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1918 B
Book 5

ARMY BOOK 136.

NB This end
of the book
only is relevant

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Fourth Year

1918



(CONTINUED)

Lt E. PAYNE,
R.E. SIGNALS
HQRS. 31 I. BDE
PALESTINE

see Photos
412-414A.

NOTES (continued)

NABLOUS 1918

Sept 21st - A German Prisoner brought in this day stated that Turks had forsaken their guns & left them (the Germans) to get them away as best they could. He expressed his hatred for the Turks.

It seems that on 20th an aeroplane spotted the Turks in full retreat on a Pass on the slope of a steep hill 3 miles N. of where we were camped and had swooped down and engaged the front of this column of wagons, motor lorries, mounted men, and guns, thus making such a blockade of dead bullocks harnessed to the guns & wagons that the others could not escape, and the whole 8 miles of road was full of this army which fell into the hands of ~~the~~ ^{29th Bde} because there was no way to get off the road, it was bordered on the right by a deep ravine (wadi) and a sheer slope on the left above them.

Fourth Year

*1918 *



(continued)

L/Cpl E.PAYNE

R.E SIGNALS

H.Q.R.S. 31 I. BDE

PALESTINE

NOTES (Continued)

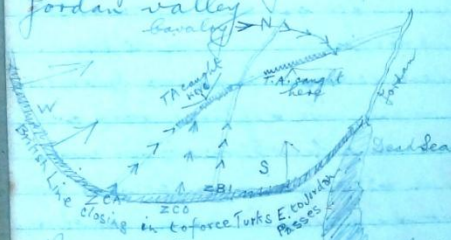
Nablous 1918

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[See Photos
412 -419A](#)

It seems that on **20th** an aeroplane spotted the Turks in full retreat on a Pass on the slope of a steep hill 3 miles N of where we were camped and had swooped down and M. Gunned the front of this column of wagons, motor lorries, mounted men, and guns, thus making such a blockade of dead bullocks harnessed to the guns & wagons that the others could not escape, and the whole 8 miles of road was full of this army which fell into the hands of 29th Bde because there was no way to get off the road, it was bordered on the right by a deep ravine (wadi) and a sheer slope on the left above them

Over 4000 prisoners were taken in this haul alone. ^{photos of entrance to pass showing} ^{photos of the cavalry} ^{photos of the army} had cut off another Turkish army on our right as they retreated to the Jordan valley.



Parties of Turks came in, after hiding on the hills till they gave up, under the white flag. A lot of German telephones were taken by our company. Our Division to remain to clear this area of spoils of war. Lorries trailing guns came by in long stream, and one of our motor cyclists who went there counted 70 guns in the column before they were removed, and he only saw part. Natives who had taken refuge in Nablous while the Turks were in the area, now commenced to return to their homes.

the authing villages. Two cases of cholera in Nablous, so all water in Nablous condemned and town of B. to all troops.

25th - Over 4000 prisoners now massed on the plain under our Indian guards. I took photos Nos. of them.

There were several hundred Germans among them. The captured guns are arranged in a park near our camp. Hear that 40,000 prisoners taken on this front to date (25th) in recent advance.

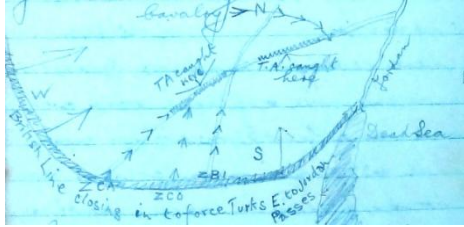
All specialists in T. army are Germans. Large German Wireless Station been burned out, near, but a loft of several hundred carrier pigeons intact. Our infantry are making good the roads, while RIFB are garrison on Nablous.

26th - Moved back 12 m. to relieve work of motor supply column to the cavalry ahead (2 divisions).

Nablous is the 'Shechem' in the Bible.

30th - Wireless Press (27th) Gen. Allenby reports to date 50,000 prisoners, and 325 guns captured.

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 spoil & photos of prisoners see page—](#)
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Our cavalry 40 m. from Damascus (30th) and have joined up with King of Hedjaz (Arab Horse). Our forces are repairing bridges over Jordan.

Wireless (30th) - Armistice with Bulgaria signed who unconditionally accept Allied terms. We are to have complete control of Bulgarian Railways.

