

Brigadier 80 Assault Bde calls on me to see how we are getting on. Everyone is extremely interested in the idea & possesses a desire to see the first shoot. The G.P. would be a packed mass of senior officers if they all came! Letter from Rosemary. Good work continues in afternoon. Maj. & I find site for guns. Rain & bad weather. In evening 73 LAA Regt. Padre takes simple service in the barn for our men - about 50 in all. Extremely well conducted & moving. Lesson from sermon on the Mount - good choice. Tent "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof". Background of shells & aeroplanes. Afterwards we walk up to cemetery and plant on Paddy's grave an oak cross bearing his name & the inscription "who died most gallantly". The graveyard is well cared for and there are many wreaths from English friends & French people. The French girl on our farm comes with a party to put on Paddy's grave.

Hear that Caen has been taken & Russians are 80 miles from E. Prussia. Impromptu concert with Gibb at piano & French people: "Clair de lune", Liszt, Beethoven, Gounod & "La Marseillaise".
Monday 10 July (D+34) (FIVE WEEKS)

Dull wet day. Troop on C & M. Carb. gets letter from Molo saying that he is in Roctampton Hospital & hopes to be back soon. Complete 80 M.M. conversion tables - what a headache! Send them in to be typed out. Pip returns from trip to Caen on m/c. Afternoon quiet. In evening up to Caen with Maj. Pip & Willie in Jeep. See wreckage of tanks, Bren carriers, guns & equipment. Villages near Caen a complete shambles. On ridge before Caen the road is under German observation from factory chimneys in suburbs to

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Monday 10 July (D+34) Contd

South of R. Ome. We accelerate over this strip of road, as shells are dropping here & there is a notice by the road. "Beware - Shelling in progress". Some unpleasantly close ones, but we drop down from the ridge & follow a bye-pass field track into Caen. We go as far as possible but this part of the town is a mass of rubble, many feet high, and eventually we are brought to a stop. The town is a pathetic wreck, though the towers of the two abbeys still stand. A priest & two helpers are searching among the ruins for the dead. We eventually return, speeded by more shells, & Bren fire just ahead on the river bank which is our front line. On way back we notice mine-fields (all road-edges are still mined - we were nearly caught!) Booby-traps VXP shells, & lines of Sherman tanks waiting just over the ridge - an impressive sight. There are lots of quickly-made graves along the roadside - English & German. On way back F.W. 190s seize chance of low clouds to pop out & strafe tanks a little way away. Unpleasantly close, so we take to ditch. Corps are in the fields killed by blast, with legs sticking up straight. The whole area between Bidville & Caen is the typical impression of a battlefield. Rumour issue in evening. Letter from Molo. Gai-Hi. Bird returns from 5 Gooseberry. Visit from Bde. EME.

Tuesday 11 July (D+35) ~~Contd~~

Heavy air activity in early morning & bombs a few hundred yards away. Go to bunkers in Hermerville & have lunch &

Stungo. Talkative & witty Barber — very good for my French. I act as interpreter for a group of officers & O.R.s. Then down to HAA site & discuss problems of ballistics, meteorology & other matters connected with our 88 m.m. shooting. Our reputation is spreading & our task should be recorded in the annals of the Royal Regiment. 2 letters from Kate. Loud-speaker fixed up in orchard so that men can hear news. We are fighting hard S.W. of Gen. Americans advancing near St. de. Russians continue to make good progress. Spend afternoon with John Davies watching rehearsal of fire-control, with two guns, C.P. & O.P.. Write to Kate. Mosquito bites cover my face & it's difficult to shave in mornings; cover myself with citronella tonight. Temperamental trouble with Phillips again.

Wednesday 12 July (D+36)

Heavy air activity early in morning, & bombs quite near. Practice ground alarm at 0830: take up positions for defence of camp. Hear that Highland Div. had a nasty time in their attack on Columbellas last night — losing 10 tanks & quite a few men. Bob comes over in afternoon with men from 4 Gooseberry, belong to Fox Tp: we are now complete. Spend evening making arrangements for Longden & Prince to relieve the 1st det. Whilst Evans Andle & Fritz continue with 88 m.m. Boche starts to shell us at 2000 hrs & lands them in our farmhouse & garden — one 21st yards from me. We dive for cover. This continues spasmodically through evening — very unpleasant. Heavy air activity about 0030 hrs.

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Thursday 13 July (D+37)

Dull day again: Sgt Longens det. goes out at 0930 hrs to 220/73 IAA Rep. I go with John Davies to Field Cashier & Ram to 86 Gen. Hosp. at La Delivrande to see Jack Kilpatrick. He is to be operated on this afternoon & will have to be evacuated to U.K. Some of the beds in the ward are bad. Pleasant nursing sisters. Back to camp & meet Capt. Tod who has come to arrange about Sgt. Prince's detachment. In afternoon out on light-weight motorcycle to Benerville Bridge, Prough Colville. See all the Horsa gliders still lying packed into the fields where they landed on D Day - hundreds of them. The bridge bears the name Pegasus Bridge and still so, although side of the road is screened with coconut matting as it is under German observation. Take a look at the canal & then back to Hemanville. Another letter from Kate - better than a stiff dose of cognac. Men of 103 HAA arrive with Capt. Hurray to work on 88 H.M. It is a beautiful gun - a sound piece with a mobile mounting better than anything we have (15 secs. into action - weighs 7½ tons!). Good sights & fuse-setter, but very poor A.A. transmission & electrical equipment. Fortunately that needn't worry us. Russians within 36 miles of E. Prussia. Vilna falls.

Friday 14 July (D+38)

Le Quenoye Gullet. Fine day at last. Badly bitten by mosquitoes in night - lip & eye. Hang out French & English flags & Cross of Lorraine over gateway to farm & chalk "Vive la France" on all the trucks. Pilots a/c comes over at 0815, Range-finders for 88 H.M. arrive. Half-day to celebrate. Spend with Capt. down to Hemanville & go into the church and

x The whole troop volunteered their sweet nation for Ben.

