

My dearest Effie,

30th SEPT. 1918.

Once more an opportunity presents itself, for me to continue with little episodes of our doings.

In my last letter I mentioned to you, that we had pulled out for a rest, to a village called COCQUEREL, and although we had to carry on with the usual routine, of feeding and grooming our chevats, each afternoon we devoted to sport. Being right on the river-bank and the weather gloriously warm, one had only to go down there and see the boys getting about, even minus the proverbial "figleaf".

Swarming carnivals were soon arranged and proved great successes. Many laughable incidents occurred: one worth recalling, is where a couple of the boys stopped in the water, although cold, when along came two old French dames, who were highly amused with their antics, squatted down on a log, near their clothes. The boys' French failed to move them. Then everything got blue, the air, as well as the diggers; then they "compreed" and moved at the "tout".

Baseball games were also indulged in with some Americans, who were camped in the Army Training School close by.

Horseracing was quite the fashion now, as the 3rd Div Artillery held their meeting at ESPAYGNE, at which, our Brigade was fully represented. There were many notable celebrities there and also a goodly number of Aussie Nurses from the 3rd A.G.H. ABBEVILLE and W.A.A.C.s. One of the chief features of the day were the Bookies, who were all dressed up in Civilian and fancy costumes of all colors. It was necessary that they do this, to derive the scene of it's army aspect. There were Pierrots, Tall hats and Frock coats, "Talkative" check-suits and other quaint rigouts and the buisness was very brisk throughout the meeting. Everything was ideally managed and everybody came away more than satisfied, even the punters.

A party of our Brigade talent visisted the 3rd Aust General Hospital, ABBEVILLE, and the concert that eventuated was much appreciated, by the Chums, diggers and Staff.

There was much sadness in store for the Brigade on the 20th May, as the D.R. arrived, which signified going back into action. This was viewed with regret, as the few days spent at COCQUEREL were easily the most enjoyable holiday we had had so far.

During our stay, Fritz used to pay regular nightly visits and paid a great deal of attention to ABBEVILLE. The people there used to go out and sleep in the fields and hedges at night, returning to their homes the following morning.

On the 31st May we left COCQUEREL behind, bringing away with us, pleasant memories of a pleasant rest. Our return route passed through FONTAINE and AIRANES that day, camping at HANGEST SUR SOMME for the night. Our journey was continued the next morning down the Somme Valley, through PICQUIGNY, AILLY SUR SOMME, ARGONNES, AMIENS, CANON and LONGUEAU, finishing up with Waggon lines at a little village called Glisy. They could not have chosen a more delightful spot, as it was right on the Somme River, with beautiful swimming pools everywhere, also punts in galore. Everyone was delighted, when they found them selves, in surroundings so congenial.

The guns went into action, just in rear of VILLERS BRETTONEUX, on the right of CORBIE. Around this part the diggers did wonderful work, when Fritz was trying to reach AMIENS in March and April. Fritz used to veritabily swamp the place with gas each night, and of a morning, the air was thick with it. Most of our work here was harrassing fire, on enemy trenches and back areas.

Great sniping work was done by some of our guns, placed right in the village of VILLERS BRETTONEUX and only about 400 yards from the front Trenches and with the Observation Post near the front line. When a Hun was sighted, it was only a matter of seconds before shrapnel and H.E. was bursting all around him. The men doing this sniping, say, it was the most interesting work imaginable.

A few minor raids were successfully carried out, on different occasions.

July 4th (American Independence Day) was commemorated by a combined attack, on Fritz territory, by Australians and Americans, this being the first time the Yanks' Infantry had been mixed with the Diggers. It was a great success; the village of Hamel, also HANEL WOOD and VAIRE WOOD falling into our hands. Over 1500 prisoners and numerous achine Guns were also captured. (Continued next page).