We collected some Turkish Wire from an old T. camp. no where we were and they had even used zinc wire cut from permanent routes, & raised on trees off the ground, also barbed wire for their communications!

1st Oct. - Damascus taken by cavalry at 6 a.m. We moved up to position 3 miles E. of Nablous.

2nd Oct. Out with St. D. sortings confusing cables at old Z B I position. Our Bde is here for sole purpose of clearing the area as this was Turkish Corps Headquarters at this village Darbalut. They left chairs, folding bed frames, & tons of stores,

as well as thousands of fleas & fleas!

The natives sold eggs & tomatoes brought from Nablous and many of our fellows boasted these folding beds, so we lived easy enough.

3rd - I cleared contact on lines caused by some Indian linemen tampering with them.

4th & 5th - Reeling up Turk wire at Nablous & on area around. I am to be paid for.

5th - Our company thanked by A.C. for its energetic work during such a victory. A special Day of Thanksgiving for Victory of our arms in Palestine.

Massed Service at Balata (Garob's Field) at which Corp & Div Generals were present, also a large representation of population of Nablous including some well dressed people.

Damascus is 105 miles from Nablous, direct.

7th - Our cavalry have reached Beirut (Bayroot) on the coast.

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2nd. Out with Lt. D. sorting confusing cables at old Z.B.I position. Our Bde is here for sole purpose of clearing the area as this was Turkish Corps Headqrs at this village **Derbalut**. They left chairs, folding bed frames, & tons of “rouse”

as well as thousands of flies & fleas! The natives sold eggs & tomatoes brought from **Nablous** and many of our fellows boasted these folding beds, so we lived easy enough.

3rd – I cleared contact on lines caused by some Indian lineman tampering with them.

4th & 5th – Reeling up Turk wire nr **Nablous** & on area around.. I am to be paid L/Cpl .

5th – our Company thanked by O.C. for its energetic work during such a victory.

6th – Special Day of Thanks giving for Victory of our arms in Palestine.

Massed Service at **Balata (Jacob's Field) at** which Corp & Div Generals were present, also a large representation of population of **Nablous** including some well dressed people.

Damascus is 105 miles from **Nablous** direct.

7th – our cavalry have reached **Beirut (Bayroot)** on the coast.

8th - French Naval Squadron in harbor
of Beirut and Naval Division
landed. Turkish cabinet fallen
so we expect important changes.
7th to 9th - Cleared all spare wire
in area.

Beresford + Burns (Spro) have been
admitted. to Hospital and others are
suffering from stomach disorder caused
by the flies on the food. Our OC
is down with it too.

10th - 2nd Lt Clark gone to leave on a
N.C.O.s refresher course for one month.
I learn from interpreter that Jacob's
Well is in the part-built Monastery
at Balata.

11th Oct. - Now reported officially that
in the four days advance 18-21st left
out of 4th 7th + 8th Turkish Armies
75,000 prisoners taken, thus only
4,000 effectives escaped.

12th Oct - Q.G.D. brought in from advance
guard to concentrate prior to move.

13th X^e walked over to see Jacob's Well
and was shown into the Monastery,
which at present lacks a roof,
by the Greek orthodox Father, two of
whom are 'c' of the place, assisted by
our own sentries. He showed me
down into a basement which tho
very dark, I discovered to be elaborately
hung with tapestry + brass lamps
and adorned with some oil paintings
depicting Christ talking with
the woman of Samaria at the
Well, as mentioned in the Bible.
The woman came from Askar (Halep?)
I took a photo of it by permission of
the Priest. The top of the ancient well
is there right enough, but with the
addition of a small pulley-wheel,
attached to which is a steel bucket
on a wire hawser, which he lowered
and gave me a richly embellished
silver cup to drink from the
bucket of crystal-clear water which

8th – French Naval Squadron in harbour of **Beirut** and Naval Division landed. Turkish Cabinet fallen so we expect important changes.

7th to 9th – Cleared all spare wire in area.

Beresford & Burns (Sprs) have been admitted to hospital and others are suffering from stomach disorder caused by the flies on the food. Our O.C. is down with it too.

10th – L/Cpl Clark gone to Cairo on a N.C.O.'s refresher course for one month. I learn from interpreter that **Jacob's Well** is in the part-built Monastery at **Balata**.

