

# FRANK HERBERT PRICE: A SOLDIER'S DIARY

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*Sherbrooke*

Frank Price of Magog, Quebec, volunteered for the Canadian Expeditionary Force on May 1, 1916. His *Diary* begins two and a half months later, after initial training in Sherbrooke, St. Jean and Valcartier, Quebec. It begins on August 12, 1916 with the departure of his battalion from Valcartier and ends on February 27, 1917 before the departure from England to France and the front lines. The *Diary*, then, covers the middle period of a typical Canadian soldier's experience of the First World War.

Frank Price joined the 117<sup>th</sup> "Eastern Townships" Overseas Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. It was the third major recruiting effort in the region. The first had been associated with the initial wave of enthusiasm which swept the country with the declaration of war in August 1914. The original Canadian plan was to send over one division of volunteers, approximately 25,000 men. Many more than that came forward. The exact number from the Townships is difficult to estimate, as many failed to meet the physical and medical standards. A rough guess would be about 1,000 of whom about 500 would have been accepted. These were not enough to comprise a battalion of 1200 men, so they were assigned to several. The largest concentration of men had left Sherbrooke in August, 1914 and had been assigned to the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion at Valcartier.

It had been Sherbrooke's two militia regiments that had been



responsible for recruiting and preliminary training. They were the 53<sup>rd</sup>, Sherbrooke Regiment, and the 54<sup>ème</sup>, *Les Carabiniers de Sherbrooke*. Each had recruited about the same number of volunteers, but the great majority of English-speaking volunteers had been born in the United Kingdom.

The four other Eastern Townships militia regiments had been left out. They were mounted rifle regiments: the 13<sup>th</sup> Scottish Light Dragoons of Brome, Missisquoi and Shefford; the 11<sup>th</sup> Hussars of Richmond; the 7<sup>th</sup> Hussars of Megantic and Compton; and the 26<sup>th</sup> Stanstead Dragoons. Their turn came in early 1915 with the formation of the 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian Mounted Rifles. That battalion had trained in Sherbrooke, but the majority of its members had come from outside the region. Local recruiters were disappointed. The 5<sup>th</sup> CMR became the only battalion associated with the Eastern Townships to fight as a unit in the Canadian Corps.

In late 1915, it was decided to raise the 117<sup>th</sup>. There was little difficulty raising the full complement of officers, 30 of 36 were from the region and all regiments, except the 54<sup>ème</sup>, were represented. The 54<sup>ème</sup> was asked to raise the 178<sup>ème</sup> *Battalion Canadien-Français des Cantons de l'Est*. Filling the ranks was another matter. In 1916, battalions throughout Canada were having difficulty raising the required number of men and the 117<sup>th</sup> was no exception. The heady days of August 1914, when many thought the war would be over by Christmas, were over. The casualty lists of 1915 brought home the reality of the western front. Wartime inflation was also having its effect on ordinary Canadians. Married men would have difficulty supporting a family with a private's pay which had not changed since the war began. There were plenty of employment opportunities in the Eastern Townships and wages were increasing, although not as rapidly as inflation. For a married man to join up in 1916 as a private required courage and sacrifice, as did his family. Frank Herbert Price was a married man and a private.

Why did Frank Price join up? There is nothing in the *Diary* to inform us. The *Diary* begins two and a half months after the decision was made. There is no discussion of the great issues associated with the war, although Frank enjoyed drawing copies of cartoons which appeared in *Punch* (see *Diary* below). Frank had been born in the United Kingdom, as had more than 300 others in the battalion. But there is no record of when he had come to Canada. He still had family in England and was able to spend Christmas 1916 with an uncle.

Frank Price joined late, just two days before the battalion left Sherbrooke for St. Jean. He was a member of the Sherbrooke Regiment, the 53<sup>rd</sup>, and so had military experience with the militia. He dedicated his *Diary* to his wife, Muriel, and sent it to her before he left for France. It is a pity that few women have left diaries. How did Frank's decision affect Muriel? His photograph in uniform taken on May 16, 1916, portrays a handsome young man and suggests that the Prices were a young married couple. How did hundreds of thousands of decisions like Frank's affect other wives, mothers and sisters?

Frank's *Diary* reflects the sense of adventure of the tourist, although it would be unfair to conclude that travel was his motive for volunteering. Intended for his wife back home, he probably entered only that information which he thought would be of interest to her. Nor was there any information about personal feelings, like anxiety or fear about the future at the front, feelings that would cause distress at home. If Frank had these, he kept them out of the *Diary*.

The *Diary* begins with a chronicle of the journey from Valcartier to Halifax where the battalion joined others aboard the Empress of Britain. Like most liners converted to troop transports, there was little luxury and even less room. The novelty of the sea voyage quickly gave way to monotony and routine. Frank was spared seasickness. The ten day ocean crossing was followed by a week's leave and the chance to visit Dublin. The next three months must have been busy with intensive training as the period was recorded later, from notes. This was interrupted with a prolonged quarantine, because of measles, and this period was characterized by boredom and horseplay, typical of young men in Canadian battalions.

The most poignant part of the *Diary* relates to the breaking up of the battalion. The battle of the Somme had taken its toll on the Canadian Corps and battalions like the 117<sup>th</sup>, training in England in the fall of 1916, were to be used to reinforce battalions at the front. These decisions caused rancor throughout Canada and a sense that the government was betraying its men, and the Eastern Townships was not an exception. Frank Price's *Diary* records the impact of this decision on the officers and men.

The brief entries for January and February, 1917, suggest that the training was intensifying. Daily "P.T.," physical training, and "B.F.," bayonet fighting, would leave little time and energy for diary writing. The *Diary* closes on February 27, 1917, although the

following note appears at the end:

March 30th 1917 Friday Night  
From Pte. F.H. Price husband  
Shoreham  
England

Was he about to leave for France?

It is known that Frank Price was wounded in October, 1918, but survived to return to Canada. In 1957, he became President of the 117<sup>th</sup> Battalion Association.

A reading of Frank Price's *Diary* will probably cause one to want to learn more, about Frank, about Muriel, about the 117<sup>th</sup>, and about the Eastern Townships during the First World War. If you have any information about the subject, if you have any letters, scrapbooks or photographs which you would not mind having copied and deposited in the archives, please contact the Archives Service of the Eastern Townships Research Centre, or Robin Burns, Department of History, Bishop's University.

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### **Explanatory Notes on the Transcription of the Price Diary**

In transcribing the Price Diary, the following procedures and practices were employed:

1. all original punctuation was retained
2. all original capitalization was retained
3. text that is segregated in the original diary by brackets is identified in the transcript by: [ ]
4. the beginning of sentences not identified in the text with capitalization, is segregated from preceding text by three spaces
5. the use of ( ) in the transcripts implies inserted information as in the following examples:

(sic) spelling error  
dev(il) missing letters, syllables, nouns or verbs  
(signed) signature

FRANK HERBERT PRICE : A SOLDIER'S DIARY\*

To Muriel H Price

Diary

Comencing (sic) from August 12<sup>th</sup> 1916

Left Vallcartier (sic) Camp at 7<sup>30</sup> sharp Arrived in Quebec about 11<sup>30</sup> and were ferried accross (sic) the river to Point (sic) Levis, where we entrained for Halifax As we were passing a small Saw Mill the noon whistle blew, and there was a huge cry for dinner But nothing doing untill (sic) We had a fair view of the Montmorency falls just before noon There seemed to be no end of good food for dinner I did not hear one single complaint, it was .OK. About 1<sup>45</sup> the order was passed through the train to prepare for a march of course this was taken as a huge joke, at 2<sup>30</sup> that afternoon we pulled into River-Du-Loulp (sic) and during the period of changing Engines, we marched through the town the Bugle Band leading,

The people seemed to regard us as intruders, but we did not care a great-deal about that, everything went fine, with plenty of fun

August 13<sup>th</sup>

Everything is real enjoyable it is the best train journey I ever experienced, everybody in our car had a good nights (sic) rest from what I could find out.