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meet the curé: Ben on the estate - & find all the villagers there, having been to mass, in their Sunday best. Drink a couple of glasses of white wine & give a toast of the quatorze juillet to the company. Chat with my old friend the barber, and with a very pretty dark French girl, about seventeen. The first really attractive girl I've seen. Unfortunately escorted by two young Frenchmen! Pass the War Memorial, where two English soldiers stand guard, & salute. British & French flags on all the buildings. All the wine has been saved for today: tomorrow there will be none. Back for a magnificent lunch cooked by Madame - roast chicken, new potatoes & cauliflower. In afternoon visit donkey's shed: a Ben round to Luc-sur-Mer and La Belverne, where I call at 86 Gen. Hosp. & find Kilpatrick gone to England. Back to Hermonville & meet curé who come out to thank the men for their gift to the children. Men are paraded & the thanks Ben, Ben his speech is interpreted to them. We learn from Madame that he was an ardent collaborationist with the Boche. In the evening we drink wine & talk with the French people of the house, and afterwards down to the village green to see the dancing. The Germans burnt the dancing floor because the French girls wouldn't dance with them, so it's sticky going on grass. Incipient romance between Marcelle and the Arkborn Sgt. who was the first British soldier they saw. Back to the farm, & Gibb plays music, finishing with hearty rendering of Marseillaise. Monsieur is very drunk by now. Heavy air, achingly at night. Ken (Ken for counter-martial) sleeps in barn with us. Russians taken Pinsk.

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Saturday 15 July (D+39)

Spend morning working out convers. in tables for range for 88 H.A. "Punch's Picture Post" from Kala. Naapi's stuff arrives - whisky, gin, beer etc. Round Sgt. Longden & Princess sites with Maj. Davey. Visit from Capt. Tod of 218 Bty. Spasmodic shelling nearby - counter-battery. Great boozing of liquor round camp in evening. Hear Rat Russians are shelling Grodno. Gibb plays a couple of Beethoven sonatas, and so to bed.

Sunday 16 July (D+40)

Slightly finer day; warm, but low cloud. Round sites with NAAFI stuff. In afternoon C. of Enquiry into loss of watches G.S. Run tea-party with the French: ~~salads~~ strawberry tart; gooseberries, traba au rhum and coffee cake with perry and white wine. Service at 1800 hrs. Heavy shelling both ways & thick smoke screen all over beach & inland. ~~Likewise~~ ^{also} ~~land~~ ^{air} bombing at about 2200 hrs. Quite a lively night all round: no casualties.

Monday 17 July (D+41) (SIX WEEKS)

In morning more work on 88 H.A.s. Early morning mist changes into marvellous sunny day later. Shelling at midday - smoke-screen goes up. Round sites in afternoon. Last night's shells were at the bottom of our orchard, likewise a ^{few} ~~afides~~ bombs. 80 ~~side~~ ^{side} ~~High~~ ^{High} ~~Fire~~ ^{Fire} order comes through: C.A.A. very restricted now. Great drinking session in left mess in evening. All night long there is intensive shelling both ways: our (G.S.) lifeboat is destroyed by a direct hit. He 177 over at 2330. To bed slightly squiffy. Amour moves up all night. Runables like traffic in a London street.

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Tuesday 18 July (D + 42)

Awakened at 0500 by intense artillery barrage & passing of aircraft. Hop out to look & find a lovely sunny morning with pink clouds. The sky is filled with Lancasters & Halifaxes which pass over towards Caen in a continuous stream for two hours. Sight grey flak, but see one lanc. Blow up in midair just above us. Over a thousand Lancs — an unforgettable sight. When they stop Harbours & Liberators & Mitchells start to come over. The artillery barrage continues without break, and as we are in the middle of a gun-zone, we are shaken to pieces. Leave with John Davies in water-pump and go to 2nd Army HQ — see G.O.C. Visit Amm. people Race to ask about 88 H.R. ammo: none available. Hear news of 12th morning attack. Three thousand planes were used — 1,500 Lancs. & Halifaxes, 500 Harbours, & 1000 odd Liberators & Yaks. They were used to blow a gap in German defences to the E. of Caen, and as soon as the bombing ceased 11th Armored Div. moved in. By the time we heard the news they had gone six miles. Magnificent news: the beach-head has been getting too cramped & we want to expand. On to Bayeux where we lunch at Notre Dame Restaurant, visit cathedral & do shopping & see Bayeux Tapestry. The town is completely untouched & full of troops on leave & pretty girls. Notices about V.B. everywhere. Back via Arrauncheux where we see the immense artificial port that has been made here — a marvellous sight. Back to find letter from Kate. A good day indeed. Heavy air attack on Benouville bridge at about 1830. Bombs & planes. Attempt to interfere with our attack.

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Wednesday 19 July (D+43)

Day starts dull. Morning in camp. Hear that our attack is going well & we are threatening to encircle Germans in Caucelles. The roads are packed with German prisoners returning from the front. Go out to Prince's site in Atlantic Wall strong-point at Christchurch. Day had a warm time & plenty of action last night. (so did Longden's det.). Chief ornament of his pill-box was old 75 M.M.: also smaller cannon. In afternoon up to Caucelles; see prisoners in cage at St. Aubin. Several tunnels. The French are gathering round to cheer at Dam & D.P.S. Lane to protect Dam. In Italy Ancona & Leghorn have fallen, in Russia Kharkov is threatened. Sun breaks through in late afternoon. Dust on roads & bridges & trees is dreadful. Road construction goes on marvellously, but a cross-country journey is still a headache, with lots of bumpy diversions through fields, and too many mines about. Down to 101 BSA in evening, to hear latest news. Slight air activity towards midnight.

Thursday 20 July (D+44)

In morning visit HQ of F/220 on cliffs at dieu-sur-Mer where Longden's det. is to be deployed this evening. In afternoon finish reading Keintworth: the warm sunny day suddenly turns to a thunderstorm & rain all evening. Two magazines arrive from Kate. Out to F/220 again to settle 'accommodation for Longden': abominable, wet. Not much war news today. Quiet night. Read some James Thurber. Hear of attempt to assassinate Hitler.