11TH Oct - Now reported officially that in the four days advance 18 – 21st September out of the 4th, 7th & 8th Turkish Armies 75000 prisoners taken, thus only 4000 effectives escaped.

12 Oct – Q.G.D. brought in from advance guard to concentrate prior to move.

13th - I walked over to see **Jacob's Well** and was shown into the Monastery, - which at present lacks a roof, - by the Greek Orthodox Father, two of whom are i/c of the place, assisted by our own sentries. He showed me down into a basement which tho' very dark, I discovered to be elaborately hung with tapestry & brass lamps and adorned with some oil paintings depicting Christ talking with the woman of **Samaria** at the well, as mentioned in the Bible. The woman came from **Askar (Salem)** I took a picture of it by permission of the Priest. The top of the ancient well is there right enough, but with the addition of a small pulley-wheel, attached to which is a steel bucket on a wire hawser, which he lowered and gave me a richly embellished silver cup to drink from the bucket of crystal-clear water which

he raised from the deep well.
It may here be observed that
like Jerusalem, the original ground
level was lower than at present.
While I was there a lot of well-
dressed people from Nablous came
and drank of the water. Some
were Jews of the Alee type.
I went on and took photo of Nablous
and on return took one of Salem
(Askar) and of the exterior of the
Monastery. Then I snapped a sudden
photo of some of the types of women
found in Askar and surrounding
villages and they are dirty &
ragged wrecks, and seem to be
same as in ancient history. How
these natives live seems a marvel,
but then some have oxen, fowls, fruit
trees, so they probably manage all right.
13th - Germany reported accepted President
Wilson's terms of his January 28th note.
14th - Turkey & Austria-Hungary forcing

Germany to make peace, or they must
have separate peace.
15th - I took four men with me
to open Z.C.A.R. at Mesoudieh Rail Hd.
where Turk railways & trains complete
are in use by us. We came
past Nablous and saw traces
of the Turks evacuation. A
Red Crescent Nurse stood on a
balcony to see us pass, also a
prisoner patient. Then we passed
several motor lorries run off the
road, & bearing German breasts.
Then a Unit of our Div. overtook
us in a number of German
lorries, driven by our people.
16 - President W. makes grand reply
of refusal to be trapped by German
craft, etc. The cables which I laid
to the battens are now to be
reel'd up as all communications
are to be by runner to Battens.
Section arrived covered with dust,

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 It may here be observed that
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 but then some have oxen, fowls, & fruit
 trees, so they probably manage alright.
13th - Germany reported accepted President
 Wilson's terms of his January 8th note.
 14th – Turkey & Austria-Hungary forcing

Germany to make peace, or they must
 have separate peace.

15th – I took four men with me
 to open Z.C.A.R . at **Messudiah Rail Hd**
 where Turk railways & trains complete
 are in use by us. We came
 past **Nablous** and saw traces
 of the Turks evacuation. A
 Red Crescent Nurse stood on a
 balcony to see us pass, also a
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 several motor lorries run off the
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 Section arrived covered with dust,

about 11 a.m. – very tired after their
15 mile-march. Swarms of fleas
here again. We begin use of arsenic
trays to kill them, the flies. Our move to
Company Hdqrs. to be postponed till
23rd. Issued with winter
clothing. **Samaria Station** near.
18th – Hear Ostend & Lille captured.
19th – Zeebrugge in flames. Bruges taken.
Great advance in France continues
the Germans are breaking up.
Socialist papers shouting for German
Kaiser to abdicate.
20th – Steve, Bob Bruce, Cecil Munden, our
Interpreter & I paid a visit to both new
and old **Samaria** villages (now called
Sabastia). We saw first two huge column-
bases made of massive blocks of stone
circular in shape (and must have measured 25 ft across)
and these I learn
have been excavated by an American
Society prior to the War ([No. 380](#)) Then we
went on toward the top of the hill
and came upon a long row of ancient

looking solid stone columns about 15ft
in height ([Photo 381](#)) and numbering
about 50. These appear to be the foundation
for a huge temple of the Romans and
tis marvellous how they erected them.
Further along we came to the village
(new) of **Samaria** just to the E of the old
ruins. The filth and evil smells made
us get out quickly but I took [photo no 382](#)
of a yard and a Minaret erected over the
alleged grave of John the Baptist. Then we came
to the high ground W. of the village, and
saw more pillars and some ornamental
top for pillars, also traces of Roman
Mosaic work, all very ancient & easily
credited to the Romans ([Photo 383](#))
On the very top of the hill we had
a splendid view of all the surrounding
country & could see the sea in the
distance. Here was a large area
excavated, showing a full tier of steps -
more pillars & massive walls ([no 384](#)), all of
stone blocks. Below the steps a huge
block of pure white marble, beautifully