The generall (sic) appearence (sic) of the country through which we are passing seems to keep ones eye glued to the window, about 9<sup>00</sup> the word was passed through the train that there would be another march at the next stop, and at 10<sup>30</sup> we pulled in at Muncton (sic) where we meet with a real hearty welcome the people turned out in crowds to watch us march through the town which seemed to be a very pretty place, the town Band or part of it played God-save-the-King as we pulled out and the crowds cheered in a very spirited manner, and maybe you think that we

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\* The diary of Frank Herbert Price is part of the 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian Mounted Rifles Association fonds (P010) kept at the Eastern Townships Research Centre at Bishop's University.

did'nt (sic) do some hollowing (sic) too 2.<sup>30</sup> I was placed on special (sic) picquet duty with strict orders to see that all blinds were drawn in our car and to allow no person to go from car to car unless bearing a permitt (sic) from the senior major also to allow no person any closer than fifteen feet of the train when it stopped at the Station

I was kept on duty untill (sic) 11<sup>30</sup> that night without being relieved. We arrived in Halifax at 9<sup>30</sup> by the city time at 11<sup>30</sup> I was relieved for two hours and resumed my duty again at 1<sup>30</sup> sharp for another four hour stretch the Batt slept on the train all night

### August 14<sup>th</sup>

We Embarked on board the Empress of Britian (sic) at 7<sup>00</sup> sharp this morning before we had had our breakfast about 8<sup>00</sup> (sic) men were detailed to draw Rations for breakfast "Was there any complaints" Well I guess so there were very few that were satisfied with it but we let it go in the hope that we would get better when we got settled down, another thing that did not sit well on us was the crowded condition of the troops aboard, but the fact that we were on our way over seemed to make everything .O.K. and we made up our minds that we would soon get used to it all, and that it could not last long at the worst Our sleeping quarters consisted of a hammoch (sic) slung to the ceiling of the mess-room

### August 15<sup>th</sup>

Everybody is calamourring (sic) and asking why in the H[ell?] we do not get started we spent the night anchored (sic) well out in the harbour

At 11<sup>30</sup> the anchor (sic) was drawn and we started on our long sea journey There were aboard the following Battns the 117<sup>th</sup>. 120<sup>th</sup>. 121<sup>st</sup>. 126<sup>th</sup>. as well as a full crew and some jack tars from the Royal navy, I was told that they were returning from a gun practice which was held at Burmuda (sic) roughly speaking I should say that there were about 4 or 5 thousand troops aboard we were accompanied by the H.M.T. (sic) Grampion and one Battle Cruiser of unknown name We saw a few Purpoises (sic) toward eving (sic) and some sailing vessels of some kind the

weather is jake and I hope that it remains so for the rest of the voyage

### August 16<sup>th</sup>

I slept on deck last night I preferred (sic) it to being slung up to the ceiling of the mess-room and seeing that good warm blanketts (sic) were plentyfull (sic) one could sleep good and warm

We had PT for fifteen minutes in the morning and a few minutes of emergincy (sic) drill the weather is jake but the brese (sic) is on the cold side the Ship is only rolling a little so far



### August 17<sup>th</sup>

I slept on deck again last night and intend to do so unless orders are issued otherwise

According to certain members of the crew we are travelling at the speed of fourteen knots per hour the cruiser is leading followed by the Grampion The speedometer says 500 miles this morning it was given out on orders that there would be sports in the afternoon but it does not seem possible that there will be enough room the PT parades were called off on this account

it is to be hoped that it wont last more than eight days I am on duty as mess orderly today and do not get much time to go up above I will try and get a little fresh air in the afternoon Some of the boys are complaining with the diorea (sic) I am suffering from the same complaint myself

### August 18<sup>th</sup>

I awoke at four bells this morning as usuall (sic), this is the only drawback of sleeping on deck. one has to arise good and early to

allow the Deck hands to "swab her off" as the sailor puts it there is a pretty heavy fog this morning, I guess I'll take a look at the log or speedometer Well it reads about 225 miles since the last time I looked at it, At 8<sup>00</sup> I was warned for gaurd (sic) duty so I recon (sic) I wont have much sleep to-night we fall in at 9<sup>15</sup> Well the gaurd (sic) is mounted and my turn for duty does not come untill (sic) 10<sup>45</sup> so I will make the most of my time before-hand

Well my two hour stretch of Duty is over thank goodness so I will scribble a few words in my Diary

I was on gaurd (sic) at one of the Engine-room doors, I got a fair glimpse of them. I am not an engineer so I cannot tell much about them but I am told that they are not turbines there are two of the same pattern I recon (sic) it must take some steam to run them I dont fancy that I should care a great deal about working in the Engine-room it is too hot for me it is getting near dinner time so I had better beat it and make sure that I get my share which issnt (sic) any too much at that

"Dinner over" rotten grub I call it, I guess everybody else does too, I have got the headacke (sic) and feel something like a dying duck in a thunderstorm I dont feel like doing much gaurd (sic) but will try and stick it out

It is about 2<sup>00</sup> in the afternoon I am still scribbling in my Diary

Towards midnight it began to get a little rougher one can notice it quite distinctly I only wish that I could sleep off this beastly headacke (sic) I shall report to the .M.O. in the morning if I feel no better

### August 19<sup>th</sup>

I am feeling no better this morning in fact I feel worse I was unable to sleep last night, I have reported sick and will parade before the M.O. at 8<sup>00</sup> and see what I can get to stop my head from jumping off my shoulders The M.O. said it was the Grippe and gave me a few number nines and some headacke (sic) tablets (sic) that was o.k. and I thought that I would move on but I was ordered to wait and take the pills, very good says. I, which ones do you want to take first The white tablets (sic) first says the .M.O. and thoes (sic) brown ones after [meaning the number nines]



well I did not relish this part of it at all but it had to be so I swallowed the white pills and then came the brown ones, well I couldnt get them down to save my neck and after tasting them did not intend to if I could get out of it so I tryed (sic) to slip them into my pockett (sic) but nothing doing the trick was seen and I was promptly ordered to get them down me, I then refused to trying to explain that I couldnt and was ordered out of the room and told that I was only playing so out I goes (sic) highly ammused (sic)

At 10<sup>30</sup> I was warned for Coy office for being absent from parade this morning Well that is O.K. it is only a mistake on the part of the orderly sergant (sic) Coy office at 11<sup>30</sup> I was told to beat it as they had just discovered my name on the sick report

It has comenced (sic) to rain I hope it does not last because we are so crowded that it is next to impossible to stay down below during the day. I was behind in finding a sheltered sleeping place tonight so will have to sleep below, it will be the first time since I came aboard and the last if I know anything about it

My headacke (sic) has gone I feel fine I hope I am not sick when we get into rougher warters (sic)

### **August 20<sup>th</sup>**

I fell fine this morning it is a little on the cold side but no rougher I slept pretty good last night We had Devine Service at 10<sup>30</sup> it is rather crowded to be a success, and there was no band to attend I cannot give the reason why but we have not had any music since we came aboard and the service hymns (sic) seemed rather dull without it, but the sermon was very impressive I expect that we shall be rocking in the Devils Hole by this time tomorrow and I am told that we will be in the danger zone on tuesday

then we shall have to wear Life Belts all the time it is bad enough now, we have to carry one with us where ever we go but there is one thing and that is that they make fairly good seats

Now for an insight on the food question, We had for dinner today. Rabbit Green peas, potatoes. and stewd (sic) prunes, but no bread we dont get bread for dinner on board. ship and we miss it pretty badly another thing we dont get and that is salt I

dont know why nor am I going to try and find out, as that would be courting trouble but there seems to be a poor system in the Cookhouse and only a limited amount of grub, But taking all things into consideration it almost makes one amazed to think that they feed the whole lot from one cookhouse, We get enough to live on anyway so I suppose it is allright (sic) of course we dont expect to get the same as we do at home but on the whole the boys are not very well pleased with the food that is between themselves but should an inquisitive outsider ask about the grub he would get the prompt answer [fine why you couldnt get better] you see that is the way a soldier looks at things after it is all over

