

"It has been my privilege to lead the Australian Corps in the Fourth Army during the decisive battles since 8th. August which bid fair to bring the war to a successful conclusion at no distant date.

"No one realises more than I do the very prominent part which they have played, for I have watched from day to day every detail of their fighting and learned to value beyond measure the proneness and determination of all ranks.

"In once more congratulating the corps on a series of successes unsurpassed in this great war, I feel that no mere words of mine can adequately express the renown that they have won for themselves and the position they have established for the Australian Nation, not only in France, but throughout the world.

"I wish every officer, N.C.O. and man, all possible good fortune in the future, and a speedy and safe return to their beloved Australia.

(Sgd.) W. RAWLINSON, GENERAL,  
Commanding Fourth Army.

H.Q. Fourth Army,  
14th. October, 1918.

This proved to be the last barrage the brigade took part in, which lasted six hours, but there were sundry shoots during the balance of the day and on the morning following (the 5th.) at 5.p.m. the guns were pulled out.

On the 6th. November the brigade retired to Montbrechain, this withdrawal which took place in heavy rain was a most uncomfortable operation, but in the light of a possible "spell," the unpropitious elements were speedily overlooked and forgotten.

The position at Sambre et Oise Canal was destined to be the last the brigade was to occupy in the "Great War."

Rumors of peace and an Armistice were flying everywhere, falling from every tongue, but, still, so extraordinarily disappointing had been "good news" at all times, that the rumors were hardly credited.

At night, allied bombing planes passed overhead in droves and on one or two occasions even enemy planes graced the neighbourhood with their presence. But they were like the last Roses of Summer, soon to fade and disappear for ever.

At midday on 11th. November, upon the dismissal of the stable parades, it was given out that an order was to be read and all who cared to remain to hear the reading could do so. As dinner was ready, however, many rushed away, halter skelter for their dixies. To those who remained fell the glad tidings that the Armistice was officially announced, but so great was habit, so great the needs of the moment, and so casual the Australian, that he only made a dash for his place in the queue at the cook house, and that's dinkum!

So ended the brigades part in breaking down the resistance of the enemy. A part that, we hope, was done nobly and well. A part that was done, for the love of Australia and Empire; a part that was done, we hope, to make Peace secure upon this earth for generations.

The brigade had, like all Australians, tried to "do its bit." That "the bit" was well done, may be gleaned from the congratulations received from brigade and corps commanders and the respect and friendship gained from the infantry and other arms of the service.

Our time during our sojourn in Montbrechain was taken up mostly preparing for the "All too frequent" Spit & Polish Parades, this was undoubtedly the cause of so much discontent within the Brigade at this time, once this was rectified things were smoother running.

After parade, football was easily first favourite, and some games resulted.

The A.I.F. Educational scheme was now introduced, but being in the embryo the nights were only set aside for lectures which were well attended.

The 12th. December brought a change, we were on the road once again, Hautmont was our destination, it being just a little south of Maubeuge, this latter town was besieged by the Huns in the early days of the war, the fortress held out for eleven days and then surrendered with 49,000 French soldiers, but not before the French had blown up all the Forts.

Hautmont was once a town of considerable importance for its manufacture, but alas! Nothing remains but empty sheds and smokeless chimney stacks Fritz having appropriated all the machinery for his own use in Germany.

The 3rd. Div. Artillery Y.M.C.A. soon established a cinema and a couple of weeks later our own Concert Party "The Courtiers" "bloomed." These were the real live factors that kept the idle minds out of mischief.

The Battery Dances were a huge success, but the one thing upper most in the minds of all was, who was to be on the first quota. However, the first batch of 130 men left the village on the 5th. March en route for Aussie via the camps in England.