carved to the shape of a man's body
wearing the short pleated kilt tightly
fitted round the loins, and truly
corresponding with all pictures I have
seen of Roman Soldiers. The head
legs & arms were missing, but there
was no mistake about the identity
as the figure of the Roman Emperor, (Emperor Augustus).
I know little about the history of
all this except that this place was a
noted fortress which withheld attacks
many times in ancient history, and
this is easily understood when one
sees how it commands the surrounding
country.

21st. Lt. Darling. O.C. Section, gone to
hospital with "debility".

22nd All of us issued with voting
cards & authority to appoint a proxy.

26th – still at **Mesudiah nr. Samaria**

Harry Normanton has got down to
69th Gen. Hospl.

27th – In orders for A/LCpl (paid) from 4-10-18.

Lt. Kendall comes to us as O.C. No.4 Section

31st Oct – We are still at **Mesudiah nr Samaria**.

Official Wire.- An armistice has been concluded
by which hostilities between the Allies and Turkey
cease at 12.00 today (31st Oct) Lt Kendall goes
back to YJ today; we are sorry to lose him.

Lt. Darling returns ce soir. Sproston, Stevenson
Turner, Buckley,* Ripley, Brigden & Bruce
Normanton*. Beresford*, Burns*, Doyle* have all
been sick attending hospital (*) admitted.

The good news has bucked us all up somewhat.

The heat & bad atmosphere here is the cause
of the sickness. Every day a number
of sick leave D.H.Q. for hospital. Signal
Coy. HQ. have over half the men away
sick. I have been painting Christmas
Cards and sketching in my book.

2nd November. Quiet and uneventful birthday

4th – An Armistice with Austria-Hungary
has been signed with the Italian G.O.C
and took effect at 3p.m today;

6th – Moved down the line on a four-days
march to **Ludd** (the Railway Centre) -a.

distance of 42 miles, via Tul Karam
railhead 12 miles West of Mesoudieh where
we started from. We reached Surafend, three
miles W of Budd, on 9th, and here camped.
10th Nov. - German Wireless - "Victory is not
granted us. Our troops have fought to the last."
"A great naval battle was to take place
but the Navy flew the Red Flag and revolted."
(or words to this effect) Lloyd George says
at Mayor's Banquet The Kaiser & Crown Prince
have at last abdicated. Germany could
speak today, tomorrow will be too late.

Meanwhile wireless has previously
stated that Allies advancing on 100 mile front
Germans retreating in disorder.

11th - We are ordered in to Company Hago
where we arrived at 2:30 pm and in
keeping with the Red Tape flying about we
had to line our bivouacs with other
rows, sidewise & front. At 5 oc news came
thru of the signing of the Armistice by
Germany by which hostilities ceased at 11 pm
(11th) and the news was sent out to all

Units in a remarkably short time, and almost
simultaneously a great burst of Terrie Lights
both English & German-made (captured stuff)
were fired into ^{the} air rendering the quiet
evening a very inferno of guns being fired,
ground flares (red), & star shells, blended
with the green and red Terrie lights all
round the country for many miles.
There were hundreds of lights fired into
the air together, by the Battalions of
infantry of our own & other divisions -
the greens & reds combining with the
red ground flares, which flooded
the surrounding bivouacs with a
magnificent glow, and thus making
one of the finest fireworks effects
one could witness. Next a number
of star shells would light up the camp
like daylight, and to make it more
effective an anti-aircraft gun a
long way away fired a number of H.E.'s.
high into the air above us, and as
I watched the sight I was very

distance of 42 miles, via **Tul Keram** railhead 12 miles West of **Messudieh** where we started from. We reached **Surafend**, three miles W of **Ludd**, on 9th, and here camped **10th Nov:-** German Wireless – “Victory is not granted us. Our troops have fought to the last.” “A great naval battle was to take place but the Navy flew the Red Flag and revolted” (or words to this effect) Lloyd George says at Mayor’s Banquet The Kaiser & Crown Prince have at last abdicated, Germany could speak today, tomorrow will be too late.

