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Joshua G.B. Campbell's Diary

1916 June 16- August 21

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16
June 21

I shall start once more to keep a diary of some sort. When last Oct or Nov the one I had kept up to that time was lost or stolen I became discouraged and gave it up. I shall record the more interesting things from now on however & hope for better luck. First to go back & write a sketch of the past few months for my own pleasure later on.

Our last weeks in Belgium were not very exciting but were interesting. Holsten seemed to be taking the place of Elverdinghe in the eyes of the Boer & the town got a dozen or more good shells each day. The church was badly wrecked & the houses in front of it a sad heap of ruins. About the usual amount of shelling went on on the roads.

To night to spend of my hours in jail would be to forget a most entertaining row with

the Med chief of '89. Kenyon & Windon were very active assistants with Spangh in the back ground - anyone to break the said Med-C had. Useless to write details. He was abusing the ambulance service for his own personal rides and arrested me because I refused to give him a car. He learned later that he was removed from the post so that ends it. Better luck to him next time.

About the time we were very much upset by the rotten way Balbi was fired we protested but that did not change matters. Poor Balbi, a fine fellow but never a squad leader. Salisbury took charge & turned out to be a very efficient man. About Dec 17th we were finally relieved from our post and after stopping a moment at Roushburg to say good bye to Mrs Turner & pick up Gimp who had just recovered from his accident we went on to Dunk.

where we stayed (at Rosendal)
for several days. I occupied the time
in going about saying good bye for in
the 11 months in that part of the world
had made some pleasant though simple
acquaintances. Now I should not forget to
mention the tears shed in Cronstede by
our rusty Kopp friends. Little Elsa
was quite unhappy. I shall certainly
have to get back there some day.

Blanche the patron - Marie - Alice -
Virginie & family & of course the
red head Schoellenders. Good hearts
they all have. At last the 21 or 22nd
off we started. Via Bolognes & Calais
we went to Abbeville where we
spent the first night in the caserne.
Half the cars could not go up the hills
and about all of us had forgotten how
to drive on hills but on we went. We
had here our first taste of mounting guard as
we had to leave our cars in the public sq.
We took turns of an hour each and as there
fell well toward morning it was not so bad.

Nevertheless we prefer to work or sleep but
not to play watchman. Next morning we were
off at a fair hour and due to reach Beauvais
by lunch but fortune turned her face. Not
on me personally for aside from a little
trouble which I soon found to be the
mixture - it having shifted - I went along
splendidly and as we had a rule of
passing on the hills rather than going
into first I wound up at B. Car No 1
having started out the 13th. Most was due
to good motor but about three places
were gained because of car ahead having
tire trouble. About very half hour the
Lund. who was leading would stop &
behind him. I would draw up five or
six of the "steadies" while gradually
the others would trail in. Up to about
noon all would finally come along
but somewhere between 11 & noon about
five of us stopped on a beautiful hill
overlooking a splendid valley & the town
of Poix. It was easy to see that Beauvais
was out of the question for lunch so the

Leont & Salisbury went ahead to see what liases Poir held forth while we waited on the hill. First we enjoyed the view. It was indeed a pleasure to see hills & valleys - pine trees & all the attractive things that wind & go with such country. Many times on the trip my throat felt just a wee bit choked as an unusually beautiful view sprang into our horizon. Clever moorlands of Belgium & northern France had made us unused to other things, but the enjoyment was all the more keen. Rivers & canals are free and I cannot say that I once felt the monotony of it while there - in fact I love the ducks on a winters morning when frozen & glistening with frost - but these views made me realize that after all the more varied beauties are the best.

Our wait proved to be a long one & from contemplating the scenery we began a more serious one of wondering about lunch. Eating is reduced to very simple proportions but we look to it

with more interest than I can recall
in civil life. Someone brought out a
box of bully beef & a tongue or some such
stuff & from other "caches" crackers
came forth & we were thus able to calm
the worst of our gnawings. Soon a car
here & a car there drifted in. All sorts
of trouble seemed to be in the air. When
at last the supply car came & the whole
story was told we found Ens. Frank
back with a burnt bearing & Townsend
came along with the sad story of an
entire car gone. He had been used as
an example for a new heating apparatus
and it over heated. Then he finally realized
that there was something amiss it was
too late for practicality the entire car
was aflame. He lost everything. Vast
stores of souvenirs & cigarettes and all his
clothing. At last we all got in to Poix
except Ens. At lunch it was decided
to send back the 'mechs. to fix up Ens
& send him on, then to continue on to
take what ever was worth taking of

Gounseids car (the motor seemed to be unhurt) & then go on to Abbeville where, I forgot to say, Browns car had been left as unfit for service. There they were to fix it up with Gounseids motor or as best they could & come on to B. So we started off from P. & arrived at B. about dusk without further accident of moment. One night we spent in the casern. Dinner we had in the same place that we stopped on the occasion that we went through in Jan 1915. Of that squad I was the only remaining one. Two new cars met us on our arrival & they were quite a contrast to our old work & war wrecked machines. Electric lights & doors of a new & improved model. In fact quite Fords de Luxe. The following day (Dec 23rd) we moved to a cantonment in the suburb of Marsaisel. Here we were lodged in a school building & for dining room Le Blond found us a splendid hall used for weddings etc.

Lunes we celebrated here and had a splendid dinner - the gift of J.H. Hyde & wife. The following days we were all busy working on the cars & getting into shape to go out with a real section. New Year's we also celebrated & many were the heads the next day. Our work did not prevent us walking rather a lot - the cathedral & old & interesting streets of the town received their due attention.

Jan. 21 I started off for Paris with my old 92 & Lunes & Holmsten & Cus with their cars - Grandclay with the staff car an Townsend with the Renault. No incident on the way of note. It had been nearly seven months since my last trip to Paris and I had been about as depressed as low tide for weeks.

The sight of L'etoile as we turned the corner coming in from the direction of St Germain gave me a momentary lift which unfortunately did not last very long - they go back over such troubles however. I only stayed one

day & the next started (Jan. 2nd) back with a new car & René de K. The word went on as per usual until I left for a regular "perm." on Jan. . The last day of my perm. I learned the section had moved and got orders to reform it at Pont St Maxence. Arrived there about 9 p.m. The town was black as midnight & no one seemed to know much. Finally I found the Zouave who he also was returning from a "perm." Finally we prowled about & found what was supposed to be our section only to find it to be an English one. By knocking on the doors facing the park we found a good woman who informed us that our S.S. had gone off that same morning so we knew we had only to find a place to sleep & wait for day light. We located a hotel near the gare where by good chance we found our men had stayed. They could not offer us any hospitality, however for the Eng. arrived that afternoon had filled the house to overflowing. The

Stable was there & we accepted it as the best offered. It was cold without blankets but sleep came all the same. The next day we located the Auto Parc & received an order to rejoin our section by means of the postal service. We had time to wander about the Town a bit & see the sights which consisted largely in the ruined bridge blown up by the Gm in the retreat & a chateau. After lunch we started off & by a round which took in half of France it seemed we finally reached Choisy au Bac. To my amazement I found the section installed in the Chateau of the Marguier de Villeneuve. The parc & the Forest de Marguier & laigle which is just back of the Chateau made ideal surroundings with the house just a short distance away. The building itself was most unhappy & did all but spoil the branches that nature had left. From an upper window I saw a sunset hard to forget. The house was covered with a blanket of pink mist that was all but theatrical in its effect. The idea of

being in a chateau was quite refreshing
but the actual comfort was small. We
were lodged up 112 steps in the servants
quarters & had to send several kilometers
away for water even for washing
purposes. It only lasted a couple of days
and I did not regret it when about Jan 28th
we were ordered on to Jaulzy. Here we were
attached to the 121st Div - 35 Corps - 6th Army.
Our billet was more like old times & an
improvement over the chateau even if it
was a dirty sort of a town hall. Jaulzy is
just 18 1/2 Kilom. from Compiègne & the
same distance from Soissons. The part
of the village we were on was on the main
road & just on the border of the Aisne.
Two other parts of the village are perched
high up on the hills & separated and from
the lower part and from each other. They
are most picturesque. The Boche passed
through in the early days but did little
damage. Stole a lot of small things &
broke windows and shot a Tommy
who trailed behind the British &