Friday 21 July (D+45)

Awake to thunderstorm & more rain. 8.5 H.M. work out of question so John Davies gives excellent lecture on Baltic States. Pouring rain all day until evening when it clears up. Men move into barn for shelter from rain. Round to London & Prince's S.K.s with Maj. Davey. Letter from Kate: rept. immediately. Willie Burns himself badly with petrol on hands & legs. John Davies & Pip are with us in the barn now. Quiet night. Russians take Ostrov.

Saturday 22 July (D+46)

Dull day, with rain again. Up to Bang-sur-Mer to visit our men in AAOR: call in at London on way back. Ken's promotion to A/Capt. comes through. A/B takes last period of gun-drill; he is due to leave tonight. Arrange for Evans & Arnold & Fritz's deto. to go out tomorrow. Prince will return & be the only one in camp for maintenance of 8.5 H.M. Receive parcel from home with handkerchiefs & writing materials & letters from Father & Mother. Heavy air activity. Russians take Iskov.

Sunday 23rd July (D+47)

Dull day but no rain: ground begins to dry. Ken comes over from G. 4 with three pips. Evans, Arnold, & Fritz take their deto. out to 40 H.M. sites & Prince comes back. Evening calm. Heavy activity - one F.V. over at 500 ft., illuminated & shot.

Monday 24th July (D+48)

(SEVEN WEEKS)

First fine day for a long while: much gadding about grounds. Take Ken round sites: talk of 8.5 H.M. Coast role: plan to establish separate THQ. Luncheon - what a relief. More colossal advances in Russia. Shells, AA fire & bombs. Then our own air-raid goes in.

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Tuesday 25 July (D+49)

Attack launched in morning down road to Falaise, after heavy air & arty. bombardment all night. Maj. returns from 80 Bde. with plan to deploy 3 88 H.A. & main 4 50 H.A. in defence of lock-gates at Christchurch - a No. 1 priority job, right under the nose - and fire - of enemy. He takes Ken down to 16 F.C.P. in afternoon: I go to get hair cut & shampoo. In evening we walk round to Maj. Trench's & are directed to an Austrian officer in LAA for translation of 88 H.A. range-table (Bruce Cunningham). Heavy activity at night.

Wednesday 26 July (D+50)

Down to Christchurch in Peep: Heavy shelling all last night & this morning. Pop Bird & Phillips at 50 H.A. gun-pos. to examine gun & on to Bruce Cunningham: crawl under enemy obs. - shells unpleasant. He translates range-table. Leading & Saps led like to join us. Back to 50 H.A. & find that it has been largely disabled - firing mechanism gone.

Beautiful sunshine & everything fresh & green: letter from Kate. In afternoon complete range-tables ready for calibration shoot on Saturday. In evening feel at peace with the world. Arrangements go ahead for our new role - anti-commando. Have a shower bath. Heavy air & ground activity at night. Carl. just misses being blown up by shell in orchard. Two hits on Conshet - fire started & one man killed.

Thursday 27 July (D+51)

Down to Maj. Johnston at F.C.P. in German strong-point with magnificent German periscope which looks straight across

A few hundred yards to enemy soil: can see German positions & Gerries moving about. Select target for calibration shoot.

In afternoon up to 3.7. site from which we are to shoot - at-
luc. In evening up to FCP with Survey Officer to show him our
target for fixation. Then to projected gun-site, also for
fixation & planning of layout. Unpleasantly bracketed by
shells when talking to I.G. We fall flat on our faces four
times. 40 shells over in all. Hear that Gascoigne has
replaced Beatty as O.C. 62 Bty. Russians take Bialystok, Dvinsk
& Stanislavov. a know. Noisy night again. Heavy concentration of
shells on Oristocham & Coleville areas.

Friday, 28 July (D+52)

(under fire again)
Down to F.C.P. to arrange signals hook-up for shoot. See
new target selected - twin German gun position. Get arty-board grid
& plot target on it. Bets return ready for shoot. Conference
with I.G. & Maj. Johnston to discuss method of shoot. Russians
take Brest-Litovsk. Yanks in outskirts of Contances & in Tessy.
Light air activity in evening. Continue to read "Rogue Heroes".
Shelling. Carb. drives round a corner in a jeep & has to stop
dead - crater still smoking!

Saturday, 29 July (D+53)

Net wireless set in morning. Receive survey data for
gun positions. Deploy 12cc 88s on gun-pos. in afternoon.
Receive letter & photo from Rosemary. Russians closing on
Riga & Warsaw: Yanks 8 miles beyond Contances. See 244
Jeep with Killinger. Morgan E. had shell-shock case. Shells
& bombs at night. P.p. acquires his pup - Marcelle admires

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Sunday 30 July (D+54)

Junks in Brihal. Fine day with sunshine. In morning complete calculations on Artz Board for shoot. The German police dog pup Coons large in our life: Pip spends most of his time with it. In afternoon up to gun-site at due for preparations for tomorrow. C.O. turns us off site & we wander around looking for a new site; I gripe with old ladies provincial French. Very hot & tired & bored. Back to find letter from Kate. In evening go to party in farmhouse again. Chocolate cake in Normandy style, sand cake à la Basque & Gâteau de Honok. Pince & wine — and so I bed. Lovely night-sky, clear & starry.

Monday 31 July (D+55) (EIGHT WEEKS)

Beautiful day and junks near Granville: our attack has gained 4 miles S. of Caumont. Lead 88 ttr column to new position in middle of RASC dump just outside due. Blazing hot — ok. for a swim. Heavy shelling all day — 175 stuff at Causseilles now. Survey came down to position. Trig. point turns out — 13 ft in middle of minefield: send for R.E.s! In afternoon have a delicious bath naked in warm sea at Lion: feel immensely cleaner & happier afterwards: lie to dry in sun. In evening up to officers' shop at Raon & buy pajamas & vests: in old chateau, run by RASC, with two pretty young French girls to cope with ATS underwear etc. ~~Whisky~~ Whisky with Q & Sgt-Majors.