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Units in a remarkably short time, and almost simultaneously a great burst of Verie Lights both English & German made (captured stuff) were fired into the air – rendering the quiet evening a very inferno of guns being fired, ground flares (red), & star shells, blended with the green and red Verie Lights all round the country for many miles. There were hundreds of Lights fired into the air together, by the Battalions of infantry of our own & other divisions – the greens & reds combining with the red ground flares, which flooded the surrounding bivouacs with a magnificent glow, and thus making one of the finest firework effects one could witness. Next a number of star shells would light up the camp like daylight, and to make it more effective an anti-aircraft gun a long way away fired a number of H.E’s. high into the air above us. And as I watched the sight I was very

much impressed with the thought of the end of this awful war at last, and how thankful we—who are yet alive & well, in spite of hundreds of past dangers, when a single shell or bullet might easily have made an end of us—ought to feel.

My thoughts carried me home to the dear ones who I hope to see not later than another six months, and I wondered what they were doing now the news is out. How excited they must be after all this suspense and hardship, and how fortunate that we three brothers have been spared to our adorable Mother, while many bereaved parents mourn the loss of those they loved.

Then it suddenly occurred to me that I might be able to photograph some of the verie lights so I went back to camp and soon exposed a film, with what result I don't know yet. It might be recalled that we are at Ludd

X
Rail centre, awaiting our turn to embark for Cairo where we suppose we shall await demobilisation, if the other three divisions on their way down go to the Gordanielles Forts for Garrison—and not us. The village of Saba Fend which boasts a large wine distillery & I believe exports the wine, is near our camp, and our canteen has bought a few small barrels lately, which, altho it has no interest to me, was sold to the men for 5⁰⁰ (5s) per pint (and this must have been equal to the best Port Wine, if one could judge from the number that went "light-headed"). I'm able to say however, that not even "Keace" made me inclined to touch it, altho I helped a few of my pals on the road to oblivion for the night, but what of that on such an occasion!
12th—This morning many of our chaps were surprised to know the antics they had cut last night & have "thick heads" too. General holiday. The sandstorm has

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the wine, is near our camp, and our canteen
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12th – This morning many of our chaps were
surprised to know the antics they had
cut last night & have “thick-heads” too,
General holiday. The sandstorm has

filled our kits with dust & sand.

12th & 13th - Violent hail & rain storm, with powerful wind which blew several marquees & tents down, also many bivies. Lpl. Clarke came back from his bout of extra training and was in bivy with me, and in the night we felt the rain spouting in thro' a large hole in the bivy top and next one side of the bivy blew away, pegs & all. J.C. had to hold it down from inside while I went out in the rain & fixed it (using a Turkish bayonet for one corner). At daybreak, while still raining, we had to parade for watering the animals, and then the rain ceased for a bit, and the whole camp got busy digging trenches round their bivies & putting them up firm again. Rain continued at intervals all day.

14th - More rain. Riding dull for some but rain stopped it.

16th I was in the "Pook" riding class.

17th - Thanksgiving Church Parade while still at Lura Fend nr. Ludd. On Guard 17/18.

18th - Troop ride round C.H.Q. Ramleh. and in the afternoon I went to 30th Bde sports which included tent-pegging & rings and pegs with sword (both at full gallop) donkey race (riders seated backwards) mule race, sack race, camel race, running etc. two bands in attendance, very nice.

20th - Lpl. Wilford & Spt. Brown gone on deck today leaving only Spt. Mitchell & Spt. Brown. Lpl. Clarke on the lines with myself. Lpl. Clark my bivy pal has a parcel of apples from home today & being sealed, they are in fine condition so with some oranges & almonds which I have bought from the natives of Lura Fend, we have a pleasant evening. Besides above named there is only Ripley in the cook house & Sgt. Slinger forming the remainder of poor old No. 4 Section here, while just Spts. Osborne, Munden & Cook & Sgt. Brown are at 3rd Bde carrying on the office, and

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18th – Troop ride round G.H.Q. **Ramleh**. and in afternoon I went to 30th Bde sports which included tent-pegging & rings and pegs with sword (both at full gallop) donkey race (riders seated backwards). mule race, sack race, camel race, running &c. two bands in attendance, very nice.

