

[continued from file "DIARIES9.DOC"]

Wednesday Jan 1 1919 Langenfeld The first day of the New Year has been gloriously fine for the season. It seems to be an omen of a bright and glorious time to be. I'm sure that it will not prove wrong. With the tuck that should have been but was not in time for Xmas we had a big tuck-in at midday. Turkey, roast beef, veges, plum pudding, fruit, nuts, etc, "decked the groaning board." Went for a walk this afternoon up round Immigrath. There was another little dance held in here this evening. Girls galore and a few male civilians found their way in and apparently enjoyed themselves for they all wanted to know when the next would be held.

Thursday Jan 2 Langenfeld Regarding the few little dances that have been held during the past week. I expect there would be the dickens to pay if the heads got to know. Of course, it isn't the right thing, but it means a little fun for the chaps, some thing to stop them from going crazy in this "show." That they allow the girls in is really for their own convenience. It is certainly not because they have any special and sudden feeling of friendliness towards them. I do not dance, but even if I did I don't think I could bring myself to swing a fraulein around the room. Dib landed back from Paris today. He also spent 6 days in Brussels, where he said he enjoyed himself even better than in the republican city.

Friday Jan 3 Langenfeld Yesterday afternoon took a run in the tram out to Hitdorf on the Rhine. The latter is very uninteresting about there. Saw a big Dutch barge, the Leonie of Rotterdam. Today I went to Bonn which is about 40 minutes' run by electric train from C<sup>o</sup>ln. Arrived there a little before midday. It is a very pretty and interesting town on the Rhine and has about 85,000 pop; places of interest are the famous university where German princes have been educated, the bridge over the Rhine and the house where Beethoven was born. The latter contains many interesting relics of the famous composer - pianos, manuscripts, etc. In the visitors' book I saw signatures of a number of the best known Allied war correspondents, mostly dated Dec 9th. Left Bonn 4 p.m. and arrived back here shortly after 7.

Saturday Jan 4 Langenfeld I hear that the Div is making arrangements for cruises on the Rhine. A very excellent proposition, of which I hope to be able to take advantage.

Sunday Jan 5 1919 Langenfeld The day has been rather dull, though comparatively mild. We are enjoying surprisingly fine weather for this time of the year, far ahead of anything experienced by us in either France or Belgium in a similar month. Caseley, Bargh and I went for a run in the tram to Horligs this afternoon. It is a fair-sized town, of the usual style of this part (the above refers to Sat 4th). Sunday 5th Church parade this morning in YMCA "theatre." In the afternoon I devoted a certain amount of time to cleaning up equipment for C.O's inspection tomorrow. I understand G.O.C. inspects on Tuesday. Numerous girls came along here this evening anticipating a dance. They were disappointed!

Monday Jan 6 The people here, after having obtained permission, held a political meeting of some kind this afternoon. Heard that a Bolshevick has been haranguing the people of Monheim and has caused some disturbance. He is to be arrested.

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Thursday Jan 9            Langenfeld    Went into Solingen this afternoon by tram. It is or was a famous crockery manufacturing place, and compared with the other towns about here, is rather grubby-looking on account of the smoke. Out that way the country becomes more hilly and undulating.

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Saturday Jan 11           Langenfeld    Went into Cologne today. Train from Langenfeld about 10 minutes. A number of the boys went on into Bonn. Had another look over the cathedral and intended climbing the tower and taking some snaps but by the time I returned in the afternoon, when I had thought the sun would be brighter, a heavy haze had come over, and rain commenced to fall. With Ted Arnold I also visited a couple of churches, including that of "Apostles" and had a general roam around. Went to a museum of anatomy etc, rather a gruesome, morbid show. From Deutze Station caught train at 2.26 p.m. to Opladen and then tram to Langenfeld. Night before last I went through for another stripe.