was caught. The valley & surrounding hills of the Aisne are beautiful. Our work took us on the right bank of the river to our main post Vie S. A. Here we kept three cars which changed every 24 hours. There was the most interesting. He had a multitude of posts most of which were dangerous enough to lend interest & the roads while far were hard enough at night to give real work. From Paulibray & Sarcy at one end of our district to Fontenoy at the other we had a number of places. Vingre was perhaps the busiest. Here the post was dug into the cliff and splendidly sheltered though to get to it one had to pass a bit of dangerous road & a stretch of road where bullets wandered. Sarcy was almost a complete wreck. The post at Fontenoy was in the barn of a chateau. A splendid old place it was and evidently the chateau was fond of horses & dogs for the kennels were well arranged. Vie is a splendid little town. We were lodged in the barn of a chateau & all along that street were

chateaux of splendid style. Lovely parks
 & enough view over the Seine to make
 them lose the shut in feeling. Every thing
 was shell struck but almost nothing
 demolished. Lights at night were shelly
 tabs of course. Many pleasant hours
 I passed at the shops to see it again.
 The shelling was an every day affair but
 though our stable yard got many rather
 barn chills one or two no one was hurt.
 Once they got really gay & put on about 1200
 shells but killed very few. It gave us
 plenty of work however and in the
 evacuation of the sugar mill at Roche we
 earned a at least received the following
 very nice letter.

2nd Div - 35 Corps 6 armée
 2nd fev - 1916

Le Medecin aide major 1^{er} cl. Rocher
 Med. Chef du G. B. D.

A. M. le Lieutenant la S.S. A. A. 1

J'ai l'honneur de vous
 faire connaître que, pendant toute la
 durée du dernier bombardement

prendre des blessés qu'il a aidé à charger avec la
 plus grande calme donnant ainsi preuve de courage
 et de sang froid.

Ormulled

35 Corps

121st Div

Cité a l'ordre

de la Div

le commandant

2nd Division

de S.S.A.A.

Sous un

bombardement

incessant

continu à assu-

rer le soc.

des évacués

sans la moindre

hésitation au

endroit particu-

lièrement

exposé au

moment où

les obus tom-

baient avec

violence à

arrêter sa

vieillesse

dans la section de Vu a Rouleau
la Sec S. A. Nos a assure le service
souvent perilleux de l'evacuation des
blessés avec sans faille zèle et
devouement. Tous vos conducteurs
sont dignes d'éloges et je signale
particulièrement a votre attention le
conducteur Hoolbert qui malgre le
bombardement tres rapproché sa
voiture a continué son service avec
la plus belle assurance. Rocher

It all seemed like old
times & was very stimulating. One
the left hand the center was of a far
more quiet nature. Here we had our
regular evacuation routes & the country
was superb. After the long Vache Noire hill
across the rolling plateau to Coevres
where the ambulance was in a
fine old chateau. On to St Pierre
Aigle from which a beautiful wonder
view was to be seen. Back on to
Viller Cotteret a town with certain
charm & a Grandcoeur. In chateau.

Viviers another attractive chateau.

Another run took us to Resson - Smully
Cntry where there was little of note but
the surroundings were always worth the
looking at. The third route was
by Montfontaine from Puy - Hautfontaine
Rogest Nicholas & into Puyeffonds.

The chateau of P. is the most impressive
I have seen. Restored it is but as we
comes up over the hill from Puyeffonds
& sees the vast pile rise out of the
ravine it is a sight well worth
going to see. From Viviers we took our
badly wounded men to Compiègne where
one hospital was in the grand chateau
& the other, that of Dr. Carrell in a hotel.
The run through the forest was superb & Compiègne
itself is a little city well worth the visit.

For eye cases we were taken to the
chateau of the Comte de la Vallée. "La
Chapelle" Beautiful park & view
but the building itself too evidently
a copy of something.

Mrs Carrell earned the gratitude

of a lot of us one very cold night by
having coffee served to us all.
It was a very thoughtful thing and at
3 a.m. after long cold drives it was
very welcome. About March 1st we
began to note great signs of activity. Troops
were coming from all sides. & heavy
guns rolling up from every direction.
Both Gr. & Bosch were making little
attacks (coup de mains) and all seemed
to foreshadow an attack for the coming
months.

On our days of rest we took
walks. One through the hills & over the
hill back of that town was very fine.
The new house at Anson is very
extensive & charming.

The new Lord Townsend White
& I over to the battery commanded by
a friend Capt. Carriol. He had his
guns placed on a sharp hill side &
facing down his & his officers quarters.
They were almost coquetish. The stone
here is very easily excavated and they

profiled by the fact to dig into the face
of the hill (it is almost a cliff) and then
extend the affair by building out. Thus
the chimney is cut in the living rock &
part of the abode is cave while the front
is a house. The effect inside is very
cozy & outside quite like a Swiss chalet.
The roofs are planted with sod & bushes
to make them invisible & in front are
little gardens & such arrangements
as men will make to occupy their
idle hours. Benches - garrets etc. The
Capt took us to visit one of the famous
quarries which have become famous from
the fighting they have seen. One wonders
how they can ever be taken. Large enough
to hide regiments & deep enough to
protect them they go for miles. Hundreds
of men are comfortably lodged in them.
We went in one side of the hill &
came out the other. From there we saw
the famous "arbre de Betry" Capt. C.
when he arrived decided to establish
an observation post in a certain tree

which, situated on the edge of the
hill commanded a splendid view
of the Bosch positions for kilometers.
He fastened a dummy with glasses in
its hands in the tree. The Bosch were
very awake & soon started shelling
very heavily. Days passed. The hill
was "smeared" the tree with ^{several}
times & once even a shell passed clean
through the dummy. At last the Bosch
caught on & were quiet. Then the Capt had
a tree constructed the exact replica of
the now shell torn stump only with
the difference that his fake was
hollow & contained phones & wire
connections. On a favorable night the
change was made & in perfect peace
for they never renewed their attempts,
the observer watches all that goes
on & phones in the observations. About
the 4th we were ordered to quit Jauby
& billet in Cortney. An awful place
& the less said the better. It only
lasted two days when we received

orders to report at Moricoul. We were a
very disappointed crowd of men. We had
got to know & like the Dew. & they apparently
to like us. All signs pointed to activity &
the very beauty of the country with spring
coming on was a thing to hold us. Orders
are orders however so off we went. Our
stop at Montdidier for lunch & then to
our destination. He obtained a very nice
place to eat in the ball room of a cafe
& some slept there but most of us in
our cars. J. Eno. I bundled in our car &
despite the cold & snow were very comfortable.

After several days we were ordered to report to
the third dew col at Moricourt & Soissons.

(in Moricoul

Never shall I forget that place as it was
when we arrived. Many snows had melted

& the country was a mire while the
roads were streams. The town badly

built & drained was such a miserable
looking place we simply had to laugh.

Our cars we had to put in a street
and be dug in mud & we were killed

in a broken down house - windowless &

no chimney with holes in the wall.

The yard contained a large puddle & the garden was filthy. Rats we were soon to learn were in fearful abundance. Only one bright ray - the dining room was excellent. Our first day we were inspected by the Med. Dir. Kasnet. He made a very fine impression & was very cordial but businesslike.

The 1st Colonial Corps of which the 3rd Div is part needs no mention. The 3rd Div has & will take care of that. As to our impression on us however it is different.

They are a tough lot. The lower officers mostly have risen from the ranks and are & have always been professional soldiers. As soldiers they ^{scarcely} have equals but as men they are not very satisfactory. The higher officers are all that can be desired. Among the men now are many who in ordinary times would never be in the Colonians but as a rule they are the rough & tough element. Roads proved to be horrible & work quite tame. Cappa was the advanced post where we kept cars

always on duty & there was a good deal
of shelling & danger here. The town was
a total wreck. Up to the time of the
attack on Krise in Feb. it seems the
town had been immune but when the
Germans made that little advance
they pretty well ruined Cuspy & ever since
it has been subjected to daily plunging
of shells. I saw it impact very briefly
one night and thought for a while very
time had come. At about two o'clock
awakened by a tremendous crashing. I
lay a long while but it was hard or impossible
to sleep & as it seemed very likely we would
have work I got up & dressed. From the
door & then from the ^{higher} view point of
the window of our room I watched & heard
a really thrilling sight. Several hundred
shells must have come in and the
crashing & whistling was continuous.
After just an hour it ceased and going
out into the dawn it seemed most
unnaturally calm. All the noise only
got one man everyone else having been

Consolidation

sheltered. The cause of it all was a "coup
de main" the Boche pulled off - successfully
unfortunately to the extent of taking about
50 prisoners. Some the wounded of the
front got in & Granddign & I were busy.
The night before it had been gay also &
those two nights got us the following.