What do you think I was lucky enough to get a real good wash today and a hot sea water bath of course anybody that reads this will wonder how under the sun a man can go without washing for such a long time, but its (sic) very seldom happens with me however on this particular occasion (sic) the wash water supply is a very limited article and one had to be wise to get there on time because the water was shut off all day except for two hours in the morning, and seeing that the washing room is of very limited space, and in our quarters would only accomodate (sic) four at a time it was impossible for everyone to get a wash however I managed to get once or twice during the voyage a good hot sea water bath and I can tell you they were fine

I think that this is about the best day we have had on-board so far the sun is shining and the sky is clear. Major Hansen told us at dinner that we could not expect to land before Wednesday (sic) as we are about 450 miles out of our right course I shall be mighty glad when we do land, it is so dull on-board there is no room for fun

Toward night it began to cloud (sic) up and get stormy looking one of the Crew told me that we would be in rough water before the coming day noon

Up on deck for mine tonight I have a nice corner picked out and blanketts (sic) all ready so I do not see the reason why I should'nt (sic) rest good

### **August 21<sup>st</sup>**

The first thing I heard this morning was ["get up soldiers" "get up"]

we are going to swab decks] so up I jumped folded up my bed with a sigh and carried it below, the wind is blowing about 60 miles per hour I find it quite difficult to stay on my feet on some parts of the ship the wind almost blew us off the deck when we were on parade this morning and there were lots of hats lost

Towards noon the ship began to toss and pitch in real earnest we are in the Devils Hole at last by three o'clock more than half of the boys were sea sick I am just beginning (sic) to wonder if I shall be sick. I hope not. It began to rain, [but I don't think it is as much rain as spray from the waves] about five o'clock and seems to me that it is getting rougher.

I tried (sic) to find a dry spot where I could spend the night but failed they are all occupied by some poor guys that are either sick or staying there so that noone (sic) can get there, it begins to look as if I will have to sleep below but I won't if I can get out of it. there is too much sickness there for comfort's sake Stung I can't find a hammock or a blanket (sic) that is dry, that looks worse yet, well I will have to use my brains I simply must have a bed somehow

"Good" I pinched one from a guy that is on guard (sic) and it took me over an hour of careful watching before I got the chance I am for number one the rest of the numbers can look out for themselves, and now that I have got what I want I do not feel as if I cared to turn in just yet My attention was drawn to the beauty of the sea, it is a very dark night and I suppose that it is the reason why the phosphorous (sic) glow showed so brilliant I remained up until (sic) after midnight watching it

### August 22<sup>nd</sup>

I did not rest much last night the ship tossed too much but I arose real fresh and dry as a bone considering that I slept out in the rain I have not so far felt the effects of the rough weather in fact I am enjoying it. but I pity some of the boys, they are as sick as dogs I think that there are only four or five in the platoon that are not sick It is a great thing to be well and O.K. and watch the huge waves toss the two great ships about like little corks I had a chat with

one of the crew on the weather and one thing and another he told me that he wished it would remain rough until (sic) we were

within a few hours of Liverpool because we would be perfectly safe from any German Subs as he told me that they cannot operate (sic) in rough water

I am getting sick of this there is nothing but water to see and no amusement going on of any kind

I shall be mighty glad to get off this boat and tread on solid land once again Towards the latter part of the afternoon it began to calm down and at 6<sup>30</sup> when we left the Grampion it was real calm I put it down as having got out of the Devils Hole, some of our



Batt Signalers read the orders that were signalled from the Cruiser which were, To proceed to Liverpool at full speed, also that we would be meet (sic) by an escort early on the following morning The Navall (sic) Band of this Cruiser played as we steamed passed (sic) her under full speed everybody is getting excited and there is all sorts of talk about the speed we are going and the size of the guns that are aboard the Cruiser and heaps of other things that none of us know anything about

I am getting a little on the drowsy side so I think that I will make preparation to turn in

### **August 23rd**

I arose at four bells or four o'clock and the first thing that I looked for was the Convoy of T.B.D's that was mentioned in the Cruiser's orders last evening (sic) "Yess" (sic) they are there right enough, there are four of them and a Cruiser I cannot say if it is the same Cruiser that we left behind yesterday or not it looks to be about the same size and I wouldn't stake much on it being a differant (sic) one Thoes (sic) T.B.D.'s are some fast boat they are going round (sic) us in large circles and keeping a good lookout The first thing after breakfast we sighted land, it was a good sight to us and everyone crowded to the ships rail I cannot say what.

Isle. it was but it was a very pretty sight the sea was as calm as a small inland lake, the sky clear and blue and the sun shining brightly seemed to lend colour to the scene (sic)

it was indeed a beautifull (sic) sight, this same description applies (sic) to Ireland and other Islands that we passed on our way to Liverpool I think that is (sic) was about 10<sup>30</sup> when we passed the Coast of Old Ireland and somewhere around 2<sup>00</sup> in the afternoon that we passed the Isle of Man. We got our kitt (sic) out of the hold Holy Smoke but there was some mix up in that deal some fellows (sic) got their pick of the stuff and some got nothing I lost a brand new pair of shoes in the deal I made up my mind that I was lucky to get what I did out of it

It would be a hard thing for me to describe the differant (sic) and various boats we saw from the first time we sighted land untill (sic) we arrived in the river Mersey opposite our landing dock at at (sic) Liverpool, it was exactly 7<sup>25</sup> when the anchor was dropped (sic) in midstream

“Well did they make a noise on our arrival?” “asked a guy” No of course not, not a noise but one Hell of an uproar what with the cheers of the boys, and the people on the ferry boats mixed with the hooting of every fog horn and siren in the city it was almost impossible to hear yourself think I shouted myself untill (sic) my head almost jumped from my shoulders it was acking (sic) so

talk about a welcome that was certainly a real one

We did not sleep much during the night the ferry boats hooted their welcome almost every time they passed by us untill (sic) very late

### **August 24<sup>th</sup>**

We all turned out at 3<sup>30</sup> this morning in full marching order ready and eager to land We were issued with rations for the day consisting of hard biscuit and cornbeef about 9<sup>00</sup> the ship put in to the dock, but the 117<sup>th</sup> were (sic) the last Batt to leave the ship

We were marched into the dock station and entrained for Bramshott. “Trains” is that what you call them? “Well Well” they look like watch-chain charms, and cigar boxes to the trains in Canada these were the comments of the boys that had never seen the English trains before

We pulled out of the station amid loud cheers from the boys there was no-one (sic) in the station except for a few newspaper venders (sic) Hey? What do you call thoes (sic) things" said a chum of mine [a Canadain (sic)] [born] Why frieght (sic) cars said I.

"frieght (sic) cars" holy smoke why man you could get a half dozen of them four wheeled, wheel-barrows (sic) in one of our box cars at home some country this says he with a wink I wonder if the bottom will fall out of this old cigar box that we are in.