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Tuesday 1 August (D+56)

Dull day. Yanks S. of Avranches: line consolidated. Avranches. Russians outside Riga, E. Prussia, Warsaw. Visit of ^{2nd Army} B.A.A. to gun site to see how we are getting on. Drill session in afternoon. Swim again in evening, & final arrangements for shoot tomorrow. Sunshine afternoon & evening. Russians take Kaunas. Pip's Troop start moving 50 M.A. together with Baby S.L. for immediate defence of port at Guntersdorf.

Wednesday 2 August (D+57) Morning of the shoot starts misty, clears towards midday. W/T comm. established by 1115 & shoot begins at 1140. All guns fired first by Langard - perfect condition. We then go on to fire 72 rounds, ranging 1, 2, 3 & 4 guns & giving salvos of gun fire for effect. Extremely good shoot: all rounds in a 400' square, all salvos in 150' by 50' oblong. Everybody very pleased: visitors include Brig. of 80 Bde, B.M., CRASCs, Combined Ops. Bombardment Offrs etc etc. I do G.P.O., Phillips G.P.O. A. Crouching over Artz Board in blinding sunshine all day on calculations: but how good to plaster gun! Val Ruff dead in evening: congratulations to Tp. from O.C., I.G., etc. History has been made. Yanks near Rennes & St. Malo in Brittany, 2nd Army Lane broken through to Vire. Canadians are holding German armour at Aen. Restless night - Lot & p'ds & stelling. Two parcels from home.

Thursday 3 August (D+58) Bright, hot day of rest: straighten things out in morning & write letters. Bathe & sun-bathe in afternoon. Harriet arrives in afternoon for E. Tp. Yanks take Rennes & push past: also take Dinan. Heavy air activity at night. Bombs v. close.

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Friday 4 August (D+59)

Another blazing day. Whole day out at Collerville, preparing the way for our gun-position. Arrangements to requisition room for office. C.O. & Bill Smith arrive: 244 are over, deployed round SHAEF with barrels clamped! 62 still in England. Swim in evening.

Saturday 5 August (D+60)

Dull day. Turn fire Cater. Morning in camp. Afternoon at Collerville: cookhouse built, dug-outs nearly finished. Talk to people of house (M. & Mme Gammier). Junkie in Brest, Nantes, Leval. Heavy attack by mosquitoes in evening!

Sunday 6 August (D+61)

Whole day at Collerville: dug-outs coming along well: 3 det. now living there. Construct a dwelling for myself. Lip swollen from mosq. bites. Yella & RHQ move to Hermauville & come to see our site. Ungromising remarks about Far East. Also A/Tk. mle. Activity in air & small naval battle off Christchurch.

Monday 7 August (D+62) (NINE WEEKS)

Cold & misty in morning. Turn beautiful Cater: finish off most of adjustment to maisonette. Talk with Re Gammier. Americans push on towards Le Mans. German counter-attack at Mortain. Heavy air raid on German positions at midnight.

Tuesday 8 August (D+63)

Five days from start: move to Collerville. Finish first gun pit & blow the second. All day organising my quarters. Four letters in evening - none from Kate. Walk round the village in evening.

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Wednesday 9 August (D+64)

Another marvellous day. Camp fully organised now. —
excellent accommodation & cookhouse, ablutions & latrines. Blow
kind gunpit. Find & read a salacious French "roman". Much conversation
with the Gammiers. C.O. comes up to Camp about 8.8 a.m. Hear
of direct hits by German 75 a.m. on D Tip 5.0 a.m. pits at
Quistrehan. Canadians 5 miles from Falaise (with Police Armid
Div.) Yanks in de Mans ^{Nantes} & Angers. Am very sunburnt.
Find that the Gammiers sleep in dugout every night. Sit & greet
milk with Madeleine.

Thursday 10 August (D+65) All day preparing for shoot
tomorrow — lining up & zeroing guns. Beautiful day. No
special news, no letters. Evening long convers. with Gammiers.
Friday 11 August (D+66) Shoot from 1030 till 1330

23 rounds percussion ranging, then 40 rounds airburst for
effect. Scratchy hot day. Bob & John come over from F. 4,
Bill Smith, C.O., Maj. Bartlett from 21 Arm Gp. etc.
spectate. Complete neutralization of German strong point
knock away camouflage, hot guns, put rounds in entrance
to strong points etc. Hear about mines & the composition
of that E Tip shot down on F. 4. Considerable evening
counterbattery fire during shoot — some quite close —
7.8 a.m. (!) & rockets. Conference in evening with O.C.
& I.G. Letter from Kate. Considerable activity at night.

Saturday 12 August (D+67) Blazing day again. Rest & read
about Henri Fabre. Finish Poque Herrieux. Hasty & Myrorethion.
Cinema show in evening — "Something to Shout About" & new reels

Sunday 13th August (D+68) Blaz., hot day again. Yanks in regions of Alençon & Chartres. Third gun goes in pit. Pip goes down with dysentery. In afternoon down to FCP to select targets for next shoot. Heavy shelling at Quistredam. In evening line up two guns & zero them. Two others from Zone. (M^{rs} Jenkins & Peter killed by phos. bomb in Dulwich; newspaper cutting.) Germans start to pull out of Normandie.

Monday 14th August (D+69) (TEN WEEKS)

Hot day again. Report of Yanks in Argentan, which only leaves a 20 mile gap for German escape. Heavy air bombardment of enemy escape routes. Line up No. 1 gun. Still suffering from touch of dysentery. Eisenhower's order of the day: Canadians attack towards Falaise: gap for escape narrows to 12 miles. Hordes of aircraft going over in level weather. Haircut & shampoo in Hernerville. Stand-to in evening. 6th Airborne attack across R. Orne & may call for artillery support: Germans may be something too. Heavy air-raid on Senonville. Bombs & cannon-fire, flares & m.g. fire from Quistredam. All together a hectic night. Rover Key has unfortunate letter from his wife.