1^{er} Corps d'armee Colonial

2 Div - 6 Mai 1916

(citation)

Au nom du Directeur du Service de
Santé du 1^{er} Corps d'armee Colonial et a
son nom personnel le Med. Div de la
2^{em} Div Col. felicite le S. L. de K et les
Conducteurs de la section A No 1 pour
l'empressement avec lequel
dans la nuit du 4 et 5 Mai 1916 ils ont
assure l'evacuation des blesses des ports
de recue de Cappy et de l'Ecluse.

Emely. Med. Div de
Prem. class le Med Div.

Our work at this time was
divided between the 3rd & 2nd Divs.
Lasker had been promoted to
Directeur de S. d. & du Corps had been

replaced as Div of 3rd by Allain who became our firm friend. He is a splendid type. Has been through the campaign in Cameroun.

These days were rich in inspections. General Saddle of the 3rd came. It was really an honor to be proud of. So far as I know it is the first time a section in the field has been so inspected.

We were able after a very few days to largely extend our forward and soon we had posts very close up to the front trenches. Our little cars were perfectly able & were willing to do the work & after a little persuasion the authorities authorized us to go well up. This was very satisfactory as we felt we were not doing but a small part of what we could do.

I personally had a few good rides taking Rasoul about while he was showing his successor the section. In Elusim I got some good pictures

That post was a bad one & why some one did not go in the canal I fail to see.

Passing by a saucune about to take the air I asked & obtained permission to take pictures & obtained many good ones.

We took our "grub" (firstly with Castellon in the receiving room & later) with the sous. off. du train. Castellon was a very nice chap. He is for Int Harb Co & works at St Nazaire. A shell came right through his room one day but exploded in the hall so he was not touched. I always thought I was lucky not to have been there for as far as I could see the shell passed the place. I usually sat by very few inches.

The S. off. was in a cellar as about every thing else in the town. There we were safe from all but big ones. Most of the men were very nice. Burside who ministered to our wants we shall not soon forget. He was

always gay & always scared. If a shell fell near he would come back from the Kitchen which was above ground with great speed.

The marine in which we slept was hit every few days but the shells never hurt any one. Our room being at the back was never reached, indeed. The church only received two. The second on striking the tower exploded and a hail of slate all over the street & place.

One or two interesting stories we hear here. This is the first time I heard of the fact that for days after the Marine fired blank shells for the guns. They had no others - just to keep up a bluff shot off the practice ammunition. This story I have heard since from too many good & varied sources to doubt. One man told of conditions hard to believe now when it was forbidden to fire on the enemy except in an

attack. All day one could come & go in plain sight & no shot was fired. Only at night when attacks were made. Frequently the Germans came & offered to exchange goods & the French the same. The numerous acts of bad faith which are too familiar to need writing down soon brought about the present pitiless warfare where to show oneself is to be shot at.

One good story showing the Germans absolute blind obedience to duty is interesting.

In a "postscript" a corporal found by listening to the voices in the German post that he knew one of the men. He called out & the answer showed him to be right. In front of him was a German who had worked in Paris & with whom they had been very friendly. They came upon the parapet & had a long talk. When relieved the G. reported to his Colonel & was ordered to try to get the G. to desert so information could be got. Charged with that mission he on the following night called out

to his friend who answered that he
had reported the incident & was ordered
not to hold any more converse & to
shoot on sight. The Fr. said you would
not shoot an old friend - I am coming
over to see you. The Sn called back don't
show your self I must shoot. The Fr. did
not believe it possible & got upon the
parapet & was killed at once. Even
German these remarks on the story said
he would have disobeyed orders & shot that
his friend - This is a bit of another story.

About this time the Croix de
guerre began to come in. You got two
in the following terms.

2nd Div. Col. 2nd Corps 9 mai
Cité a l'Ordre de la Div. V. White Chef
de la Sec. San. Am. Nos. Le 3 mai 1916
Chargé d'évacuer des blessés d'un village
violément bombardé, a fait preuve de
sang froid, de courage et du plus beau
dévouement en chargeant rapidement
sa voiture et en la mettant aussitôt
en marche ne se souciant que de

soustraire ses blessés à de nouveaux
coups de l'ennemi

14 Corps d'Armée Col. Direction du Soc de S.

8 Mai 1916

Cite à l'ordre de la Div de Soc de S.

White Victor Conducteur

Engagé volontaire à la S.S.A.U.1
depuis avril 1915 a montré en toutes
circonstances beaucoup d'entrain, de
courage et de sang froid. S'est particulièrement
distingué lors de l'attaque allemande par
les gaz du 22 Avril, des bombardements de
Dunkerque et pendant les évacuations
des ports de l'Écluse et de Capry, Rev -
May - 1916

Campbell Joshua Conducteur

Engagé volontaire à la S.S.A.U.1
depuis Jan 1915 a montré en toutes
circonstances une calme imperturbable
et d'un absolu dévouement. A assuré
le service des évacuations depuis
le port de secours de l'Écluse

sous plusieurs bombardements dans les
conditions de rapidité parfaites et avec
un extrême souci du confort des blessés.

Mericourt became after a lot of work on
our part the kind of assistance sent us
by the Division in the form of a
lot of men one of our best planes. We
were really comfortable. I even
installed a little flower garden of
groffle taken from Cappy. Some was
with real regret that he left it
early in June to go to Sayonvillers.
He was very good. Well so all
rolled on. The preparations for a big
offensive which had been going on
for weeks now assumed a really
intense activity. Not a woods but
covered vast stores of shells. Trissy which
it seems is a point very hard to be reached
by the many shells became a vast
munition depot. In regular rows &
in all directions shells from 120 to 360
were placed. Soon the towns could no

longer hold the troops & entire division
took to the tents in the fields. The roads
were one long stream of camions
carrying every possible material.

The emblems on these sections
are interesting. Many very clever.
Each section of automobiles in the
army has a right to its emblem.

trucks

Elephants & rosters & swags are
favorites. One unusually clever one
is a monkey in a circle. He is suspended
from the upper part holding on by his
paws above & below looking at you
through the whole to speak. Another
is a nude with a helmet on her head
fading a shield to the new moon who's
completed circle encloses the
entire affair. Two bulls about to
fight is another good one.

Perhaps the most impressive
evidence of the fight to come is the
construction. From Hencourt - Sudancom
& Hartmanns are lines of narrow gauge
serving the entire front. Down to Perry

+ Chuignes + Goucaumont they go.
Wide gaug terminals are made at several
points + dozens of sheds + preparation
of every sort for the wounded. The
entire country is in a fever but a
well ordered one. Huge guns come up.
Several batteries are in B - 220 - 280
waiting for their emplacements to be
finished + it would be long. The Bosch
aeroplanes which used to come over
with little trouble are kept strictly in
bounds now. The seldom dare to cross
the lines. One I saw brought to earth.
It was a cruel + splendid sight. Just
like a hawk after a bird. Down swooped
the Bosch the gun just behind firing his
mit. They swept forward earth at a
terrible rate. It was impossible to
repress a yell of exultation + no
one wanted to either.