I was more than amused at some of the jokes and comments that were passed during our journey to Bramshott Camp. We pulled in at Liphook Station the nearest depot to Bramshott Camp. I think that it was about 9<sup>15</sup> PM or some such time but I know for a fact that it was exactly 10<sup>00</sup> PM when we got to our quarters

We were placed in Wooden huts one platoon in each hut and were given blanketts (sic) and bunks also a straw mattress which made a fairly comfortable bed We were given a good hot supper after which we made up our bunks and turned in

### August 25<sup>th</sup>

We were allowed to sleep in untill (sic) 8<sup>30</sup> this morning We slept like logs, being pretty tired when we arrived here. Everybody seems to be well satisfied with the apperance (sic) of the Camp There is only to be one parade to-day

We are all chatting about our coming six days leave and studying railway-guides and maps, and having heated augments (sic) and debates about the differant (sic) routes to various places in the country and the quickest way to get there, but the most important thing is when are we going to be paid. I would not be an officer in a time like this. there are too many questions to answer it maybe (sic) a big mistake but as far as my experience goes the platoon Comander (sic) is most generally taken to be a walking information bureau, first one then another will ask about the shortest route to so and so and what the fair will be, and so on it is a great pity that the platoon comander (sic) did not travell (sic) all over the world before he took out his comission (sic) then he could answer the questions that are put to him, but the fact of the matter is that the most of them dont know as much about the place as you do and has never been here before but this simple

fact does not go with the average private who take (sic) it for granted that he should know anyway, or that he should look it up for you if he does not, which means that the average officer lieutenant (sic) has his hands full when he gets here, untill (sic) the boys get away =,, I am sorry that as far as dates are concerned I did not add much in my Diary beyond a very few things that I thought worth mention (sic)

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I will add a few pages in that I will take from memory that are I think well worth remembering

Of course we got our leave allright (sic) I got seven days, a day extra to go to Dublin Ireland. we also got plenty of money to go with, and it would be useless for me to try and record the good time that we had suffice (sic) to say that our leave was the topic of our conversation for a long time afterwards I will just record a few items about the Camp and our usuall (sic) parades etc

One thing that struck me as being strange and I cannot say wether (sic) it was only regt orders or not and that was the fact that we in the 117<sup>th</sup> had to place blanketts (sic) over the windows at night to hide the light while other batts in the same Camp did no such thing and as far as I can make out never did As regards parades we were jake although (sic) we did not enjoy the early morning parade of one half hours (sic) drill before breakfast, we had a pretty easy time of it on our other parades

About ten or twelve days after our return from leave one of the boys in our platoon came down with the Measles and we were quarintined (sic) for fifteen days, it was great fun for a while as we were not called upon to do any drill

we were supposed to have the usuall (sic) P.T. of one hour every morning but never got it, we asked permission to be allowed to play football instead and got it, and as a generall (sic) rule played all morning, in the afternoon we were marched a few miles to keep us in trim and during the first part of our quarintined (sic) days made a real good time out of it, untill (sic) one afternoon while we were marching along, and singing at the top of our voices a staff officer of some kind came bouncing along in a fine Car, stopped and asked who we were and a whole lot of other stuff which resulted in our being called back to camp and our last march in charge of an N.C.O. I suppose it was because we were enjoying ourselves a little too much to suite (sic) the H.Q.

On the whole we fared pretty well the main trouble being that we had to make smoke once in a while to get the Mess orderlies to bring us enough to eat

Well this sort of thing run (sic) along for fourteen days and we were in high spirits and expected to be let out the next day, but no such luck another of our boys came down with the measles and we were in for an additionall (sic) fifteen days, not very encouraging was it, but we were not the only platoon that were in this fix almost every platoon in A. Coy were quarintined (sic) and things got worse for us as far as parade was concerned and we were made to parade with the rest of the Battn only we were kept a fair distance from the other companys (sic) We had probably been quarintined (sic) about 25 days when we began to get it into our heads that we should be paid and also that we ought to be allowed to get out at night or stay in alltogether (sic), so we decided that we would kick. one afternoon just after dinner the orderly sergeant (sic) came around with orders for a route march in heavy marching order, but we refused to go, this was then reported to the Coy Comander (sic) who in turn sent our platoon officer to see what the trouble was of course this placed us in the soup as he had allways (sic) been very reasonable with us and had gone to considerable trouble to get us tobacco and cigarets (sic) and other sundries but a poor excuse was far better than none so in a very poor way we told him that we wanted our pay and also more grub to eat, well the end of the whole thing was that we all, but one man, went out on parade and he got six days second field punishment but we got payed and and there was far more attention paid to our rations so we gained our point but paid for it in drill because we were made to attend the early morning parade besides getting squad drill galore for the rest of the time that we were quarintined (sic). It was not long after we had been let out of quarantine (sic) that we, or the whole Batt went on an all days (sic) route march covering the distance of about 19. miles not one man fell out but we were all glad to get back to our huts Things progressed very well with the 117<sup>th</sup> for a while there were all kinds of roumours (sic) in circulation about. going as a unit to France etc probably the most absurd roumour (sic) that we got hold of and allmost (sic) swallowed was, that we were to be converted into a Mounted Regt, however we soon found out the absurdity of this. Now for a few points about Bramshott Camp that is as far as the good points are concerned which are of most importance to a



Tommy Now the first point that a Tommy looks at is the amusement which the place affords. There is a very good Y.M.C.A. service to begin with, with good concerts and lectures every night and is no doubt the most popular resort for Tommy, There were also if I remember rightly numerous other places that are supported by various religious denominations together with a fairly good Movie Show and Tin Town. Haslemere - a small town less than three miles from the Camp also afforded us a pretty good time, it seemed to be the generall (sic) thing for us to make it our Sunday afternoon stroll. Liphook the nearest town to the Camp was perhaps the most convinent (sic) of the two towns for the boose (sic) artist, Time passed on, and the boys began to get restless and ask for weekend passes, I was no better than the others in this respect, I applied for one and got it one saturday morning about 11<sup>00</sup> just before the Barrack-room inspection by the O.C. The thought never entered our heads that the lad that was taken out of our hut only the day before and sent to the hospitall (sic) was seriously ill with the Spinall. (sic) Maningites. (sic) I suppose that our week- end pass'es (sic) were all that occupied our minds. it was about fifteen minutes after the inspection the .M.O. came around and told us that we were to be quarintined (sic) again for a few days and that our passes could not be used, what luck shut up again, we were all examined and were told that as soon as the results were reported we would be let out and five days latter (sic) the most of the boys were let out, I think that there were seven that were kept in as having symptoms of the desease (sic) myself being included, we were told that we only had a week to do, so we planed (sic) to make the most of it, and I dont think that we fell short of having about the best week that we ever had in the army. I will relate an incident which happened during this week, Myself and a particular chum of mine were at a loss one evining (sic) to find anything to do to pass away the time, now my chum was far ahead of me at planing (sic) mischief and you can bet that it did not take him very long to start something. All of a sudden he jumps at me, grabs me by the shoulder and says, was (sic) you ever a fireman Why says. I, Oh well we cant have any fun if you dont know anything about fire-extinguishers says he Jake says I, Ive got you you have a little scheme that we play fireman go ahead whats the game, well says he as long as the corporal (sic) is not here we'll have some fun believe us, leave it to me kidd (sic)? now says he I am going to start a fire Ill set some paper alight on one of the beams and then ring the bell, then

you double up with the fire-extinguisher and put it out, when you have finished that job put your finger over the nozzle then we will go outside and put some more fire's (sic) out, Well we started our game and had a pretty good fire going on inside that old wooden (sic) hut but of course I got there with the extinguisher in time, that part over I hands (sic) him the extinguisher and out the hut we go and when passing number two platoons hut we spied some guy half asleep on a bed just next to the door, let him have it says I, and he got it in good shape my chum creeps up to the door and releases his finger from the nozzle for just a few seconds then we beat it down the line and started to do good work as firemen by pulling the stove pipes apart and sending a good stream from the fire extinguisher into the fire, we stayed just long enough to hear a clatter of feet making towards the hut door then we would beat it, it would not do to get caught at such pranks in the army especially when we were supposed to be quarantined (sic), we eventually decided that our own lives were getting too hot for us so we beat it accross (sic) to the 134<sup>th</sup> lines untill (sic) things got a little quirter (sic), and it was while we were over there that we got the chance of using up the remainder of the liquid left in the extinguisher, a party of men were going by, I suppose for night manouvers (sic), so we emptied the whole lot into the ranks from out a wash-house window, and then beat it back to our own hut, and set the empty extinguisher back in its place, drew a bench up close to the fire, lit up our cigarettis (sic) and drew up plans for a good excuse to make should anybody ask why the extinguisher was empty, but could not find any, however we got a good one the next morning, when the remainder of our platoon fell in for early morning parade and began to hammer the hut with sticks and stones to wake us up, as a rule we did not get up untill (sic) the mess orderly brought our breakfast to the door. but this particular morning the boys took good care that we did not over sleep. so later that same morning we reported to the Segt Major that the boys in their energy to awake us had dislodged the extinguisher - and that it fell on the floor and emptied itself, and showed him the wet floor to prove our statement, we did not mention the fact that we had spillid (sic) a half pail of water on the floor,