Tuesday 15th August (D+70)

Shoot all day: start at 0.8. but return to gun pos. Fire at three targets - percussion for sea registration, A.P. at German strongpoint, airbursts at German batteries. Fire 130 rounds. Feel rather sick still with slight temperature. We land in S. France: escape gap narrows to 10 miles. Night-hot & feverish for me: sweating all night. Heavy air raids, & our guns in action max. range in C.D. role. Thunderstorm at 1900 hrs. Barrage balloons down all round.

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Wednesday 16th August (D+71)

Temperature worse: spend quiet day. Canadians in outskirts of Falaise. Beach-Head in S. France goes well. Parcel from home & letter from Duncan. Air-raids at night. Restless & little sleep. Visit from Cliff Huxford in afternoon.

Thursday 17th August (D+72)

Feel worse still. Rise at 10.30 a.m. to take stock at Le Homme. Fire Ritz, odd rounds & then B.T. 80 Bde stops us as attack is imminent. Retire to bed at tea-time finish Right Off the Map & dip into Weekend Book. Yanks in Chartres & Orleans. S. France goes well. Canadians take Falaise: the pocket is much reduced. Exchange notes with Madeleine to practice my French. Letters to Joan & to home.

Friday 18th August (D+73)

Feel better in morning: sunny day. Falaise gap nearly finished. Yanks 23 miles from Paris. 7th Army 25 miles inland on Riviera. Spend day quietly: much reading in Weekend Book. Hear that the Belgian attack on our sector yesterday has taken them near Calvary. Proposal to shift us to Quistrehem beach where we can bring to bear direct fire. Visit from Bob & Gordon of 80 Bde in evening. Very successful inspection. 400 rds ammo. discovered for us at Falaise. News that German army is broken & retreat becoming a rout. Enemy stops active near Le Havre in evening: stand to at midnight: 21 plots on FCP board: no action. Yanks in Dreux is close to Paris.

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Saturday 19th August (D+74)

Feel better again. Grand news about flight of German army. Weather still fine. Visit from M.O. who inspects the men: see Dido & D-Day again: much bigger pups now - very different looking. Our pup fox, with pointed ears: darkish brown hair & intelligent & lean: Pip's is short-eared, light-haired, softer & rounder: more active but less intelligent. News of Yanks half-way up Seine from Paris towards Rouen, in region of Mantès. Weather breaks & rain-storm in evening. Coffee & conversation with the Gammiers. Then magazines from Katé.

Sunday 20th August (D+75)

Prepare list of QE for sea-stroke. Great to-do about church service. Ken sick in bed. Write to Katé. Yanks make bridgehead over Seine near Mantès. In Fontainebleau. Church service in evening.

Monday 21st August (D+76) (ELEVEN WEEKS)

Weather breaks & steady rain all day. Complete records of shooting in morning. Test No. 2 gun with three rounds in afternoon. Mobile cinema shows "On Approval" with Clive Brook George W. Barnes & Beatrice Lillie. Parcel of "Punches" from Rome.

Monty's order of the day.

Tuesday 22nd August (D+77)

Fine day again. Take a look at No. 22 in Gellauville as possible accommodation for our use. Feel very listless & tired. Yanks across Seine S. of Paris. No mail because of bad flying weather yesterday. Dido comes to lunch with us.

Wednesday 23rd August (D+78)

Rain in night & day starts dull. Still feel a little groggy. News that Maquis have taken Paris & Americans are in Grenoble & 2nd Army in Tonnelle Pont-l'Evêque & Lisieux. Recce new site for 88mm on beach at Quistocham. Visit from Bill, Bob & John in evening: celebrate Liberation of Paris in gin. Football match Single Men v Married: single men win 3-2.

Thursday 24th August (D+79)

Dull again. Rumania capitulates & as Russians drive into the country. Stroll round neighbourhood & visit cemetery on road to Quistocham where Black Watch, Gordon's East Yorks & 107 HAA dead are buried. In evening, after heavy rain the sky clears & sun comes out. Letters from home & Joan, with account of her movements towards entering Franciscan order. News of new trap for German army along W. bank of Seine. Revival of street fighting in Paris. 100,000 prisoners taken in Falaise gap. 100,000 believed killed there. Patton's army moves towards Troyes. Rumours of Junkers in Bordeaux & on Swiss frontier. Kick a football around in evening, & read First Act of "Le Cid".

Friday 25th August (D+80) Beautiful day. Letters from Kate & home. Visit from Pip & John Davies. Another football match in evening. Second Act of "Le Cid".

Saturday 26th August (D+81) Paris completely free of Germans again; Rumania joins war against Germans; 12 German divisions trapped in Rumania. Germans try to cross Seine at Rouen, Junkers in Kriemhild & Briantou. Bulgaria joins us. Beer pocket is split in two. Football in afternoon. Beer issue. Read Antic Hay again.

Sunday 27th August (D+82)

Fine day. Canadians take left flank, 2nd Army centre, from
downriver to Mantès. Junks from Mantès southwards. We have
bridgeheads over Seine and spearheads at Harne. Finish 'Atie Hag'.
Church service in evening. Conversation with Galle - very witty man.
Much discussion about demob. & Burma in evening. G.S. to close.

Monday 28th August (D+83)

(TWELVE WEEKS)

244 to move to Port-en-Bessin with 105 Bde. 62 & our
remnant expected on 30th Aug. 83 Bde likely to be at Rouen.
What of us? Ken sets arrangements on foot for Grand Ball.
Football match v B.H.Q. in evening. Wins 5-3. Finish 'de Gid'.
Letter from Kate.