Amiens was our nearest large city
in the Somme. I had passed through it before
(in Jan 15) but this is the first time I had had
an opportunity to visit the cathedral. The exterior

is extensively protected & so marked by
piles of sand bags & wisely for the Aviators
got over once & a while & drop their nasty
bombs. I never had a really satisfactory look
about this ancient Picard town for on each
of the several occasions that took me in I
was busy shopping & getting a bath the greater
part of the time. The towns we worked through
here presented little interest. Our first
Mervillecourt is a cheaply built & unattractive
farming village & the same can be said of
Morcourt & Corisy. The interest in Cappy
was largely ruins though the almost unharmed
church is really a fine looking edifice. Bray
we scarce saw. It was occupied by the Eng.
the greater part of the time & so except for
hurry stops at the canteen we got no
sight of it. Proyart is scarce worth the
mention. Chassignolles another Mervillecourt
& Chassignolles another Cappy. This part of
the Somme is generally very uninteresting.
From the plateau on the forbidden road - which
we always used - of Proyart & Grossy a rather wide
view could be had which took in the German

positions & Dompierre & Gray & the
ruined sugar mill. One supremely
beautiful view is to be seen on the short
cut over the hill from Grouse to Capry. The
road skirts the top of the cliff thus paralleling
the canal road. This view I saw first one
morning just at sunrise and it was most
impressive. The extensive interlacing of
the Somme's many streams & the Canal
formed a various mirror which on the
morning stillness & hush caught & threw
back the image of the hills in softly
tinted radiance. Of woods there were
enough to accentuate it all and along
the edges of the plateau the lonely trees
here & there stood like sentinels, as though
they too were entranced by the morning's
feast of beauty. This is I must say the
only really splendid sight I saw in this
part of the country. Mericourt from a
distance presents an attractive picture which
is soon dissipated. The chateau of Mer-
is not bad though except for a fine tower
& portal scarce worthy of note. The ruined

Chateau at or near Fontaine la Cappe might have been worth while but there is not enough left now to give even a hint of its style. At Beaucourt the building is really attractive though very much renewed.

June 24

Harboursiders

This is my first visit to Harboursiders & probably the last as the 3rd moves to Bayonne tomorrow. There seems to be nothing of note in the town and the only interesting thing I see is a very attractive garden just door.

June 25th

Mons Lasnet decorated here today.

There are many & interesting changes in the troops. General Marchand who is in command of the 51st Cd has moved up to the north a bit. The famous 20th Corps (Gen. Balfour) which covered itself with glory at V. has come in & taken the sector just the other side of the Somme held by the English. Evidently it is felt best not to leave such a dividing line between the allies & one cannot but think it is right. This time I really believe the

British will prove true but so many
& cruel have been the deceptions that the
Fr. are justified in taking every precaution.

The famous Senegalese have come in. Each
Div. is to have a battalion. Fine soldierly
looking blacks they are. Real savages -
no error. The various slashes on their
faces are tube marks & some show their
name also. Each carries his knife (coupe
coupe) which they know how to use unless
rumor does them too much justice. In
conversation with one of their sous-chefs I
learned a little of them. They are recruited
from the villages. The head man simply
supplying as many. In ordinary times
there is an army of about 40,000. This
regular army has been terribly cut up
but kept filled in & even increased. As
a language they have almost none. About
200 words is all they use and for every
thing such as gun - horse - wagon & in
fact every object which they do not know
of except from civitation they use the French
words. The particular battalion attached to

The 3rd are largely veterans some having been in the early fighting in Belgium - the Marne & later in Gallipoli. D. May informant tells me that like all savage troops they are restless under shell fire if held inactive - in other words poor defensive fighters but hell as attackers. Once crossed they can not be recalled or held. They would kill their own officers if they attempted to stay them.

Several battalions of 20 + 80 came through & into the village some stay. Every thing seems almost ready. The Rps are pushed ahead at incredible speed.

9000 about the most interesting of the new troops are the Zouaves. Class 16 of the 3rd & 4th two companies of each. None young chaps they are. Having been with their regiments in Belgium I was able to tell them a lot of interest. It seemed so odd to thus reverse the usual order of things. These chaps had never been to the front & were as eager to hear all about it as we

used to be. For me to pose as a veteran
& tell them about things quite amused
me.

June 16th
(

Off for Paris with a car. Made a
very good trip. Stopped off a few moments
in Beauvais. Into our favourite patisserie
just for luck & the girl remembered our
uniform if not our faces. On by Pontoise
& then through Argenteuil to Neuilly.

June 20
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Back at Suresnes but not one to
meet me so shall spend the night
at the hotel & take the train to Guillaumont
tomorrow.

June 21st
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Back to Bayonneville & I fall into the
most terrible news. It is hard to
realize & more hard to understand. We
have received orders to go to Bar le Duc.
A more disgusted bunch would be hard to
find. Here for weeks we have been
watching the tremendous preparations go
on. We are all sure of being on the eve
of a great & victorious offensive &
here comes this order to chill all our

enthusiasm and make us feel it is scarce worth while. Every possible idea is expressed. Every opinion has its backer & most of us shift from one to another.

The most gloomy is that the army does not want us to be there in the big drive. Some feel it is the final realization of Andrews desire to have all the Sections in the same army. That seems most likely though why it should come to a point just at this moment is hard to realize. At least we have convincing proof that neither the ~~Head~~ nor the Corps want to see us go. Cassel does all he can. Telegrapher G. C. G. & Sam Sadell even gives us an order not to move while he makes an attempt to have the order changed.

The Soc. Automobile is however as we learn with sorrow quite independent.

They can give & take as well. Their duty is to furnish autos when & where needed and the General of an army can not control the coming & going.

This is of course wise & best as it permits

the service to be apportioned to the best advantage but just now we wish it could be otherwise. Another interesting thing I learn is that the S.C.S., from whence come all orders, does not officially & probably in any way know the exact location of the sections. From the S.C.S. we are as an example sent to the 6th Div^{ce}. There the Sec. ants. of the army attach us to a corps & the corps to a Div^{ce} so far the S.C.S. we might be doing evacuation work at Amiens or Vil Breit. That seems together with the kind & sincere attempts of the Corps to keep us to sweep away all possibility that our precious skins are being protected and so gradually we are resigned to fate and there is less talk of quitting at once. Personally I have determined to wait & see. Leaving the Div^{ce} we felt we were being badly used but in the end were pleased & perhaps some such good luck may again smile on us. Bar le D. means Verdun probably. Nothing we can get will repay

the offensive we might have followed here but if we have good ports we will not at least feel we are not trusted when it comes to the pinch. I don't believe that anyway. My memories of Everingham are too fresh. All is bustle getting packed.

June 22
()

745 we got under way. M^r. Allan came there to bid us farewell and I was sincerely sorry to part with him. May some good stroke of luck throw us together once again! The convoy went on as far as the fork of the St Quentin & Mouldedien roads & there we waited for the Lint to come back from the park with orders. One more look of the choir at the Cathedral.

Picardie is not beautiful but will be regretted all the same. By the good luck of having Le Blond ride with me I was detached from the convoy & drove ahead with him so as to arrange meals etc & have all ready by the time the convoy arrived. We stopped off a moment at Moricourt to have

a glass of coffee in the cafe and to say Bonjour to the ladies. They are really very charming those ladies. So to call them is no abuse of the term.

Their conversation is most refreshing & I shall always feel grateful for the pleasure their mere presence gave me in March when I was rather glum.

Soon we were on the route again. At many places we saw large preparations for wounded & material & it was just an added bit of sadness to think of all we were leaving behind. We would have stopped for lunch & had it in the same hotel we stopped at on our way from Jaulzy to Reims in March.

Cochin was to stop for the night. Leaving Mont-our first place of importance was Pont St Maxence. Then we took the wrong road & went toward Verberie instead of direct route to Senlis. It was not a great detour however & soon we got back on the main route into Senlis.

The gain of this unhappy tour I had

already seen in the Crepy days but
after all these months & after all I had
heard the sight still held its element
of novelty. Bombarded villages & cities
I am used to but this beautiful &
wealthy town systematically burned
to avenge a fancied wrong is a very
terrible proof of the fact that ^{the} ~~Nazi~~ is
no misnomer. Down the long street
with ruin & desolation on every hand.
Not far beyond Senlis lies Compiègne where
we arrived well ahead of the convoy
& had all arranged. The town is very
attractive. A Grand Chateau now
the property of the League d.N. & used as
a home for its members. The place
very picturesque, perched on the hill
side below the Chateau with many
ancient & attractive buildings. Gimp & I
& I walked up to see as much as we
could of the Chateau. Not much to be sure.
More man is evidently strictly excluded.
For the first time in months & months
we got belched in rooms. Mine in a

very decent though old hotel.