The next day another of the boys was taken to the Hospitall (sic) and we heard later that he had so many germs in his system that they would not take effect,

At last we were let out and if I remember rightly the Battn was out on an inspection that morning, after the inspection the whole Battn was on its ears, as they were told that they stood a very good chance of going as a unit to the front, But no such luck was ever to be ours, it was only a couple of days after that orders were recieved (sic) to send four officers and 130 men to the 148<sup>th</sup> Battn I cannot describe the feelings of the most of us on hearing this, but it had to be done, and I think that it was very much against the wishes of our Colonell (sic) of course I will have to admitt (sic) that we were all greatly excited and was (sic) ready to listen to any roumours (sic) that were in circulation, the chief one being that the Colonell (sic) had gone to London to see what he could do to cancell (sic) the order and that nothing was to be done untill (sic) word was recieved (sic) from him, anyhow the 130 men were chosen and it was decided that the officers should draw lots to see who should go allthough (sic) I am not positive about this part, but I do know that the next morning our C.O.C. came in our hut with our platoon officer looking as though they had both lost their best friends and the exact picture of misery and sorrow (sic), and broke the news to us that our platoon comander (sic) had to go, and then asked us if we would go with him as a platoon which would make it much easier for him and us too, and also told us that angrements (sic) had been made for us to stay as a platoon should we care to go, so we all said ya for the simple reason that we had the greatest respect for him and also because we had a chance of sticking together then followed kitt (sic) - inspection etc and the next night we were transfered (sic) into the 148<sup>th</sup> everybody had the Blues officers and men alike, we all shook hands with our senior Major and said farewell it is needless for me to recall that handshake, and parting the parting of men who were sincere comrades I suppose that in order to make up a real diary I should skip nothing but all who read this will grasp what I mean when I say that even in the worst cases a Soldier in a vollen- teer (sic) army will not put things in their real light, looking from the dark side of things, on the average he takes things as they come and makes the most of them, so I do not want to be misunderstood anything that I have written in this book is not written with the Idea of putting things and incidents in their blackest light, I will endeavour to make my description of army life as light as possible, and not deal with anything that ever occured (sic) in anything but the lightest manner possible,

Of course it hurt our pride to be placed in another Battn and one that we had always scorned, [at that,] as being inferior to our own, we were assigned to C. Coy and filled the place of number eleven platoon, it was just like starting over again and everything seemed strange to us at first. The greatest of our troubles was in the food question we could not seem to get enough and it was not like our old Batt, - cooks used to put it up, quite a few of the boys would go up the lines back to our old mess-room and have their meals, the fact of the matter was that like a pack of fools we did not know when we were best off we used to kick about the grub in our old Batt - but then it was nothing like this, we could not kick the only thing that we could do and did do was to create jokes on the matter and let it slide. The 148<sup>th</sup> remained in Bramshott about two weeks after we had joined them and then moved to Witley Camp about 9 1/2 miles, it was rumoured (sic) at the time that we were to go there to train and prove the Batts fitness (sic) to go to the front as a fighting unit.

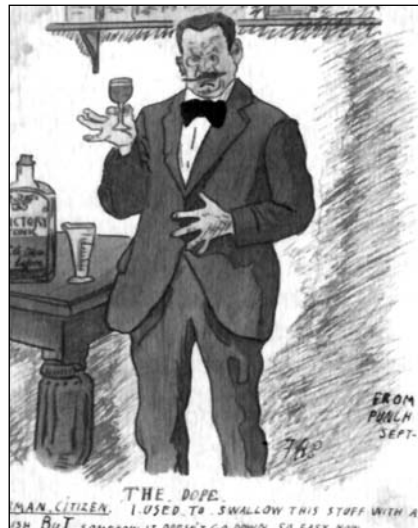
I think that I might in justice to the reader give a slight description of the Camp before I go any further, and I might also add that although (sic) I was in this camp for over two months I did not spend much of my spare time in sightseeing and of course will only state what I know about the place, it was to me a far superior Camp to Bramshott the Huts were warmer for one thing and Tin-Town much nearer and up-to-date, the trench area and training ground far more extensive and the chances of amusement far greater, the surrounding (sic) towns more enticing (sic). the towns are as follows Milford the nearest 2 1/2 miles Godalming 4 miles, Witley 4 miles, and Gilford 8 miles, all of these towns were within bounds bar the latter and made an Ideal Saturday afternoon stroll and when it was round (sic) pay day the greater part of the boys spent all day Sunday in one or the other of the towns, Soon after our arrivall (sic) in Witley Camp vollonteers (sic) were called, for (sic) signallers (sic) and I took it up which fact accounts for the reason that I did not have much spare time in which to waste in sight seeing, as I put the greatest part of it in study and letter writing.

It is nodoubt (sic) useless to record the every day occurances (sic) of a soldier in Training, as it is about the same old story every day I usually took one hours (sic) phicall (sic) training in the morning and spent the rest of the day at signalling. It was Nov 12<sup>th</sup> 1916 when I first took up signalling. I am taking a few dates from a

small pockett (sic) book in which I dated a few incidents that I thought were worth remembering. It was on the 24<sup>th</sup> of Nov that orders were recieved (sic) to send a draft of 300 men to France, and the same news that killed all hope of the 148<sup>th</sup> going as a unit, then followed the usuall (sic) busy time, and all sorts of roumours (sic) were in the air, I was placed on this draft but later struck off the list on account of some teeth that were in need of attention. there were eighteen of the boys of our platoon chosen to go, we were all sore because we could not all go together, but I suppose that it was impossible under the circumstances.

### November 28<sup>th</sup> 1916

This morning will allways (sic) be remembered by the boys of our old platoon, the morning when the closest of Chums parted, the morning when the best platoon of boys that were ever got together were split up, it seemed a shame, a crime, but it could not be helped, we had to part. Picture for yourself a hut in which are thirty two men, mostly from the same town, all sworn friends, eighteen of



which are eager to get there and happy that they are going and craking (sic) jokes to the remainder (sic), who are in the deepest mood of the blues. their features betray their feelings, they are all trying like men to hide their feelings from their Chums, who are in the highest spirits and dressed in heavy (sic) marching order awaiting the signal to fall in. The whistle sounds, and the boys cheer as they crowd to the door and we surprress (sic) a lump in our throats as we shake hands and bid them farewell, each of us that are left behind hiding his face from the others view to hide the weakness that for the time overcomes us. a few minutes later when the company has marched out on the Battn parade ground we collect ourselves together and follow,

The Colonel gives a short address and then the draft moves on, and our chums yell a finall (sic) farewell and the scene is over,

we return to our hut, the emptyness (sic) of it, the silence, no one dares hardly speak for fear he should give way to his feelings, then in comes the Segt just like a wild man, and unable to controll (sic) his feelings, we all stare, turn our heads away, and give in to our feelings for a short time.

This is as near as I can describe the separation of the originall (sic) number one platoon of the good old 117<sup>th</sup>

The next date that I find in my book is Dec 4<sup>th</sup> 1916 my signalling work came to a sudden end and I had to take a course of P. Muskettary (sic) instead, The next date is that of Dec 5<sup>th</sup> 1916 the day that five more of our boys left in a draft for france there were in all 190 men in this draft, our old platoon comander (sic) had charge of it and went to france with them, returning about three days later I might mention that he had a good visite (sic) with the first lot of our boys that went over.