Tuesday 29th August (D+84)

News Rat remnant will arrive at Guna Beach at 2000 hrs
tomorrow. Great rejoicing. Petty is posted to 244. Letter to Kate.
In afternoon over to Courseulles, find Wrennery & set arrangements
on foot for party of Wrens at the dance. Back via Dolivronde
& find nurses gone. Willie drops in for tea - R.H.Q. about 18
miles to Port-en-Bessin. Letter from Rosemary & Maggie from
Kate. Restless night.

Wednesday 30th August (D+85)

Dull day. Sports meeting with
book made by Goodman & Kirby. Bird in 220", Sam R. RW in
100" Yallon in putting the weight, ^{2nd prize in digging race} HQ in relay (Paley,
Hartley, Key & Bird). King & Castello also run well. In
evening 7-a-side soccer won by No. 4 det. & tug-o-war by
No 4. Win 50 francs on book. News Rat Seine Bridgeheads are
30 miles deep. Rouen evacuated: Junks in Rhaine & Soissons & Leen.

Thursday 31 August (D+86) Remnant are in Transit camp, expected here today. Run in truck through Benouville. Caen. (sweet scent in air to hide smell now) & down main Paris road through Caen & Vimont to place just short of dieuville, to pick up rpt. Hear that Les' gone to Bayeux! News of capture of Beauvais & Amiens. Remnant not arrived here yet. Visit from Bdier 80 Bde - about to move to Rouen. Would have liked to take us but we are tied in G4 & C.D. roles. What a bore! Orders to move down to Quistocham.

Friday 1 Sept. (D+87)

Rece of pos. at Quistocham in morning. Remnant arrive in afternoon - 6 tractors, 1 w/cant, 1 15cwt, 3 3-Tons, 1 jeep, 5 m/c's. No guns, no stores & my jeep missing. Sgt King, Jack Kerr & drivers all present, except Griffi's. Rough landing, some damage to tractors. Football match v 3-7 side, abandoned with deflated ball. Canadians in Dieppe, 2nd Army in Arras, Yanks in Laon & place 20 miles from Belgian frontier, also in Verdun & 50 miles from Saarbrücken.

Saturday 2 Sept (D+88)

Canadians in Albierville - Germans flood Low Countries. In morning up to Wrennery & make final arrangements for dance. Pass long convoy of 6th Airborne going back on leave at last - decorated with French flags. 2nd Army in Lens, Donai, Viny ridge. 8th Army have broken through Getriculne. Letter from Tony R in H.E. Down to Majestic bar in Quistocham in evening. Drink Calvados with BSM & Benny. Move to Quistocham cancelled. Dance cancelled by Prefect. Cliff Haylett to replace John Davis.

(24)
Sunday 3rd Sept. (D+89)

5th Anniversary of war. British & American forces cross Belgian frontier - take Tournai, Mons, Namur, Brussels & push on. 35 miles beyond dykes in south: leading for N. Italian plains from Gothic line. Order to move to Le Hamte with 88 mm - cancelled. Order to collect 40 mm. Collect 18 Mk. I 40 mm. from Audricq, near Bayeux. Back late to find letter from Kate. Lateral roads to Paris packed with traffic. Finland packs in. Wilkie has classis now with O.C.

Monday 4th Sept. (D+90)

(THIRTEEN WEEKS)

G. & I. close & E. & P. come on shore. Feel feverish in morning. Guns are being cleared & got ready for quick move. In afternoon off to Bayeux to find Kilpatrick: directed Rance to Arunay-sur-Ordon (via Dilly & Villers Bocage) & return via Green & Caen. Fail to find him as Rpt. Gp has moved. 2nd Army half-way to Antwerp. Guderian announces mobility of troops 15-17 yrs in Germany. Write letter to Kate, receive parcel from Tom.

Tuesday 5th Sept. (D+91) 2nd Army take Antwerp & cross Dutch frontier. Flying-bomb sites completely cut off. Deep penetrations into Belgium & Pas de Calais. Reach Breda in Holland. Gun-drill on Mk I's; visit from O.C. & RSM. Letter from Kate.

Wednesday 6th Sept. (D+92) Set out to go to Trouville in morning along coast road through Calvados. Road-veeps heavily mined, with narrow strip of tarmac in centre safe. Destruction of road every 400', with track round. Practically no

traffic. Water-tower at which we fired now completely destroyed. Fortified coast zone at which we also fired very strong, bristling with guns, pillboxes & heavily mined: Germans pulled out upon flank turned at Falaise & no one has touched it. A few burnt-out Chevrollets on road. Calvados proves to be dead-end, with bridge over Dives down. Shops intact & pleasant hotels. Only troops are R.E.s clearing mines for travelling of troops. No wonder so little traffic. Return by same road. In afternoon go through Ranville, Tram, Dozulé, Pont d'Évêque to Trouville. 6th Airb. admin. elements round Pont d'Évêque. Area of bridges badly damaged but rest of town all right. Trouville untouched, full of girls & shops full of things: few troops & consequently terrific friendliness of French. Root around & find wine-shop (near Casino). Buy 6 bottles white wine from countess & distinguished-looking swindler with Oxford accents - has served all the best people from England. Return for tea - fine road not too full of traffic. Give gifts to Airborne Cadets & Free Frenchmen etc. Report of flank patrol across German frontier; Calais & Boulogne encircled. In evening it begins to rain...

Thursday 7th Sept. (D+93) and rains all night: all my kit & belongings soaked - including Ra's boots, which had previously escaped intact from perils of fire & water. Spend morning reorganising & improving roof. Visit mine to see if bomb is available in Colleville. Jan Jan's kit - a

(22)

Thursday (7th Sept) D + 93 (cont'd)

Capt is le Bat (but proprietor lives on première étage.)

Visit from O.C. - E p. now deployed at Port-en-Bessin.

More rain throughout day. Heavier resistance now on approaches to German frontiers. Full story of flying bomb revealed.

Friday (8th Sept.) D + 94

Possibility of move to Port-en-Bessin in the air. Down to Gen to cash cheques. Yanks in village, Canadians in outskirts of Alstend. Fighting on line of Moselle between Metz & Nancy. Very cold but no rain.