June 23rd

Off from Ecouin just before 8 o'clock. At one time not far on the route we were only 12 Kilom from Paris and it was not because I did not want to that I did not turn the wheel & run it in for a few moments. From the 12 Kilom point we soon turned our back directed on good old Paris & bowled quickly along the Nevers route. Just a glimpse at the Cathedral in passing & without stop on we went toward our arranged destination stop Chateau Thierry. At Fierbois we came well into the valley of the Marne & into the beautiful country that at almost every turn in the road gives us the happiest emotions. Vines on the hillsides flowers at every cottage. Truly this is a country blessed & cursed. Blessed by nature & cursed by the Germans. To get to Chateau T. was like home coming for me though I had only been there once before. (I ran then with a civil malade from Cetry once) He marched out the same

little hotel where I lunched so well
on the previous occasion but could
not make arrangements. He soon
found a place just outside town however.
The hour or so I had to wait I spent in
wandering through the market etc. Soon
the others began to wander in & then
lunch & off once more. Chalons 5:15
was our next stopping place & this for the
night. He came fast ahead with only a
moment's stop at Epemay. The country
is perhaps less beautiful than here but
still fine. At Chalons we put up the
tent down by the river. Between the canal &
the river and were very well fixed. Even if
it rains we will be OK. A fine swim in
the river - good dinner & now for
bed. The Cathedral is very interesting
looking with a most unusual facade.
I shall have to read up on it to find
the reason for this apparent ambiguity.

Off once more on the road by 8. Stopped
at Vitry le Francois for a coffee in a

June 24th

came on the place where the Krouprince
was making his famous address to the
troops when news came of the defeat of
the "Mame" & he stopped the oration to
rush back as fast as possible & just
escaped capture. The cathedral here is
somewhat the same as that of Chalons. I am
much interested in the type. Here the facade
terminates in a most unusual arch
broken at its inception. A few moments
of leg stretching & we were off.

At Digne we made lunch &
had time to wander about the town a bit.
Largely a manufacturing place now though
of Roman origin & having an honorable
history. "Bragarade" is the name of the
natives from "Brave gars" as they were
called when they fought so nobly
for the French King against Charles V.
A very fine statue decorates the place & is
emblematic of the siege.

On to Bar le D. after lunch.
Here we waited just at the entrance of
the town for a long while & at last received

orders to proceed here to Vél. We have a really very picturesque encampment. Our big tent. Two marabout tents & the Kitchen tent also the abode of the French men. We are in a state of wonderment as to what we are to do. See 2 of hatred or rather scorned memory is in B le D & we wonder about our fate. Ah well —

June 25

Well we have started off in working any way. Last night about 11 an order came to get under way. Great was the bustle for a half an hour. He expected nothing so little as a call but in spite of that a half hour saw us all on the road. The Frenchman & only he the destination & he being quite new to the sector did not know just what kind of work it was. To me the impression was very interesting. It felt really good to be off evidently on an urgent mission. Through B le D & on & on we went. Our only clue was the illuminated signs

of Verdun & an arrow pointing
at us. On & on we went seeming to
be climbing ever up for miles & miles.
It was very interesting really thus
going on through the night not knowing
whether it was to be a post of danger &
a quiet one but always & ever drawing
closer to that magic place Verdun. The
guns, very distant, drew closer & closer &
several times huge red flares lit the
horizon. One expected to be disposed by
a huge explosion but none came. It
was probably the reflection of the liquid
fire of the Germans or the burning up of
a depot of powder. At last we reached
our post which turned out to be
Lemmes a distance enough from the
front & a very tame denouement to the
long & interesting ride. Just about day
break we were all loaded with "gassed"
men. The Germans had been using this
their favorite method of murder very
frequently, & in spite of the masks many
were the victims. I only spoke to a few

and they seemed to have either received a bad dose before they could get the masks on or the eye places were pierced or defective. That latter seems to be a real danger. Back over the same road by day light was more informing but scarce more interesting. We found that we were on the famous "Voie sacrée" & plenty of traffic there was but nothing like the exaggerated descriptions one hears. It was very inspiring all the same to see be on that route over which really the best & bravest of France have gone many never to return & never to be brought back maimed or dead. The officer in charge of the motor transport told the Germans that he had transported to the front one million & a half of troops since the offensive began in Feb & had brought back one million. The other third either stay or are prisoners or have come back in the ambulances as wounded. This sounds tremendous but when one knows the rule that a

division stays at the front untill
60 to 50% of its effectors are
lost it is said to be very probable.

He got back without mishap &
discharged our burdens & the Gent
received very nice praise for the
promptness with which the work was
done. Also he informed him that he was
sorry to call on us for such work as he knew
it was not our type but that a good part of
the front would soon be ours. Therefore we are
much pleased & filled with hope. Our camp
is really very fine here -

June 26th

Once again we were called out last night.
This time to Augny but first I must record the
information which Andrew & Doc Bros
spread about the place. They visited us
yesterday and had spent the previous
night with section 8 at Augny. Both
were all tired out because the German
curtain fire of 380's just outside the village
made sleep impossible. The village itself
was subject to fire. Several of the autos of

No 8 were shattered and in fact
Dugny was as near hell as any earthly
place could be.

When we drew in this a.m.
about 5 o'clock we were expecting most
any thing but only found a typical "back
of the front village" full of ambulances
& wounded & sick. Lasige who is in the
No 8 said he knew of none of the prisoners
Andrew spoke of. Every day, 350 or so shells
320 or 80 fall just outside of town near
the station but it seemed to be a very safe
place. The new section was a sad wreck.
Half the cars have been in accidents & one
or two are badly smashed. It made us
bad to think of putting out all four new
cars with a lot of green men. Just a waste
of material - However. We did not have
very long before we loaded up & started
back. I hated to be doing this work while
See & had post work but we had our assurance
& so swallowed the pill. See & on the
other hand were frankly & heartily anxious
for relief. They have a stomach full

No wonder. A lot of green men with
a green leader can not expect to have
the ability & spirit needed. One or two
had to go back. One was a Sussex survivor
& so should not be blamed though with
the others as far as I know it was pure
yellow. Our Sussex man Culbertson
seems to have as good a nervous system
as anyone on earth.

June 28th

Orders today were to move tomorrow
then a new order to move at once. Half
the section had gone in to Bath for a bath
and a hurry call was sent for them.
Great activity and an early & cold lunch
& we were off. Here at Augoy we find
we are to replace the S.S. & work with
our own No 8 which does not please us.
I feel that they are green & badly
organized & so unable to do the work
they should so we will suffer from their
faults. On the other hand if they do earn
any glory we don't want to share in
it preferring to make our own. Our billets

good & the sector seems easy to learn
so all goes well.

29th

Got my first glimpse of Verdun last night
& this morning. During the night four of
us. Woodworth - Kewer - Bayless & myself got
a call for wounded at the crossroads of
Moulmouille & the Ex Etain route. I
had a general idea of the place & as the others
had none off I started intending to skirt
Verdun. By going too far however I led
the way into the Port Neuf & through the
city & out of the Port Chausse where we were
on the Etain route. It was dark going through
& so saw almost nothing. Then started
the hunt for the crossroads and it proved a
hard one. On & on we went asking questions
until at last we came to the Cabaret where
several Sec 8 men were. They did not know
the place at all & one even assured me
there was "no such animal". He assured
me it was death or almost to go ahead
that the road was dangerous & all sorts
of stuff. Getting no help from them I looked

at the map and saw I must be right &
went on preceded by my misinformant
who evidently had business ahead.
He passed plenty of dead horses & shell
holes. I began to think he was right but
the order was there. Stopped at a cross
road to consult Moody & B. (Hewer
by this time had disappeared and I
decided it was useless to wait for him)
Just then a big one landed in the field
near by & coupled with the misinformant's
croakings it seemed a good warning so
we decided to consult further at another
point & went on. Soon we met the
chap again who had reached his limit
& was going back. Once more he croaked
about "full view of Bosch" Gerendus
ahead & what not. It was a quandary.
Only solution was to leave the auto &
go ahead on foot which I did finding
the indicated cross roads not 300
yards beyond. There were however no
wounds & after waiting a while &
yelling my lungs out went back to the

machines + we all started back. The day was now quite well advanced + showed the ravages of the shelling. Hoods on both sides slipped start to their trunks.

Narrow gauge ~~are~~ destroyed about every 30 feet + road very bad with a punctuation of bad smelling dead horses. He spaced out on the way back + regained Cabaret without incident. Here we found Lewis had not yet showed up so sending A + B back the short way - by the route we should have come. I went back through V. glad of the chance of seeing the place by daylight. I found some accident to Lewis + was right. Happily not a shell - only a ~~series~~ wheel. Verdun presents an aspect ~~in some~~ streets little short of ~~horrors~~. In fact I find it hard not to call it horrors. One street for several hundred feet is a complete wreck + beyond that most of the houses have received something but on the whole the city has suffered less than I expected - but how ugly. It is of no importance and

the troops can & do go around & rather than through it to reach the front. Just another case of the German method of warfare.