The Muskettary (sic) course continued for some time and during this period I do not think that there is anything worth mentioning

### Dec 13<sup>th</sup> (19)16

Myself and 109 other men marched to Mytchell Camp a distance of fourteen miles, it was some march but we enjoyed it, we arrived in Camp about 6<sup>00</sup> at dusk, and were served with a hot supper. things had a bright appearence (sic) for us, as we were informed that we should not be requiered (sic) to shoot only for one half day everyday untill (sic) the course was finished. I might add a few points in concerning the camp etc. The Camp itself is only a few minutes walk from North Camp station or ashvale as it is sometimes called. the Rifle Ranges are well away from the Camp and on the fox hills, they are the most up-to-date ranges that I have ever seen or been to, everything is modern and handy. there are coffe (sic) stalls at each and every range a thing that is well appereciated (sic) by all soldiers that take their Muskettary (sic) there. I found the prices very reasonable in all the stalls and also in the neighbouring 85 towns which are Farnborough 1 1/2 miles, and Aldershott three miles from Camp These towns offered plenty of amusement to us. for my part I was Jake as I had relatives in Aldershott and went quite often to tea and supper on the whole it made for me a very pleasant time and

I was sorry when it all came to an end

We were at Mytchell for Christmas and speaking for myself I can say that I thoroughly enjoyed it. I managed to get leave from Camp from noon the 24<sup>th</sup> untill (sic) Christmas midnight and spent the day with my relatives. I was given permission by my uncle to invite as many of my Chums down for the afternoon and dinner as I saw fit so I made angrements (sic) for four. we had a thorough good time and returned back to camp in a taxi at ten past twelve. I might also add that about two days before Christmas when one and all were at a loss to know how we were to spend Christmas or where we were to have our dinner the Colonell (sic) sent word from Witley Camp saying that angrements (sic) had been made with the Camp staff that if we chose to have our dinner alltogether (sic) that we would be allowed certain time in which we could march to Witley ariving (sic) there at 6<sup>00</sup> Christmas eve and returning the day after. but we did not want a feed of any kind enough to march 28 miles for it. so we stayed where we were and I am certain that we had a far better time, we had our feed on the night of the 24<sup>th</sup> instead of 25<sup>th</sup> as a whole bunch of the boys wanted to go somewhere for Christmas. we had Turkey Brussel Sprouts, etc and some first class pudding there were also plenty of fruit (sic) and lots of good beer and mineral waters. the latter was provided for the benifit (sic) of the tee-totalers - of course I will not attempt to picture to you a feed as the boys call it where there is only men in it that are pledged to have a good time out of it as long as the beer holds out. however I think that I say quite enough when I say that there were numerous swelled heads on Christmas morning.

The next date is Dec 30<sup>th</sup> the day that we marched back to our Battn in Witley Camp. we started about 2<sup>30</sup> and arrived real fresh and gay about 6<sup>00</sup>. this ended our finall (sic) Muskettary (sic) as far as we knew at the time, and we returned once more to the old routine of daily drill. I forgot to state that according to the standing orders we were transformed into the 20<sup>th</sup> Reserve Training Battn from that date 30/12/16

### **January 1<sup>st</sup> 1917**

Well here we are, at the beginning of another year" [So good luck to all]

It does not make much difference in the army it carries on in the usual (sic) manner in our outfit we are very busy indeed packing up as we are going to move to Shoreham by Sea. I am not very busy myself, somehow I generally manage to escape all the hard work, and even when I am placed on fatigue I as a rule skip (sic) the hard part. I am orderly-room orderly today and only have to put in half the day at that so you see it is not a very hard job, well what do you know about it we had Christmas pudding for dinner and it was jake

[Jan 2<sup>nd</sup>] Oh yess (sic)? they managed to place me on fatigue today in the Q.M. stores but I can tell you that it was mighty little work that I done (sic) on the whole I had an easy time, yes and this happened to be one of my lucky days I only had a couple of shillings and as it is getting close to payday I though (sic) that I would stake them on the cards to pass off the evening and I couldnt loose them if I had tried and I came out of a game of banker 25 (?) the winner, no more cards for me for a while, at least not untill (sic) I have spent the most of it allthough (sic) I sometimes play cards it is only sometimes and I have never lost at the game yet taking everything allround (sic)

[Jan 3<sup>rd</sup>]

Q.M. fatigue the same as yesterday so I guess that it will be an easy day for me.

[Jan 4<sup>th</sup>]

The Bugler overslept this morning and the consequence was that we did not get out untill (sic) late the first thing that we heard was "Cook House" so out we jumped and rushed pell mell to the mess-room swallowed our breakfast and beat it back to our huts to get ready for parade, I was supposed to go on parade this morning but owing to the fact that I was unable to get ready in time, I nodoubt (sic) would have got it in the neck if I had of gone out on parade without shaving or polishing my buttons so I duked (sic) the parade and reported myself for fatigue there were dozens of others that duked (sic) parade but did not have the sense to report on some fatigue or other and so got into trouble. but I got out



of it O.K. this is the first parade that I have willfully skipped since I have been in the army

**[Jan 5]**

Well I am on parade today it seems strange to have to drill again, of course we had the usuall (sic) PT and B.F. also bomb throwing and wood manouvers (sic) also a lecture on the latter The weath-er is as fine as it can possibly be

**[Sat Jan 6<sup>th</sup>]**

The usuall (sic) P.T. and B.F. also S.h. in the morning I was warned not to leave the lines in the afternoon as I was to go with the advance party to get the Camp in rediness (sic) for the Battn, late in the evening we were again warned that the advance party was canceled for the day but we were to hold ourselves in readiness for orders in the morning

**Sun Jan 7]**

The advance party 20 men in all including myself were called on parade in full marching order at 7<sup>30</sup> this morning, and marched to Milford station, we left Milford at 9<sup>00</sup> and arrived in Waterloo Station London at 10<sup>50</sup>, the officer in comand (sic) bundeled (sic) us on a motor tram a double decker, and we got on the top where we could see all the sights, you see we were in a hurry to catch a fast train at Victoria Station so that is the reason that we had the fun of riding on a Tram, We got there alright (sic) but were about 5 minutes too late, and as the next train did not leave untill (sic) 1<sup>15</sup> we had to wait, we had a good lunch at the Soldiers free lunch counter in the station and spent the rest of the time in the Y.M.C.A hut right opposite the station At last we climbed aboard our train and pulled out we had to change twice, once at East Croydon and again at Brighton - and arrived at Shoreham at 3<sup>45</sup> and marched to the Camp which is only about a mile from the station, we had a very phalasant (sic) journey on the whole. we found that our quarters were not ready for us so we could do nothing in the way of preparation, we were quartered with the transport section of the first Labour Battn for the night, about 6<sup>30</sup> we all went down town but was (sic) unable to get much of an Idea of

the place because it was so dark, It rained all night,

[Jan 8<sup>th</sup>]

we did not get out very early this morning or do much, there was nothing to do in my opinion, we were to take over the lines of the first Labour Battn which was (sic) to go to France starting away at noon The remainder of the Battn arrived in Camp at noon just a few minutes after the Labour Battn had gone and once again I managed to skipp (sic) out of the work part I was told to look after the rations in the store room and you can bet that I done (sic) my work right well. I made a real good hot fire and took it easy, routed everybody else out and had a feed of new bread and Marmalade that sort of work suites (sic) me to a. T. but I pitied the



rest of the Batt when they came in there was nothing ready for them, and it was late in the afternoon before the Cookhouse was got into motion and the men fed - it began to rain again in the afternoon there is plenty of mud which is as sticky as glue

[Jan 9<sup>th</sup>]

We are very busy trying to get settled down and there seems to be lots of work for everybody, but as per usuall (sic) I am jake I am Q.M. orderly for the day and there does not happen to be much hard work for me. the weather is rotten, the wind is blowing in good style and is cold enough to frese (sic) a dog and it is trying to snow, I wouldnt care if it froze up this beastly mud gets on my nerves

