered to stand by for an hour. Fall out, and told to move off half an hour later. Rain began to fall and continued to do so for the remainder of the battle. We hear firing towards Vendresse. Move down road "B" to Vendresse and lie under cover of hedge "C". Things are beginning to liven up and bullets are falling all round us. Two men are wounded. One in foot and another in leg. Captain Body, who has taken over the Company, calls all Company officers and explains situation. We are shortly moved up to Tryon to support attack on factory. While he was explaining all this the bullets kept singing by, some fairly close. I felt uncommon like making a dash for the nearest cover. Lieut. Loomes turned up and rejoined; we were all glad to see him. He was delighted at being back. When he had reached the base he was told to go to England, but not liking the idea he had got on a train and, by changing trains and living from hand to mouth, had succeeded in joining up just before going into action. "C" Company are sent to support Guards. They return after about an hour, having suffered very severely. Knowles had gone on gallily attacking the whole German army until he found himself very nearly surrounded. He then made a bolt for it. "A" Company rejoined, and we move up to Troyon. Pass about 350 prisoners, a welcome sight. They were in tears. They had been told all they had to do was to march through to Paris, which had already been captured. They were surprised at their reception. On approaching crest of hill we come on signs of conflict. Helmets lying all over the place, and also rifles. A good deal of blood, and several wounded and dead lying about. We reach crest and halt just under it. The bullets now seem to be coming from all directions. After a short rest we are ordered forward to attack factory. I extend my platoon after Loomes (he is far in front of his platoon waving them on; this was the last I saw of him). Loomes is on my right and Goldie on my left. Had only gone about a hundred yards under a perfect hail of bullets when I heard a singing sound on my right. Two eight-inch shells had pitched 20

yards to my./

SEPTEMBER 13th
(continued)

yards to my left and blew sky high a few of my platoon. The shells emitted a tall cloud of black dust and smoke. Truly terrible missiles. We go on forward, but as yet I can see nothing. At last we reach the firing line. How anyone reached it is beyond comprehending. And such a line. All manner of regiments are there, and the dead and wounded are lying round in scores. We carry the factory and hold on like Grim death. Allason is a little to my right, and Goldie landed up to me. He shortly afterwards moved off to the left by rolling on his side, and that was the last I saw of him. The man next to me, just as he was getting down, suddenly pitched forward and lay in front moaning the whole of the time we were there. We opened a sharp fire on the German line, but are not able to see very much. Allason, on my right, is bandaging up a wounded Guards' officer. He was a fine example and seemed to shew no fear. He would not lie properly down. The German machine guns are nasty; they keep traversing up and down our line. A great increase in the noise of cracking whips overhead always heralded their return. Many men are hit and the casualties become truly appalling. We get no reinforcements or ammunition, and soon exhaust our supply. Germans heavily counter-attack. I noticed their way of carrying machine guns on stretchers. We used not to fire at these until we knew their contents. Goldie sends back word that he has been wounded in the leg and is going to crawl back to the rear. That was the last news I heard of him. Allason orders me to retire, and I do so with two Loyal North Lancers., three Black Watch, two Cameron Highlanders.// We move back at a fast double and, coming to a donga, take shelter there. We are subject to a terrific bombardment and it is death to shew a hand. The shells seem to come right in and sweep the hole out. We lie there for some time and then move a little further back. I strike the Gloucester Regiment, who are the 3rd Brigade. They have come up to support and have had no casualties. They are all very eager to go on. I have already lost my Loyal North Lancers., and the Highlanders go off to try and find their regiment. I decide I will attach myself to the Gloucesters. I am absolutely done. 2nd/Lieut. Harding and I settle down to eat something. I supply the jam, he the bread. This revives us. The fire is still tremendous, but we are sheltered under a steep cliff and do not suffer. It is not safe to go on top. A party tried to bring in a wounded man, but all of them were either killed or wounded. Towards darkness the Gloucesters are ordered to attempt to advance on factory via village of Tryon. They ask me to come and I do so, there being no chance of finding my unit. We move off and have several escapes from "Jack Johnsons" and move up the road. Reach top of road when half battalion in front get panic. The General's escort bolted and the half battalion Welsh opened fire on us. Luckily they fired high so no damage was done. The Gloucester Regiment's leading Company had scattered, and it seemed as if we were in for

another fight../

SEPTEMBER 13th. another fight, for we did not know who was firing at us. The officers exerted themselves and quickly succeeded in getting the regiment together again. We then lay down and shouted to those in front to cease fire. It ceased as suddenly as it had begun. We all thought the thing closed, but no, suddenly a black wall seemed to rise in front of us and a crown of charging men came through us. They were the Welsh. They bayoneted two Gloucesters in their passage through. They went on a couple of hundred yards and lay down, and once more opened fire on us. Again no one was hit and it stopped. After a good deal of not knowing what to do, we got orders to retire down to the bottom of the road and entrench. This we did, moving a platoon at a time from the head of the column. I am glad to say I was able to help several of our wounded down. They were lying very thickly up there. Of my Company, no fewer than 3 officers out of 5 and 175 men out of 220 were either killed or wounded. It was terrible not being able to help them and still to hear them cry out "North Lincs". I passed the night after having supped off biscuits and jam, under a waterproof sheet, and, as it rained the whole time, I had a very uncomfortable time. Harding (Gloucesters) slept next me; he was afterwards killed.