July 30th

Last night was one of the most interesting of my life though not very exciting. I was just turning in when a call came to get a Comdt at the famous Moulmoull. Grand Bowman's turn it was but he did not know it so I went with him. Every thing was quiet enough through Belknap but when we got into the Caseris & near the Gaubourg Pavé the noise started up. It was stupendous. They were sending a "tir de barrage" of huge extent over the hill. From every point of the landscape the sharp stabs of light jumped forth. From far & near came the flashes & crashes. In we went to just beyond Cabaret where we were stopped & had to await the battery of 75's which happened to be shooting just over the road. I ran ahead into the battery to find how long would

have to wait & got there just about time
it stopped. Back to the machine & on. The
next battery seemed as bad but a team of
horses was passing & no one was in the
road to warn so on we went. The air
displacement positively bowls one over &
the noise cannot be measured. 8 guns
firing at head neck sped about 12 ft away
can be counted on to raise some row.

We arrived at the place after going in one
hole & getting pushed out. Dr. Plancard
we found but the wounded had not arrived.
For half an hour we were able to watch
& listen. It was superb. At one moment
signals flew up. Brights which burst into
triangles of green & red balls. I had scarce
said "I suppose that is cease fire when
though it would have seemed impossible
the speed redoubled. The air over our head
was one long screech of the big shells
coming from about a belown back. They
made a queer ripping noise as they passed
over the crest of the hill at what must
have been a very low level. Now our

charges came. The 4 gallon had had his
leg cut off by a 77. It hit him before
exploding and by a queer coincidence
at the very place we were waiting to
take him - comforting - I began to
think of the German reply to all this
which would come as soon as the 4
guns ceased and wondered if we
would get out. There did not seem to be
much chance of it & I felt pretty
happy. Have been feeling thus indeed
ever since the 19th. Before that for
several weeks I had a premonition of
death. Perhaps my luck would have
been bad in the Somme. Now I am
my old self & am ^{sure} Captain I won't get it.
In spite of that I & all of us regret the
Somme where the glorious start has been
made & where the ground we know so
well has become the map of the world
for the moment.

On the way back we
were treated to a very impressive display
of fireworks. Evidently the depot of

signal rockets of a regiment had been
lit for in a huge flame lighted the hill
top & from it shot in all directions the
signals that used would have called
down about all the shells on earth on
the heads of the Germans. As much as I
could keep my head turned from the
road I watched this display but soon the
descending road gave us other things to think of.

That sacré batterie was going full blast
right across the road and it did not look
good. I walked ahead & nearly got blown down.
Could see well enough that the guns were
pounded to high to get me but the blasts
of air & the sparks about ended me any
way. At last I saw the pointer standing
in the road between the guns & to him I
made my way. No passing for 6 min. and
as his post was safe I borrowed some
cotton & watched the fun. Thoughts of
shells that explode prematurely as they
leave the cannon's mouth & exploding
pieces were in my mind but nothing
happened & soon I was told O.K. & off we

went. The poor Comdr died on the way. Poor fellow. 55 & a fine chap he looked. No sooner in than a call came for me & off I went. At Cabaret I found several of the fellows in a serious mood looking at Edwards car which seemed to have been hit by two shells. At any rate his front wheel was smashed & punctured. Plenty of holes in his side box & a big one through the body. He had a lucky escape & though a bit shaky went on in fine shape. I tried to arrange for him to get the first call in hope I went off myself to Bellone. While coasting along over the hill came a car which proved to be Edw. At this time plenty of shells were bursting about the farm & I admired Edw's control. Shall certainly tell the Genl & hope he gets a citation.

A call came for Cabaret with advice to stop some 200 meters away as the place was being shelled. Culbertson & I

July 14

got the call. As I drew near could see no signs of a blizzard or any transcarriers on the road & as one of our cars was before the Cabaret it seemed to be the thing to do to go on. On we went. Shelling they were but nothing very terrible. 100's were coming in on the hills both back & front & some men had been killed but the reason for the message did not appear.

July 3rd

Today for the first time I learned the true meaning of the phrase one reads at times that "Devant les horos de Verdun on a le desir de se mettre à genoux". It seemed to me exaggerated before but now I have seen & felt & understood. The remains of a regiment came through Dugny. Poor devils fresh from the front positions. Wet - muddy & dead dead tired but with a really sublime air about them. Tired they were, & many were slightly wounded but unbroken. A few had dazed expressions seemed still to be seeing the horrors they had

lived through. Horrors they are too. Here
are no well organized positions. Sheltered
bryans & protected cayna. The front line
is simply a series of shell holes. Into them
the men go at night & fight from one to
another organizing each hole as best they
can. The really terrible tor de carnage
get them often going in & make the
food & water supplies when once we
very dubious & the evacuation of the
wounded perilous & often impossible.
I have carried men who have been
wounded 6 days. Isolated in some
hole covered by the enemy they have
had to lay there & hope for a change in the
positions to release them. Most men
are hungry having had nothing but
the canned stuff they carried in to eat &
often having lacked time to eat that or
been unable to for lack of water. Smoke
has been an unknown solace & even
now those who would cannot buy
tobacco for there are no cigarettes to
be had for 50 Kilom. The joy I had

in distributing all I had of cyanide
to these fellows was one of the greatest I
have enjoyed. Mr Hong little imagined
the immense good his 500 fr would do.
Only too soon all were gone & no more to
be had - then with more of his
generous gift I bought chocolate & with
the help of the other fellows distributed
to all that passed. The eagerness with
which they took it & the almost unnumbering
thanks received were pathetic. Truly we
can put ourselves on our knees before
these men. I look at you & feel almost
ashamed of my easy life. How can
a young Frenchman who from his
safe ambushed spot looks on this
passing party feel like a cur.
May the rewards of martyrs go to these
men - they deserve it.

July 4th

Last night took me to our most
interesting post. Fort Pavannes. The road
I knew but not the fort & it is really
good luck that nothing happened. The

Germans were giving the place a little attention in the shape of shrapnel as I got in. Arrived at the Fort & no living soul was in sight. In I went & across a bridge that seemed none to sure. Into the tunnel & then started a hunt for the post. The two DPs who came up with me to rejoin their post were as much lost as I for they had been absent 10 days & the interval had seen great changes in the shape of wreckage in the fort. They started off to find someone & as they did not return after about 10 min. I started off on a hunt of my own. The rather lively shelling now was interesting all falling outside the fort where my path mostly lay so I was OK. At last found a door & a man who however seemed very disinclined to go find the "Major" but he indicated my route which lay through the tunnel & then over a huge earth pile well shell torn. It looked like a bad place to walk and I half expected to go over the crest into Germany but

found instead a hole in the earth
which led into subterranean workings.
Here I wandered about & at last found a
trancardier who directed me back over my
path & down a twisting stairway which
made me think of the Princes in the Tower
& across the moat & into another part of
the fort where I found the man & also
that there were no wounded to take so
back & off I went with no further incidents
regarding Cabaret about dawn.

July 5th

Tavannes again today though it
was darker & rainy. I took several
photos & hope for the best.

Carried an artillery man who is
the only survivor of his gun equip, a 380
having fallen sq. on his piece.

July 7th

Took the Med Div (4 salms) St Pol of the
127 & Med Chef of S. B. D. La Chappelle in to
Bar le D today. There the Div treated
us to an excellent lunch & then on to
Tannois where the div. a part of it is

in repos. It is a charmingly located village.

July 8th

Off on my first run just about sun down + going down the hill into Belray was treated to a splendid sight. All the commanding hills from Dancowood to Vaux + the main ones were enveloped in black clouds of really sinister aspect. Verdun itself on the edge of it all was bathed in the last glow of the setting sun. Its radiance was almost supernatural set off as by the thunderous background. It seemed to be symbolic and I could not but be hugely impressed. The morning's work took me to the Ballen of Mardi Gras - One of the outworks of Gavannes. From it a fine view of Lanfric is to be had. What desolation. Against the rising sun thou poor bare stumps + limbs of trees seem the very essence of desolation.