**[Jan 10<sup>th</sup>]**

Cold and clear today with a good fresh wind blowing. I am on gaurd (sic) for 24 hours the rest of the Battn are at the usuall (sic) P.T. etc Perhaps I had better try and picture our Camp as it appears to me, The Camp itself is situated just a short distance from the town [in fact it overlooks it,] our particular lines are well up on the Hills of course there are numerous lines down in the valleys we have a fairly good view of the English Channell, we are only about eight miles from Brighton which is out of bounds,. I might add that all towns are out of bounds that do not come within a three mile circle of any camp over here. The hills are all Chalk with a few inches of clay on the surface, which makes a very slippery and disagreeable mud when it rains, and it does not have to rain much at that, In the town itself there seems to be plenty of amusements in fact a little too much for the most of us to try and keep up with on what pocket money we draw there are three movies and one theatre, two Y.M.C.A huts which are in the camp itself, and numerous resturaunts (sic), I forgot the Soldiers Club, in which there are good dances two and three times a week, then of course there are the Pubs and Hotells (sic) I will not attempt to count them because I have no use for either but I am positive that there are more than I could count on my fingers As far as I can judge the only poor points of this Camp are the Hills, and mud it must be jake here in the summer,. It was also on Jan 10<sup>th</sup>] that I went over to the 23<sup>rd</sup> Reserve Battn lines to see what few of the 117<sup>th</sup> boys still remained in England

**[Jan 11<sup>th</sup>]**

I was relieved from duty at 9<sup>00</sup> and at ten attended a special inspection by the .O.C. for all men in the A.1. class or all men that were fit to go to France. We also had lectures Muskettary (sic) and Arm drill which was carried on indoors on account of the rain. it rained all day long.

**[Jan 12<sup>th</sup>]**

Plenty of rain and all kinds of mud we had P.T, B.F. and arm-drill also lectures. I recieved (sic) a fine large cake from Canada so you can imagine that I had plenty of friends for a while

**[Sat Jan 13<sup>th</sup>]**

P.T. and B.F. in the morning. Pay parade in the afternoon

**[Jan 14]**

Church parade as usual (sic) in the C of E hut, the service was conducted by our old 117<sup>th</sup> Chaplin (sic).

**[Jan 15<sup>th</sup>]**

P.T. B.F. and bombing in the forenoon the whole of A.#1. Coy was given one half hours (sic) extra drill for coming on parade with muddy boots. field manouvers (sic) in the afternoon some poor idiot asked me how I liked it in A.1. Coy Oh well says I its jake to know that you are .a.1. and fit, but they sure do work us. I guess that they will soon stop us having any -noon hour, we are at it from 8<sup>00</sup> untill (sic) 12<sup>15</sup> in the morning and from 1.<sup>00</sup> untill (sic) 4<sup>30</sup> in the afternoon.

**[Jan 16<sup>th</sup>]**

P.T. and B.F. also bombing and arm drill by numbers in the morning we went to the trenches to work in the afternoon, it was some job we had to march allmost (sic) a mile uphill and some hill at that. it was as slippery as the Dev(il) and I for one was about all in when we got there of course we were not carring (sic) one single thing. Oh no we only had a Ross Rifle, Spade and a full pack, I know that I had a faint Idea that perhaps they were breaking us in for pack Mules, but maybe I was mistaken

**[Wednesday Jan 17<sup>th</sup>]**

as usual (sic) we had P.T. B.F. and bombing they keep us right at it some of us are getting to be experts in the business in the afternoon we did not go out on parade untill (sic) 2<sup>30</sup> on account of the night manouvers (sic), Some manouvers (sic) too, we were all issued with uncooked rations consisting of one susuage (sic), two potatoes tea, milk, sugar and bread, butter and Cheese. now we were supposed to cook these for our supper but some of the boys threw theirs away and bought stuff of the canteen. but I

was broke so could not do any different. when it came supper time I got a good fire started, fried the susuage (sic) and some of the other boys susuages (sic) as well, also fried the potatoes boiled tea and made some good toast. it was a huge success for me the Major came to my fire and told me that I was the first one in the whole bunch to cook anything I let him taste the tea and he said that it was about as good as could be made at home and was very well pleased with it. so was I, I had a real good feed out of it

**[Jan 18<sup>th</sup>]**

The same old story P.T. B.F. and bombing in the morning on dental parade in the afternoon

**[Jan 19<sup>th</sup>]**

P.T. B.F. and lecture on bombs Medicall (sic) inspection in the afternoon. I also attended a Signallers (sic) examination weather is fine [but [muddy]

**[Jan 20<sup>th</sup>]**

P.T. B.F. and bombing in the morning. I was transfered (sic) to the Brigade School of signalling and attached to the 8<sup>th</sup> Reserve Battn at 2<sup>30</sup> this afternoon,. I found the 8<sup>th</sup> pretty good as far as the grub was concerned, but we have a hot, Capt, he seems to be rather strict with us on parade, the Sigs are alltogether (sic) in one company about 200 in all. I am in a hut with some of the boys from the 110<sup>th</sup> they seem to be a good lot the weather remains cold and there is still plenty of mud

**[Jan 21<sup>st</sup>]**

No Church parade sunday to day (sic). so I took a stroll over to the 23<sup>rd</sup> lines to see some of my old chums it is turning Colder and trying to snow

**[Jan 22<sup>nd</sup>]**

We attended the Sig school in the morning. P.T. and S.D. in the afternoon, no mud today. the ground is frozen (sic) hard, cold winds blowing

**[Jan 23<sup>rd</sup>]**

Sig practice all morning, route march with the 8<sup>th</sup> Battn in the afternoon. still frozen (sic) with beastly cold winds blowing

**[Jan 24<sup>th</sup>]**

S.P. or signal practice as usual in the morning. a short route march instead of flag drill as it is too cold for the latter in fact it is colder than yesterday. one feels it far worse here on the hills than in Canada. we had the usuall (sic) physical (sic) training and squad drill in the afternoon also a short hour of fatigue

**[Jan 25<sup>th</sup>]**

P.S. as usuall (sic) also a route march of about eight miles instead of flag drill. the march was fine, the same old thing in the afternoon P.T. B.F. and P.M.

**[Jan 26]**

P.S. route march and weekly tests, Battn route march of about nine miles. clothing parade at 7<sup>30</sup>

**[Sat. Jan 27]**

I am hut orderly today we had a bathing parade and clothing board. I got a new pair of shoes about the ninth pair I've had since I joined.

**[Jan 28]**

Church parade 9<sup>30</sup> in the Y.M.C.A hut. and pay parade in the afternoon at 4<sup>20</sup>. the weather still remains the same

**[Jan 29]**

S.P. and S.D. in the forenoon also flag drill, P.T. and S.D. in the

afternoon the latter is allways (sic) done in full marching order

**[Jan 30<sup>th</sup>]**

Sig parade and route march about six miles in the forenoon S.D. and P.T. in afternoon

**[Jan 31]**

went to the school the same as usuall (sic) we had flag drill this morning.

on Q.M. fatigue all afternoon

it is trying to snow but is still frozen (sic)

**[Feb 1<sup>st</sup>]**

School in the morning no route march just the usuall (sic) work. Muskettary (sic) and shooting at the mineture (sic) range the weather is holding out about the same. beastly cold I call it for this Country

**[Feb 2<sup>nd</sup>]**

I went to the school in the morning but beat parade in the afternoon, I did not feel up to the mark to go on a long route march so got somebody to answer my name when the rool (sic) was called I was mighty glad that I did not go after the boys had come back and told me that the Capt had marched them from Lansing a good three miles, at attention and without changing arms and from what I could learn it was done purely for spite

**[Feb 3]**

we had our weekly tests at school also flag drill etc there was nothing doing in the afternoon, and as I was dead broke I raffeled (sic) off my rist (sic) watch I got about 9 shillings out of it and that was about 9 times more than it was worth