Saturday (9th Sept.) D + 95

Quiet day: Russians in Bulgaria & on Yugoslav frontier. First fire in office. Sun & clouds intermittent.

Sunday 10th Sept (D + 96)

Lunch at Bty. - excellent food with Montagnac & champagne. Batz at D Tp. in Quistrehan. Evening round up in talking racing with Benny.

Monday 11 Sep (D + 97)

Trip to Trouville with ASM Phillips, Benny, Mike & Cook. Arrive at midday - drinks & lunch in hotel - walk up to plage & see Le Havre - smoke rising from there. The others visit a high-class brothel. Back in evening with wine & perfume. Pretty night.

Tuesday 12 Sep (D + 98) Orders at 2 a.m. to report to BtHQ at 0915 with jeep to go on recce - rationing for six days. In & on to Bde HQ at 0930. Orders at midday. Bde to concentrate 5 miles SW Amiens preparatory to move to

protect Calais & Boulogne which are still in enemy hands
starting preparing for move. Last stand to at 2030 hrs.

Wednesday 13 Sep (D + 99)

Up early, pack & come out of action with 88 mm. Are
ready to move by midday. Message in afternoon - O Gp.
1700, move tomorrow.

Thursday 14 Sep (D + 100)

Move off 0930 - Tournai, Lisleux, Murbourg, Les Andelys,
Grandville - spend night in vehicles on road. See sniper troops
rounding up snipers near Lening. Valley of Eure & Seine Tavel.
(160 miles)

Friday 15 Sep (D + 101)

Move off at dawn to conc area near Amiens. Off again
at 1130 - Amiens, St. Pol, Fouquembergues - conc area
at Cayeux. Arr tea-time (70 miles). Excellent bivvy
& enthusiastic reception with eggs etc.

Saturday 16 Sep (D + 102)

Await fall of Calais, Boulogne or Dunkirk. No more body
C.O. addresses officers. Orders at midnight - move to Belgium
Sunday 17 Sep (D + 103)

Fouquembergues, St. Omer, Hazebrouck, Poperinghe, Ypres
& conc area outside Ostend. Great reception all way -
sp crossing frontier. Arr 1800 (60 miles). Excellent bivvy
again but too many children.

Monday 18 Sep (D + 104)

Ken returns from recon. We move into Ostend, dep by
3 p.m. on town promenade, 3 in German defence area

Monday 18 Sep. (D+104) could
on other side of Harbour. The men into German canteen.
Very strong defence & luxurious accommodation. We and
3-7 deployed in CA role. Ostend to be main petrol
port for attack on Germany - W 2 priority V.P. (Dieppe
M. 1). Sleep comfortably at last.

Tuesday 19 Sep (D+105)

Settling in. H.C. tries to enter Harbour & blows up: Help to
reach it. Airborne landing in Holland in afternoon - Roe
gliders came down round Ostend; we help wounded from
one to hospital. 2 Army advance 30 miles into Holland &
reach Rhine. Strongpoint begins to look tidy & clean.

Wednesday 20 Sep (D+106)

Write to Kate & Tony. Air-rail on bridge over Bruges
canal by five ^{Attempting to detonate charges in ground} Spitfires & the 109. Work of clearing Harbour
continues. 62 & 54 being used as infantry at Zeebrugge.
Are likely to move in later at Ostend: BHQ consider
possibility of moving. Mail arrives - letters from Mollie & Tony W
& from Tony. Stand-to in evening, E boats at 18,000.
2nd Army reaches Rhine in Holland.

Thursday 21 Sep (D+107)

In to Ostend to change Tp. money from francs to Belgian
francs. Make landing arrangement with Belgian ~~and~~ Landings in
afternoon. Hear of Leaver fighting at Antwerp for crossing of
Scheldt. Carb. goes back to Conque to get m/c. Bob spends evening
with us. Hear of Cliff Hanflett and 19 O.R.s missing believed
killed at Zeebrugge - all from one troop.

Friday 22 Sep (D+108).

In to Ostend buy can-de-Cologne, glasses note-paper etc. Drink the weak sweet beer. Up to E Tp. in evening, make date from balcony, in to town & drink with Ken, John & Willie at the Royal Manchester and at the Park. Also see dancing at Rhythm club.

Saturday 23 Sep (D+109).

Cold in head & chest. In morning check gun-drill 4.5 & 6 data. Retire to bed early in evening. 2nd Army join up with airborne forces at Arnhem.

Sunday 24 Sep (D+110)

Very windy: visit CRS & get some pills. In afternoon visit la famille Qualey at Bredene: have supper Rose & listen to radio. Present of apples & grapes. Return to THQ at 22.30.

Monday 25 Sep (D+111)

large numbers of a/c passing over continuously to drop supplies to 2nd Army: great demolition work in harbour: tankers stand by to bring in petrol. Our 3-tonners return from supply job. Carl goes to live at site on Ostend promenade. {Gestapo cars shoot in Ostend streets & night.

Tuesday 26 Sep (D+112) [First Airborne withdrawn from Arnhem.]

8th Army cross Rubicon. 62 & 244 relieved at Zebrugg by Canadian armoured division. Write lots of letters - but cold still in head & chest. Read "Ordinary Families".

Wednesday 27 Sep (D+113) 62 arrive in Ostend & Jack Wines' Tp takes over AA guns in vicinity. Take left section on gun-drill. Another batch of mail in evening - letter from Kate. Hear Bach's Double Violin Concerto on 109 set.

Thursday 28 Sep. (D+114)

Find Sgt. King's gun dirty - great row. Down to Ostend & drink with Carb. in restaurant. & see his latest conquest - aged 17. Afternoon writing letters home & to Kate. In evening round to the Quail's in Breedene: Supper & conversation: take Rem some presents. Speech by Churchill.