Sunday Jan 12            Langenfeld    Church parade at 10 this morning. In afternoon Tom Hogan and I went for a walk, and repeated the performance after tea. Quite an interesting time! Changed my place (or rather my house) of residence. Have taken the billet recently vacated by Roy Wilkie. It is a jolly fine place next to the post office. Have a fine little bedroom and a most excellent bed, snowy sheets, etc, and as a coverlet, one of these German feather quilts. Warm as a toast. The people, knaper by name, seem very decent. There are three girls in the family. That by the way. The play the piano and even had some music this morning.

Monday Jan 13 1919       Langenfeld    The house is very pricely furnished and if were to be here for any time I'd have a jolly comfortable time. However, I'll not be here to enjoy it long. A draft of about 70 leaves the battalion tomorrow for NZ. So I am off home. If I cared to stay I would get another stripe or perhaps become a staff sergeant, but it's not worth waiting for. Out of the section Ted Arnold, Spot Holmes, Parenga and myself are going. Oscar J.- aussi. Jack Miles will be sergeant. James, corporal. Went down to Div, beyond Wiesdorf, to field cashier to enquire re money cabled for. No advice yet to hand, but it will most likely be in London, slow in advising. Spent pleasant evening in the house, music, etc. People speak little French and one of the girls a little English.

Tuesday Jan 14           Langenfeld to Belgium    The long looked-for day has come - at last. I am on my way home. The draft from the battalion paraded at 9.15 a.m. and about half an h our later bade farewell to Langenfeld. Marched to Leichlinghen, a distance of about 8 kilos. From this little town (Brigade hdqrs) we were taken by motor lorries to Central Station, Cologne, where we arrived a little before 2 p.m. In this draft to go away there

are chaps from practically every unit kin the Div. About 1000 in all I think. The train I understand, takes us to Le Havre and from there we sail to Blighty. I sincerely hope we do go to Blighty and get leave. If not, I'll be disappointed. Left Cologne shortly after 6 p.m.

Wednesday Jan 15      In the train - Belgique      I am making the entry, sitting in the train a few miles to the west of Charleroi. The time is 6.55 p.m. Before starting from Cologne last night we were issued with straw to spread on the wagon floor, and upon this we lay out our blankets and spent quite a comfortable night. There are about 25 in this wagon. We got into Huy about 8 this morning. Got off the train and prom'd to a place where we were given a junk [sic] of bread and cheese and a drink of tea. The old train rumbled on through country we had marched over, Namur, etc. Groaned thro' Tamines and into Charleroi about 4.30 p.m. About here we hung until after 6, and when at last we did start, we went by spasms for a few hundred yards. Enough to send a fellow crazy. Thursday Jan 16 1919      In the train - France      I don't know what time we passed out of Belgium into France last night. I was asleep and cosy. Neither do I know whether I shall again see that martyred little land, but I do know that it, its people, will always be held by me in a sense of great admiration and deep affection. They have shown the world and me much. It was about 8 o'clock this morning when we entered the battle-stricken area of the east of Arras, and the sight of it, after having seen the intact and apparently prosperous towns of the Rhineland, filled me with increased loathing and hatred of those who caused it all. Reached Arras shortly after nine and stood about station yard till nearly eleven. Passed Albert, Corbie, and through Amiens. About the station of latter city saw effects of Hun bombardment of last year.

Friday Jan 17      Train to Le Havre      Was slumbering very peacefully and comfortably, when at 4 a.m. somebody came along, banged at the wagon door and told us to pack up and "fall in" outside. Felt annoyed at being disturbed, but perforce complied. We had arrived at Le Havre. Marched about a kilo to No 2 rest camp and waited in a shed for daylight. A medical chap passed in his check on the train last night. Cause - overdose of stolen rum. E.T.C. look after feeding of troops here. Got tickets for meals. It was uncertain whether we would get boat today, but we are still here. Don't know whether we will get away even tomorrow. This camp is used chiefly by Canadians demobilising. Not far from wharves. Some big airship hangars adjoin. Went into town with Osk and Ted this evening. Too dark to see place properly. Went into Yank YMCA. Cordial welcome. Interesting chat with American girl! Weather showery with hail.