**[Feb 4<sup>th</sup> Sun]**

The usuall (sic) Church parade in the C of E hut

**[Feb 5]**

all sigs started on another Muskettary (sic) course. no more signalling untill (sic) the course is over. there is quite a lot of snow today and in some places four inches. holy smoke but it is cold

**[Feb 6]**

We had Muskettary. all day today we are inside as it is far too cold to work outdoors we that is the class that I am in (are in) an unoccupied officers mess we are in the kitchen part I got hold of some coal and made a good fire in the stove so we were jake I found it a very easy time but afull (sic) tiresome. the snow is still on the ground

**[Feb 7<sup>th</sup>]**

Muskettary (sic) all day the same as yesterday

**[Feb 8]**

Reported sick and managed to put one over on them at that so did not go out on parade at all today the weather remains the same

**[Feb 9<sup>th</sup>]**

the only thing that persuaded (sic) me to go out on parade today was the fact that we were to go to the miniture (sic) Ranges I am learning a bad habit beating parade. however we did not go to the range untill (sic) the afternoon

**[Feb 10<sup>th</sup> saturday]**

P.T. one half hour and then we marched to the big ranges to do our shooting. I did not shoot this morning so did not have to go in the afternoon

**[Sun Feb 11<sup>th</sup>]**

A parade for the Muskettary (sic) party. but I did not go there



was no shooting for them as the range was occupied

**[Feb12]**

The whole Sig spent all day at the ranges, the weather is warming up this make the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of cold frosty weather. I think that is going some for this Country.

**[Feb 13<sup>th</sup>]**

We were all day at the Ranges, The shooting is very good on the whole Sig's are as a general (sic) rule better shots than the average. it is warming up today and there is plenty of mud

**[Feb 14]**

Our last day at the ranges, we took our dinner with us so as not to waste time, as we have to shoot fifty rounds per man. It is real windy today but still muddy

**[Feb 15<sup>th</sup>]**

P.T. B.F. and a bathing parade in the morning We were paid in the afternoon

**[Feb 16<sup>th</sup>]**

I am hut orderly today so do not have to attend parade, we were issued our Webb equipment (sic) this morning it is much warmer with no wind to speak of today

**[Sat Feb 17<sup>th</sup>]**

The Sig Section were sent trench digging this morning, but not me, I duked (sic) parade on the excuse of Dental necessity

**[Feb 18<sup>th</sup> Sun]**

The usual (sic) Church parade in the morning. I went to

## Shoreham Church at night

**[Feb 19<sup>th</sup> Mon]**

A few minutes P.T. also S.D. we were then warned to pack up and be ready to be transfered (sic) to the 22<sup>nd</sup> by three o'clock in the afternoon, but owing to some mix up were not ready until (sic) 4<sup>30</sup> and were kept waiting until (sic) after supper time, we were then marched over to the 22<sup>nd</sup> lines but the Adjutant (sic) refused to accept us without 24 hours rations. The Adjutant (sic) is Capt Smith our old Coy. Capt. of the 117<sup>th</sup> well we were marched back to the 8<sup>th</sup> to get our rations and this, is what they gave us for seventy men supposed to last 24 hours, about two pounds of sugar, one quarter pound of tea one half dozen turnips, 18 onions, and three bowls of rolled oats, quite a lot of stuff to feed seventy men on for 24 hours was'nt (sic) it. and in the end we got no supper and had to go on short rations the next day

**[Feb 20<sup>th</sup>]**

we were paraded to the Canteen at 10<sup>15</sup> this morning for our breakfast which is to be charged up to the 8<sup>th</sup> Reserve. I hope that they soak them in good shape for it. if it had not have been that the most of us had money we would have been a hungary (sic) crowd before we got our breakfast. there was (sic) no parades today for us. I suppose that they thought we did not have enough inside us to parade on

the Weather is rotten. foggy and muddy also raining

**[Wed Feb 21<sup>st</sup>]**

Today we start on a real bussiness (sic) like method of learning we are to have ten weeks of strict training at the School and night work three times per week that means no more physical (sic) torture or Squad drill or route marches all that we have to do is to study and learn for the next ten weeks. The weather is the same as yesterday

**[Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>]**

We have the usuall (sic) days (sic) schooling today, the weather

remains the same as yesterday

**[Feb 23<sup>rd</sup>]**

We held tests at the school today also had a dental examination

**[Sat Feb 24<sup>th</sup>]**

Pay-day, we were paid the first thing this morning, I did not go to school this morning after the pay parade was over, I remained behind to see the paymaster. I had two reasons the first was to get another 10/- out of him and the other was to skip (sic) the buzzer test as I was afraid of the result

**[Sun Feb 25]**

Church parade at the C. of. E at 9<sup>40</sup> this morning. I took a quirt (sic) walk in the afternoon of about six miles and attended Church in Shoreham at night,

**[Feb 26<sup>th</sup>]**

I attended school this morning I did not feel very good tempered so cut up in the ranks, and the result was that I was sent to the school to do fatigue, I was on dentall (sic) parade this afternoon and had two teeth drawn. I did not mind the drawing but the after effects was a little more than I bargained for I must have caught cold somehow, my jaw is ackeing (sic) so that I can hardly controll (sic) myself

**[Feb 27<sup>th</sup>]**

I did not sleep any last night, my face is swollen in good style and I cannot eat (sic) much. I reported sick so as to get excused from parade, towards night I can swallow a lot better so I guess I will have a tuck in of some sort] Well this is the end of my diary that is to say that today as I am writing this it is the 27<sup>th</sup> and I have no more in my small book to continue with whoever (sic) reads it please overlook the writing as the greatest part of it was written in a hurry  
Yours truly (signed) Pte F.H. Price 749113

**March 30<sup>th</sup> 1917**

Friday Night

From Pte .F.H Price husband

Shoreham

England

## ERRATUM

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From "The Hyatt Papers: An Interpretation"

The last document presented (p. 107) should have been the following:

**Hyatt Papers:** file # 3, article # 4

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**format:** one folio - handwritten

**subject:** response to a petition from Charles Hyatt for compensation in respect to expenses incurred by his father, Gilbert Hyatt, for surveying the Township of Ascot, dated 1830

**folio title:** (none)

**folio text:**

Castle of St. Lewis  
Quebec 25 January 1830

Sir

I am directed by His Excellency Sir James Kempt to acknowledge the receipt of your memorial praying on the part of yourself and the other heirs of the late Mr. Gilbert Hyatt to be reimbursed for the expenses incurred by him in surveying the Township of Ascot in the year 1792

Upon this application His Excellency has desired me to observe that the length of time which has elapsed since the service was performed could of itself form an almost inseparable bar to recognizing the claim; it must either have been before brought forward when its merits could be better known to the Government and then rejected, or it must have remained dormant which could furnish just ground for supposing that those who made the survey were aware that the claim was not such as could be entertained - By a certificate attached to your memorial it would appear that a similar claim was made at some former time, which is not stated, since the decease of Mr. Gilbert Hyatt, when it must of course have been rejected

His Excellency being however desirous of making full enquiry to ascertain if possible the real nature of the survey that is stated to have been performed by the late Mr. Hyatt, caused a reference to be made to the ( \_\_\_ ) in the Surveyor Generals Office, and from

that examination it would appear that the survey in question had never been returned to that Department, without which it could be of no service to the Government. It is however admitted that a survey of part of the Township of Ascot was made by Mess<sup>r</sup> Hyatt, but the field book now extant shows that it was commenced on that part of the Township which was granted to those persons, instead of following the arrangement of the projected diagram nor is there any claim to show that the remainder was surveyed with equal care. Under these circumstances however much His Excellency may regret the unfortunate situation on which you state the memorialists to be placed he feels it to be quite impossible to admit the claim now preferred by them to be reimbursed for the survey in question.

I am

Sir

Your most obed servant  
(signed) C. Yorke