July 11th
12th

A 5.30 call for Casem Chauvet started off
28 hours very interesting work. The guns
were going at break neck speed. Fauri who
called me asked if I did not notice gas in the
air. I noticed a smell but thought it only
the powder odor held & carried by the fog.
Once on the hill climbing past Belrupt
a wonderful & terrifying spectacle met
the eyes. The craters of Souvillet & surrounding
were covered with a dense cloud of smoke
& the flashing of the shells all along
was continuous. One would have said a
long volcano. Men passed wearing
these masks & a queer sight these new
masks are. One sign called to me to
put mine on. I stopped the car & got it
ready by me on the seat but common
sense told me that as I had left the
valley & was going up the hill there was
less danger ahead than behind. Soon
I saw an officer unmasked & so felt
comfortable. It was I must admit a
queer feeling. Patches of fog here &
there made one wonder if perhaps they

did not contain the deadly mixture. Some there was in the air surely for head & eyes felt it but the worse had gone & the wind now blowing softly toward the Bosch relieved our mind of all danger. Easily found the post. While waiting saw a G. man have a close shave & when I laughingly called out to him as he passed that he had not been missed by much he yelled back something unintelligible but in no very gay mood.

The Germans have been attacking fiercely against Souda all day it seems. We have been busy fighting steadily. Hundreds are ~~being~~ slightly. The G. SS working last night lost one man upon the Gavannes road. He walked ahead when his car got stalled & has never been heard of. In the outrage at Fourelles (apparently of Kauffert) one man told me about 50 men were caught in the caves by the gas while asleep & could not be awakened. In addition to the

dense waves the Germans are using they have a new shell which exploding with very slight force in the air allows gas to descend to earth. By this means last night they in the absence of any breeze put a big cloud in the valley around Cabani. The Dr had to work for 6 hours with mask on. It seems to be a very effective weapon. On calm nights one may run into a cloud makes bad of apparent danger. What with this and the lacrymogenic war is surely becoming complicated. Several of the fellows are experiencing the same feelings of disgust & hatred of such cruel methods as I ~~did~~ last year in April at the start of it all. Now I must admit to being hardened. It does not raise the resentment it did so spontaneously. I have to think of it & see some poor boy choking to death as I did today before I can get mad. Poor chap. a stupid looking peasant, built like an ox but who will be dead in a few hours

from a most horrible death by suffocation. Several of the cars got peppered in the night's work but no one hurt though Townsend got a little piece which did not have the force to penetrate his legging.

The port de S is in the church & was a busy place these past 24 hours. This section carried 900 & the other sections from other ports probably as many. Surely a church never saw more suffering. May it help to ease it.

Tomorrow we follow the div en rups. Would be sorry to leave if did not feel that it may reach the Somme for us. The Div is a good one and will surely not be long idle.

On the whole our days at V. have been very interesting and if in the end we reach the Somme I for one will not regret the trip. It has been fine to see all these places that have been but names to this time. From the God of Burgundy one evening I saw the entire

panorama. From the Col de Poivre to
Damloup. There is an impression
never to be forgotten about these hills.
One stands & sees & hears & is awed by
it all. Then go the guns - there burst
the shells on those very hills that have
seen these past four months the
greatest fight of all time. Once fully
so small before it all & yet before one
also feels it is small. Surely not
greater but smaller have produced
this awful crime.

Before closing this period I
must not forget to record the pleasant swimming
in the Meuse. Pleasant & necessary for
it was the only relaxing medium we had.
Swift current made it hard to do much more
than plunge in & upstream & then strike back
for shore but it got one clean - that was the
great thing.

Writing so much I forget whether
or no I have written of the village. There is
little to write except of the church where
the ambulance was installed. Dating back

to Roman times or at least Roman influences as shown by its wooden tower according to Fardieu. Humbert the senator has a chateau also in the village. very beautiful grounds but in all not remarkable.

One thing about the soil which seems to be good in these times its habit of absorbing shells. The first one I saw fall near at the Moulins road I ducked expecting the usual shower but none came. Since then I have noticed that seldom were there any of these ugly whizzing off throwing. Unlike the sands of Belgium the soil appears to hold back the pebbles. On the slopes of the Grotte du Fau are many 380 holes. They are among the most picturesque I have seen. Apparently the shells were timed to penetrate to great depth before exploding so when they did they threw up vast amounts of clay which is spread in smaller particles over a great radius. In the holes huge masses of it which at

first glance would seem to be
boulders.

July 13th

Good bye to Dargy for how long one
does not know. There is always in these
partings some little sadness. No matter
how uncomfortable or unhappy or busy
or what not one has been there is always
a regret. These villages are subject to so
many happenings. One one had turned
& it may now be seen the same way.
However we are off in this train & mud
which is indeed preferable to the dust.
Just at the last moment while indeed
drawn up in car & waiting for the
whistle to start I was able to gladden the
tired hearts of a company of the train with
the cigarette Madame P. had sent in
the mail to me. 90 Bar le D over
the "voie sacrée" & through it straight
on to Farnois the same charming
little village where the elab map of
the 127th still wait. Lunch we had
in a farm - cold lunch provided by

our own cook. Here we had much
sport with a little girl who became
really enamored of Paul & so I
offered to marry them. She is a bright
little girl & Paul lending
himself to the game with just enough
reluctance to make it fun we had
a wedding & a feast & all sorts
of things. Soon after we moved
just out of town into one of the
most charming valleys I have
seen. What a joy to see such a place.
Small enough to be intimate, large
enough to give space & our full a
cold rapid flowing brook. We can
stay here forever & it seems without
boredom. All are delighted to have
found such a gem of an encampment.
It will probably not be for very
long either for the div will no
doubt soon receive its reinforcements
& be on the move - So the
Somme are all hope.

In Bar L D. today for a

15 bn

Shopping tour & met a chap just back from V. who had had news of German advances & part of Souville taken - the Meuse dammed & up to the passers & all sorts of calamity. Let us hope it is not serious as it seems.

16th

Call to Haut le Grande - where a treat to climb the long hill which forms one side of our valley & see the beautiful hilly country. It is impossible to realize one is so close to war while gazing on all this calm beauty. The long road from the hill crest down is a constant down grade & a continuous turning. The forest is thick & low & it is an incessant opening of new vistas with open cultivated spots at rare intervals. It is beautiful -

17

Orders to move first with the div & then to another. We are disgusted. The lot of the Wandering Jew seems ours now. Here at Evry we find ourselves attached to the 16th Corps 32 div. The town

is dull & dirty. For me its only interest is that it is in Argonne where I have never been before. One splendid sight we passed on the way - The village of Soumelles. Burned by the Boches in 1914. Here a woman's breast were cut off and nailed to her door & her children murdered. The Boches were drunk & savage. Now amid the ruins are little wooden structures. Part of the walls of the old house forms part of the new. A pile of stones being all that is left of some houses the new is built on and here still close to the front have the inhabitants returned & lost up their tasks again now made hard by death & tragedy. It is an inspiring & symbol of France this.

22th

Left Givry just after lunch & now have fine encampment in part of chateau. Not up to G. but still very fine. Our table is beneath a really majestic alley of pines. The town has a church which

to all appearances is very old & boasts a
van Dyke. More or less original I presume as
the Boche were here 8 days. One street of
the town is a complete wreck with marks of
shells about the park etc. The remaining houses
have not suffered however. The blonde into
whom grace the Zouave does his best to urge
his way is it seems the heroine of the village.
During the bombardment she was severely
wounded in the arm and her mother
who stood by her side was killed. Her
head being taken off. Mlle. Zouave seems
to have suffered no real harm however
for she dispenses thousands of papers daily
with a bright smile & the picture of health.
She recounts the German occupation very
interestingly. One night her father was
forced to go about the town to cry that all
the inhabitants would be shot if any of
them fired on the G. soldiers etc. There
were & seems no atrocities. The medical
attention they gave her was of the best
& kindest only act that was not quite
honest was their forcing her on her

worst condition to sign a paper the
purpose of which she was too ill to
know nor does she to this day.