SEPTEMBER 15th. Next morning early the Germans attempted to push through, but, after suffering severe casualties, they were compelled to desist. I waited a short time, then thinking I would be of much more use elsewhere, proceeded to try and find my Regiment. I had one or two narrow shaves from snipers going down the road. Met the transport of the Welsh Regiment and the officer in charge gave me tea. This revived me very much for I was still very exhausted, besides being drenched through by the night's rain. I went on through the village of Chivy and asked a staff officer the way. He took me in and took me to see the General. He was very kind and directed me on my way. He told me 3rd Brigade had captured about two hundred prisoners that morning. I went along and came on H.Q. Guards Brigade. The General, Maxse, was also very kind and sent one of his staff officers to direct me to the 2nd Brigade. I was able to give them the news of the morning's capture. He at once ordered it to be given out to his Brigade. We were just then in a state that news like that was very cheering. We had to hug the cliff very carefully as the shells were pitching just over the crest very close every time. I reached H.Q. 2nd Brigade and see Troyte, also the General who was very kind. He told me the Regiment was only a few hundred yards further on. I went on and saw Captain Allen. He waved his hand frantically at me, and then I saw several more heads bob up from under a haystack. Soon I was shaking hands all round. They all thought I had been killed and had given me up for lost. We were soon exchanging all our adventures, and I had a really good meal. Jack Miller had a marvellous escape. He was blown up by a shell and rendered unconscious.

When he came to.. /

SEPTEMBER 15th.
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When he came to he found himself a prisoner of war. He managed to make his escape when we pushed them back again. Captain Prince was grazed at the knee. In fact, we all had wonderful escapes from death. We were, including M.O., 10 officers in all, having lost 14 during the previous day's fighting; our losses in men were about 400. My Company only mustered just over 50. We were dug in, in shallow trenches, just below the crest and out of sight of the Germans. The day passed very quietly except for shell fire. I went down to Vendresse and found Spread in hospital. He was badly wounded and not expected to live. His first question was, what had happened to Goldie.

SEPTEMBER 16th.

Next day, Wednesday, we had deepened the trenches, and they were a good deal safer. Night was very cold and rainy. Several stragglers turned up, and also wounded crawled into our lines. I went out to try and find out if anything was coming on. German advanced post was forced to get back again. In the afternoon of the 16th, Germans, who had got reinforcements, attempted to counter attack on our extreme ~~left~~ right. They were driven back at the point of the bayonet with heavy loss and some prisoners. A rather curious thing happened during the action. Both sides ceased fire and stood up, each thinking the other wished to surrender. Captain Watson, Queen's Regiment, who was acting Brigade Major, galloped out to them to accept this surrender, but on getting up to the officer in command was informed that they thought we wanted to. He turned round and came away, being fired at but not hurt, and the fight was resumed. We who had been watching the whole thing a M.O. on the enemy with visible results. The 2nd K.R.R.L. were mostly responsible for this gallant affair. I began to feel the effects of the rain and cold, and had to spend a day in the Regiment hospital, which was immediately behind our trenches. We now settled down to trench warfare. Our trenches were deepened and improved daily. Night attacks by the enemy were frequent, but produced no results. On the night of the 20th an officer and 25 men of the Guards captured a small German advance work without loss, and killed all the occupants. Stories began to go about. One wit called out "Waiter!" and about heads popped up from the German trenches. They were promptly shot. Each side used to signal hits. I saw a duel between a L/Cpl. of the Sussex and a German sniper. It ended after three-quarters of an hour by the Sussex man being shot through the head. We held on until 21st September when we were relieved by the 18th Brigade just out from England. We were all glad of the rest and went back to the village of -----, where we were quartered in caves. We got a draft of 350 men. Lieut Lucy joined September 22nd, 1914. Spies were very numerous. We arrested two in mistake for them. They turned out to be well known local people. Griffith was sent after one behind our position, but, although

he was...../

SEPTEMBER 16th:etc.
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he was wounded, he got away. Another was arrested in Troyon village in the act of despatching pigeons. Another was discovered installed with a telephone which communicated with the German position. The usual procedure was to hand them over to the French Authorities to be dealt with. We rested only for two days when we called out to support 18th Brigade, whose trenches had been taken. The Northampton and Rifles were only used, but we lost one officer and 32 men from shell fire. I was left behind to gather all the tools together and come on alone. We had to advance in extended order, being shelled from the flank. I was lucky in escaping without any hit. We went to Paissy and stayed there while the action was going on, and then went back to our billets via Moulins.

It turned out that the 18th Brigade were caught unprepared by the Germans who, pretending they wished to surrender, surrounded and caught most of them. The plan was, a line of unarmed men came in front and were followed by a crowd of armed Germans. Before the unfortunate 18th Brigade were able to make out what was the matter, the Germans were among them shooting all with arms in their hands and taking others prisoners.

We had an unpleasant job when orderly officer. We had to go and watch the trenches from behind a Brigade of French 75.m.m. Guns. As the German 16-inch shells used to pitch very often within 100 yards of the spot where we sat, it was by no means pleasant. One shell burst in a house. The house was absolutely wrecked and several French artillery men were killed. A Division of French Moroccan Troops were camped just below the hill. We stayed in ----- until the 29th September, when we once more went into the trenches and stayed there until October 18th.

It was one continual round of trench warfare. The trenches of the West Yorkshire Regiment were still full of their dead, and it was almost impossible to dig in places without coming on dead bodies. We were subject to several attacks and continual heavy bombardment. We repulsed all attacks, and in no case did the enemy set foot in our trench. The bombardment was the worst and we suffered several casualties. One day Major Burrows, Allason, Allen, Calrow, Reid (who only joined that day), and myself were all sitting in the mess talking when a shell burst just at the door. Allason and Calrow were killed. Reid was wounded and also Major Burrows. Allen and myself were not touched, although I was knocked over. For a few seconds I thought I had been hit, but recovered sufficiently to dash away. One of the mess carts was blown up completely. On another occasion a Meenen Weeper came into a trench and burst in a trench where five officers and a few men were standing and only wounded three of them slightly.