Friday 29 Sep. (D+115)

Jp. Cmdr's Conf. Ken to become Bty. Capt. Read Col. Eggingham's "Raid". F Tp. vacant for moment. Exercise with S.Ls and guns in CA role in evening - from 2130 - 2359.

Saturday 30 Sep (D+116)

Taking over Troop from Ken in morning. Down to Quail's family in evening & meet brother from England in Civil Affairs. Another S.L. exercise in evening. Send four men as reinforcements for 244. Stop fighting in Holland.

Sunday 1 Oct. (D+117)

Wet day: Ken goes in to BHQ. C.O. expected to inspect. Visit No. 1 site & dock area. Great preparations for petrol unloading. New bridge built for short route to Ostend. Photos taken at maison Quail's. Evening with Rem - dancing. Much mail arrives.

Monday 2 Oct. (D+118)

BHQ move to new house near Van Haan. Evening in: write letters & finish Berry Fleming's book "Col. Eggingham's Raid". New attack towards Cologne by US 1st Army. 2nd Army a bit further in Holland. Calais surrendered. Russians in Yugoslavia.

Tuesday 3 Oct. (D+119) Sent for by C.O. and given job of going round Reptl. sites to make plan for mine watching. Evening at Quail's.

Wednesday, 4 Oct (D+120)

Complete tour of Regt. in morning - in rain! and submit report to RHQ. Meanwhile O.C. & C.O. inspect THQ site.

Thursday, 5 Oct (D+121) News of impending move to Antwerp. Visit from Brigadier. Evening at Quaker's with Carl.

Friday, 6 Oct (D+122)

Visit by Hq. Recog. King from GHQ AA Troops. Evening in reading & writing. Russians 110 miles from Budapest, 8 from Belgrade. Canadians push N. of Antwerp. Holland in danger of floods.

Saturday, 7 Oct (D+123)

Int. report of first two raids by Enemy Jet A/c - Me 163 and 262. Delightful letter from O.C. Evening at Quaker's. No. 6 det. shoots down E/A over harbour. Stand-to for C.A. later.

Sunday, 8 Oct (D+124)

Conference at RHQ over plane shot down, which turns out to have been a Mosq. Pouch its behaviour was hostile. Feel rather ill in evening.

Monday, 9 Oct (D+125) Temp. so stay in bed. Visit from H.O.

Canadians mopping up S. of Scheldt. American progress round Aachen & towards Cologne. Russians 30 miles from Tilsit & Memel, 60 miles from Budapest. Churchill in Moscow.

Tuesday, 10 Oct. (D+126) Feel a bit better. American ultimatum

at Aachen, Russians 12 miles from Memel, British in Corinto. Letter about no-fraternization with Germans from Eisenhower.

Wed. 11 Oct (D+127) Out to Rite C.C. 2 and see immense port activity: supplies & convoys streaming. Nurses in town. Evening at Quaker's

Thursday 12 Oct (0 + 128)

Russians closing on Memel, Tilsit, Budapest & Belgrade.
 Canadians progressing in Holland: Aachen surrounded. Preparations
 for move on Sat. morning. Adv. party of relief (4 LAA-S.L. Bty.)
 arrives.

Friday 13 Oct. Move to Bty. conc. area at Sysele
 just outside Bruges. No news of deployment

Saturday 14

Sunday 15

In field at Sysele. Much mud and
 rain and have to winch all guns and
 tractors out. Great stumbles all Easy and
 Fox detos. winching simultaneously!

Monday 16 Take Bdr. 2 mile to 12 Can. Hosp. for Kray.

Tuesday 17 Afternoon out in Bruges. Quaint old
 city with narrow streets. Dinner at Hotel du Belge &
 drinks at cafe francais & cafe du centre in market square.

Wednesday 18 Good news from Moto. Good chance of his
 return. Recce of Darnie to see 244's positions

Slight enemy shelling & mortaring. Extensive floods in area

Thursday 19 Deploy in inf. role at Darnie on Leopold
 Canal. Recce positions at midnight with C.O. Only slight
 activity but lots of mud & very cold. Landing in Phillipian

Friday 20 Relieved at 1200 by Meim Volin Dragons after
 ground-shoot. Move from muddy field in afternoon.

Saturday 21 Gdr. Smith has T.B. & will be discharged.

Organise ourselves in new field - offrs. mess in farmhouse & cookhouse under cover. Aachen surrenders.

Sunday 22 Quiet day. Beginning of Blanco & foot drill.

Tea with Belgian family and sing-song in evening. Pancakes & excellent pastries. Yarns of teachers. Prepare to move.

Monday 23 Good progress in pocket S of Scheldt. Harriott off to meet C.O. Orders at 1800 hrs. Move to BRUSSELS.

only AA def. here. Set off with recce party at 1700 ant.

BRUSSELS 1900. Spend night in Chateau Wanciez Ave. Water

BHQ. Great difficulty in finding way round BRUSSELS

Tuesday 24 Recce gun pos. to THQ by lunch time. Directed by Maison Commune for HQ to Chateau Goojean, Clausse de Louvain. Guns arrive 1600 hrs, in action 1730. Round up straggling vehicles; to bed in chateau by midnight.

Wed. 25 Guns & barrage. Conference at 1700 hrs.

Thursday 26 Getting transport. Naval battle in Philippines.

Friday 27 Evening out in Brussels. Night club racket - Maxims, Broadway, Derry.

Saturday 28 Rows with O.C.

Sunday 29 Up at 0530 & off to Breskens to recce anti-aircraft layout. Through Ghent, Schoondike. Front line a few hundred yards away. Worst destruction since Caen - Breskens flat, cows & horses stiff, German corpses & wrecked equip. See dive bombing & Leang's raid flushing over the water. Canadian inf. & lots of medium guns moving up. Harbour blocked but Navy busy.

Monday 30 - Sunday 5th Nov In Brussels. See Fanny & Gailight at cinema & meet Jacqueline Besse

Monday 6th Nov Leave Brussels move to Conc. area Vambrecht. meet sales E/A. Weatherside 8th Deptos Breakers.