Saturday Jan 18      Le Havre      It was not until after 2 p.m. that we learnt we were not to sail today. Then with Parenga went down town to have a further look around. Had tea at the YMCA at Crystal Palace and later went to a baksheesh show at the Lyric Theatre - also run by the YMCA. Didn't particularly enjoy it. Am feeling rather fed up with the waiting about camp etc. The town was very brightly lighted and busy, but like

most ports is rather grimy. And then it's over-run with troops. Two more deaths have resulted from the rum orgy in the train. Had another bath and change this morning.

Sunday Jan 19 1919      Le Havre - Channel      Am making this entry on the boat before it gets out and I possibly become sick. We are still against wharf, and will move at any moment. Our

destination I believe is Weymouth. Night was very cold but had plenty of blankets. After lunch paraded at 12.30 p.m. and marched a couple of miles to wharf and here I am on the boat about to farewell "La France." Later. Promptly at 3.30 p.m. the boat glided away from the wharf. It - the boat by name Dieppe, is very much crowded, there being I understand over 1050 on board. We quickly lost sight of land. I wonder if I shall ever see old France again. Some day, I hope, but under more favourable circumstances.

Monday Jan 20            Sling Camp    At last I have arrived at this camp about which, during the last two or three years, I have heard so much, and already I feel fed up with it. Any how all camps are distasteful to me. For the first hour or so of last night's trip the sea was very calm, but later we ran into less peaceful water and quite a number of fellows were sick. And on this account and also because of the crowded conditions of the boat, were rather uncomfortable. Fortunately I was not sick. Got blankets out and slept cosily enough on a seat. Dropped anchor outside Weymouth shortly after midnight and did not go into wharf until after 9.30 a.m. Disembarking, we were supplied with refreshments, and also lunch for train and then marched to station. Left there about 10.45 a.m. and detrained at siding near camp 4 p.m. Rotten wintry weather. Rain and cold wind.

Tuesday Jan 21            Sling Camp    When we got in last night we were told that a fortnight's leave would be forthcoming in a few days' time. When we had gone through the process of being fitted up with clothing, etc, and medical inspections. Cheery. It was also stated that a certain number would be able to get away home by boat leaving on 1st ult., if they so desired. Would mean no leave of course. Not for me thanks. 21.1.19. Evening. I am filled, obsessed with a feeling of absolute fed-upness. This return to life in camp is to me in my present frame of mind, sickening, repulsive. General Stuart addressed us in the YMCA today and outlined what is ahead. Boats sail on 1st and 5th Feb and 1914-15 men upon application may get away then, otherwise they may take leave, in which case they will not get away till March.

Wednesday Jan 22 1919    Sling Camp    A day devoted to hanging about the huts in anticipation of some progress in the process. It seems one must go through here, and still nothing done, nothing more than a cursory medical inspection. Lost patience and went for a walk with Sam Venning who I met on the way. Our stroll took us past WAAC town, which has a fair population: so it seems. In the evening sought distraction in a picture showing

in the same locality. Poor old Tom Carrig received some very bad news last evening. Was told of the death by influenza of his brother and sister in NZ.

Thursday Jan 23            Sling Camp    This morning I shifted down to Auckland detachment lines No 6 camp. Waited about from 10 a.m. till after 3 p.m. before I got fixed up and allotted a place of residence. Decent organisation seems horribly lacking, though I suppose they must be rather "bustled" dealing with the number of men at present passing into and out of the camp.

[Diary then ceases until March 28]

Friday March 28 1919 We were up shortly after 1 this morning, had breakfast three-quarters of an hour later and about 2.30 started to march down to Amesbury Station. We handed in our kit bags last night, keeping in the little tea kit that which we were likely to require most on the voyage. Consequently had not much to carry. Train left at a few minutes to four. Being sleepy I dozed chiefly for the first few hours. Passed through Oxford, Bambury, Birmingham and Crewe and arrived at the docks at 2 p.m. In a big shed against the wharf was playing a band, the instrumentalists being about thirty small boys, some of them very young, and they rendered excellent music. They evidently were from some institution. Going up the gangway we were handed a ticket giving the berth and mess table number. Saw Jack Cains.