Last night the division gave a performance
for the officers & men. From its men
alone it was quite interesting there being
among the soldiers many artists of
merit. One violinist & a couple of
comedians were excellent. The singing of
folk song La Gouloussienne was about
the best of the numbers & carried over back
of heart these troops of the night might
put in the trenches they were plenty in
their singing. We were forced to
make a contribution which was very
poor. One of the men blacked up &
danced a jig & sang Tipperary while we
back of the stage sang the chorus. The
Com. almost insisted on that as they think
Tipperary the Eng. patriotic air & see no
difference between the Eng. & ourselves.
The funniest thing about our contribution
was this morning when a soldier came

and clapped me on the back & inquired
if it was I who had appeared "disguised
as an American" When I thought of that black
clown face it seems rich. I shall here
also record that other would be compliment
a Frenchman gave Americans. He was
commenting on our fine equipment etc & I
told him if he wished to see real ^{& the datums}
& luxury he should visit the Eng section
in the same village. He ^{was} ^{very} ^{pleased} ^{to} ^{see} ^{me} ^{and} ^{the} ^{Eng} ^{section}
certainly. He me said plus de beaux chose
que vous autres. Ces américains sont plus
femmes. Ils sont trop ^{de} ^{la} ^{bonne} ^{nature} ^{et} ^{ils} ^{ont} ^{un} ^{bon} ^{coeur}
blanc leurs dents et leur mains sont les
vôtres." I should like to repeat that to some
Eng men but perhaps they would not see
the funny side. What a place. But
must be to a lot of these men.

But to get back to the show.
After all perhaps the greatest interest was
before not behind the foot lights. The
audience all soldiers. Seats for the officers
the men seated & laying all about on
the grass. Possibly 2000 in all. The corner

of the park chosen to stage the affair
found a sort of natural show place.
On three sides surrounded by trees.
The stage - a wooden platform raised
high up on four huge "pinard tonneaux". The
lights were of acetylene & good. Sitting or
lying about every where till bitten up all the
trees. That gave a most picturesque touch
for each time one of the dozens & dozens lit
a cigarette & threw his face into incandescent
light. This happening every few moments
all about was very odd & the effect of fire
like glow worms moving about among
the branches might have been put there
for effect. The trees themselves were beautiful.
Those far back appeared blood by contrast
with the lighted stage as dark & gloomy
cliffs. Mysterious they seemed & brooding.
Those close were thrown into such clear
relief that they seemed to out do nature
in delicate tracery. Perhaps however
it was in great part the sentiment.
The thought of it all. Of seeing
soldiers so near the front & comparing

all the mummy with the hard
realities soon to be thrust upon them.

The park is owned & seen
by a brother of Paul Poincaré.

Aug 7

Left Briançon about noon & instead of
going into the Argonne as we all thought
and has been expected the div is going in
the other direction & we will before many
days no doubt be in V. once more. The
last days at V. were all the same story.
No incident save a visit over to Les Islettes
where we expected to go. The town is about all
gone & as subject to daily bombardments.
A house was still burning as we went
through. On way back we went in along the
famous Metz - Paris route to St Menchould.
Regions of Louis XVI & much of the history
of France flashed through my mind as we
whirled along. Poor Louis he might have
escaped had he had an auto - but probably
to greater misery & crime. Now that it is
all over is perhaps best as it is. Back

we came through (Passenavant?)
where in 1870 - (Aug) 49 French prisoners
of war were murdered by the Prussians
because a shot was fired at them - no one
ever found by whom. A statue was erected
to their memory and this time when the
Prussians passed in 1914 they mutilated
the statue. Off they knocked his head
arm & broke the inscription so today
it stands more than ever a finger of
 scorn for them. Here at Vandœuvre there
is no work either. The town is quite
completely wrecked. We saw a stately
ford near by where rivers flows mostly
wild boars -

Aug 10th

The entire country seems to have
suffered. Yesterday through I seen Barrois
Rouppé le Petit, Rouppé le Chat to
Reims and all these towns are more
than half in ruins. Rev. shows however
great activity. Signs point the way through
piles of ruins to little towns newly
built where trade goes on as usual

Good courage for they need it & luck for they deserve it these brave shopkeepers mostly women who go on & on & on.

Our forest home is very fine.

I have a little tent up against a pile of wood where I am very cozy. Our kitchen is installed at the house of the Forestier. Sanglier there are in plenty & those who have had the energy have been out at night to get them but though they have seen plenty have had no luck at bringing them in. In a few days off on perm. I go - Gave Mieux - when I get back hope to find the section as usual -

And I did - but first to write of coming back.

Aug 20

Last night got to the Gare d'Est about 11.40 only to find the midnight had been suppressed so I went back home & up early this a.m. to get the 8 o'clock. Arrived at Bar le Duc without incident & then had to hunt for a way to get back to the section. At the park was told that the

sition was at Billefont instead of
Landrécourt as had been directed from
Paris. An auto projectum was going up my
way so they put me on and by great good
luck when we reached their destination
Culbertson came by with Le Blond + so
I got back. We are in a so called Chateau
which is really a very fine house with
huge dining room + kitchen + plenty of
room for us all. It was great good luck
getting it really. An Etal Major was here a
week or so ago it seems but was killed
out. Several hits were made in the yard
so as a result there are no windows left.
The barns have also been partially destroyed
but the house except for the said windows
is intact. We have solemnly promised the
authorities to keep our cars hidden beneath
the trees and not to run out in convoy +
so the place is ours. It seems to have a
German faint for though its inhabitant was
a Frenchman he was the managing
director of the Site Anonyme des Fours
à Chaux de Billefont a German

owned affair. It seems remarkable that an enterprise owned by Germans should have been allowed in such a place. Commands a perfect view of Verdun & all the surrounding hills & might very conceivably have been used under many circumstances to help an invader. When one thinks of that house in Coxgde with its solid concrete foundation, supposed to be the work of a houseless crafter but found to be a gun emplacement and on the unique point commanding Dunkerque; one is very leery about such things. All those vast concrete so-called tunnels counts about Paris also.

The house is sad. More so than a badly wrecked one in some ways. The rooms contain little signs of a happy family life - children's toys and books. Girls' articles & so on. It makes one feel blue in seeing the present desolation - garden gone wild but still filled with flowers among them a few of my favorite *monarda*.

The squad has only been

working here one day so I have missed
but little. Went up to see the post tonight
though fortunately am not on duty. We
go through Porte Neuve out Porte Chausée
& to the Casernes Marceau just back of
Souville getting the evacuation from
Stenay. Rather a lively place. The shell
destruction is just the same old story.
Trucks stopped - not a foot of earth
untouched. One old battery emplacement
is really remarkable. The Germans got
the range a few weeks ago & simply
smothered them. The ~~men~~ got out with
their guns after great effort but left lots of
material. It seems to have been left but
yesterday with rifles standing ready &
shells prepared to load. A good many
men were buried here as usual in the
shell holes & entombed by the shells & buried
again. While at the post the Germans
evidently made an attack for the "mits"
started followed by the grenades & then a
very lively tir de b- which hurt my
ears coming as I do from 6 days quiet

in Paris.

No one has got hit though some had funny experiences. Rathrop was misdirected by the gendarmes on his first trip & got through a fearful road no one knows how. Jones who followed was his fortunate & spent the night in a shell hole. He says "The shells were coming in, not very close you know but I did not know how close & the kept it up and I was not ashamed to admit it I prayed & ran like hell for shelter but there was none so I thought if I was to be found dead it had best be on my car & came back" He was killingly funny but all the same for a new man (it was his first taste of shell fire) it must have been very rough.

An old Chasseur d'As - who was "lison" I presume in one of the regiments of the 37th Div came in slightly wounded & with a great story. He was in a shell hole four

days ago which was captured by the
Sikhs & there he stayed they not
offering him anything to eat at all.
Thought the Gr advanced & took the
hall. Just before the Gr. left two came
back to kill him but he managed to
dispatch them with his knife & the
Gr brought him in. He was quite
cheerful & in going off called to
Francis - "à la prochaine."

21st

Got called last night away as
a result of that little attack. Only made
two trips. Last one a Gr shell struck
a Gr powder depot (loose) some
where near the road & I went up with
a flare that made every thing as
distinct as day. Thought at first it was
liquid fire. According to report the S.
attacked the Gare de l'Est but the Gr
welcomed them with such a good shower
of grenades that they lost about 600 or
grat. Gr loss 168.

It is very pleasant to sit

here & hear the row. They put
a few shells over our way once &
awhile but not too near for enjoyment.
The view across the valley of D. &
Souville & the casernes is fine. Have
taken picture & only hope it turns out.

Verdun

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