Saturday March 29 This is a fine big boat, 12170 tons I understand. She has aboard a cargo of 12000 tons of iron, wire, etc. We are accommodated in hammocks and rather crowded. Could not be much more so. Hammocks are suspended from hooks on ceiling. The mess tables are below. However, everything is very clean, and that's a consideration, very important in those circumstances. A number of the boys climbed over the side last evening and had a few hours up the town. Some of them were caught coming back and there is to be Orderly Room for them. With Tiki Roake and [name indecipherable] I also went off, for about three quarters of an hour, but we were not caught! Wrote two or three notes last night and despatched them. Drew away from the wharf some time last night out into the dock. Sunday March 30 In this inner harbour or dock we lay until 9.30 yesterday morning, when tugs towed us out into the Mersey, where we lay waiting for a suitable tide to enable us to negotiate the bar. At about 5.30 p.m. we started down the stream. We were clear of the bar before dark and when I went down below the coast was getting distant. The O.C. boat addressed us yesterday and among other things he told us it was expected we would reach Newport News in about 10 days' time. There some cargo was to be discharged and coal to be taken on, and he hoped to arrange leave for all during the 24 hours we would be there. Tres bien! The sea is behaving well and the boat rides splendidly. Fine sea boat. Weather fine but rather cold wind. This morning until about three this afternoon the coast of Ireland in sight.

Monday March 31 Have not yet been subject to mal-de-mer on this voyage, but last evening when we got into a bigger swell, didn't feel too sure about things. Haven't felt over-bright today, but think I'll survive alright! The YMCA has on board a library from which may be drawn books, and there also are

pictures screened twice a day, forward on A Deck. Had a look at them for a few minutes but found the place very stuffy. The food so far has been pretty good, but somehow or other to me food on board ship tastes altogether differently from that on land. Sighted the lights of several boats tonight. We have averaged 14 1/2 knots during past 24 hours.

Tuesday April 1 There's little worth recording. Life aboard is a monotonous round. One reads, smokes, eats, promenades the deck, plays quoits, skips, drowns, sleeps. There was some boxing on this evening and a bout in which the boxers were blindfolded caused great merriment. Cannot remember when I have laughed so heartily.

Wednesday April 2 Had a great surprise today. Was strolling along the deck when I suddenly spotted a face I recognised! 'twas cousin Bert. Here I have been roaming around the ship for the past four or five days thinking I had met everyone I knew and it has been left till today for me to discover my cousin. I really hadn't the slightest idea he was about. Needless to say we were mutually surprised and pleased.

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Sunday April 6 A miserable unpleasant day with a wind that spun the foam from wave crests and sprayed it over the decks.

Monday April 7 1919 Was awakened early this morning by the deep heavy roar of the ship's syren [sic]. For the moment I wondered whether we had run into port; but was soon enlightened as to the reason for the blasts, which were repeated at intervals of a few minutes. We had run into a heavy fog bank which I suppose the prevailing wind had blown down from the Newfoundland coast. Our speed was greatly reduced to less than half and thus we continued cautiously and with frequent warnings from the syren till after lunch, when we cleared the fog, and emerging into pleasant sunshine and a calm sea, resumed our normal progress.

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Wednesday April 9 Anchor was dropped outside Chesapeake Bay at an early hour this morning. The pilot came aboard about 9 a.m. and we proceeded up the harbour. It was nearly eleven when we got up opposite our coaling place at Newport News. Here in the stream a few hundred yards, we dropped anchor. There was a boat against the place where we were to berth and we had to wait until it came out. Impatient and disappointed at not getting ashore straight away, we kicked our heels about until after 6 p.m. when a tug helped to pull us in against the coal wharf. Scrambled over the side and got onto terra firma about 7 p.m. Bert and I went up to town. Triumphal Arch. Tea at YMCA and stroll about town, with which were not particularly struck. Aboard again about 11 p.m.

[The diary finishes at this point]