20th – L/Cpl Wilford Spr Brown gone in "dock" today leaving only Spr Mitchell, J. Brock and Craig, & Inker on the lines with myself i/c
L/Cpl Clark my bivey pal has a parcel of apples from home today & being sealed they are in fine condition so with some Oranges & almonds which I have bought from the natives of **Sura Fend**, we have a pleasant evening. Besides above named there is only Ripley in the cook-house & Sgt Slinger forming the remainder of poor old No. 4 Section here, while just Sprs Osborne, Munden & Cook & Sgt Passey are at 31st Bde carrying on the office, and

moving with Bde assisted by three RIFB Signallers. Many of the Indian Infantry are dying as the result of Bronchial Pneumonia from the storm of night of 12th + 13th inst. A steady stream of white soldiers including our company, are being admitted to hospital with the "Spanish Influenza" which has been so prevalent in England lately. Sprston, Stevenson, Bruce, Turner, Brighden are among those "admitted".

24th - Company moved off to the train three miles away and amid the usual rush, the animals were loaded + also the wagons. The train left Sudd at 1200, stopping at Gaza for 50 minutes, so I hopped over to the signal office and ~~phoned~~ phoned thro to Rafa Loco + they kindly offered to send ^{Herbert} a message to meet my train down. Arrived Rafa where I met Herbert. He had tea + biscuits, a sponge, four packets of cigos + a box of matches for me, also he had brought a souvenir to show me which was a coal skuttle made from a

Turkish Shell, and was excellent. Arrived Kantara Sunday morning before dawn and after unloading everything in the dark we harnessed up and again moved off, only to proceed a few hundred yards to a freighting shed where we anchored, and the dismounted men went with an officer to a canteen near and got hot water to make our tea with. I was now very sick with the "Flue" and after a much-needed wash and shave I rolled myself in a blanket. We moved off in the evening for Kantara East, at dusk, a journey of 2 miles and entrained by about 900. afterward getting some food at a canteen on the station. Then I slept on the floor of the carriage all night and I think my temperature was high, but in the morning we reached Cairo at dawn and were shunted into siding where we had to wait all day in the heat and flies but only our pint of tea on arrival to last us the whole day. In the afternoon

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the train with the wagons on arrived and were soon unloaded for the last time and by evening we marched out of the station to Mena Camp at the Pyramids 10 miles away, via the Kasr el Nil bridge, which is a fine piece of engineering, spanning the Nile. It is quite dark long before we reached the camp and on the way we passed much flooded country stretching well away from the Nile. We slept in the open on the sand, as no sort of shelter ~~off~~ were in evidence. I reported sick with my cold but got nothing more than a few tablets to take. The second night we again slept out having no bivies borrowed and the cold wind did considerable harm. Thirty men reported sick when I did, nearly all with the effects of "Flu". We can see Cairo in the distance, with the two Minarets of the Citadel standing out in relief.

30th John Clark & I went on pass to Cairo, and went to see round the Box cars where the noted spice merchants of the East, are made, we sent home a double-tube case of pure saffron, each, cost 17s each case. We also inspected the metal workers & in the evening after a tea in the Y.M.C.A. Ezbeki Gardens, we went to a Picture Palace, and after, caught a tram for camp at 9pm. December 1st-23rd - Still at Mena Camp and nothing much doing save a Y.M.C.A. Recreation Room & hired to go to in the evenings. We three, John, Hazel, and I, have been on pass to Cairo several times taking tea in our favourite rendezvous in the Soldiers Cafe Ezbeki Gardens and going to theatre after. There was a grand Review of our Division on 19th inst. in Giza Race Course, Cairo, and the C-in-C. expressed himself pleased with all he saw in turnout. On 22nd Capt Rose opened a Demobilization Office for the Company and we had our particulars of grades &c taken, Cpl. Reynolds & two Smith

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have gone home today for a start. (regular)

23rd - Repairing a Bamboo Concert Room for Xmas. ^{24th} We had a Football match, boxing match, and tug-of-war.

25th Christmas Day - Extra food for breakfast: three eggs + tomatoes, Dinner + concert at 6pm with free beer + lemonade.

26th Another grand day with fine dinner and tea and a card evening followed by another impromptu concert. Altogether a very fine holiday. Ten miners gone home.

(Lapse in keeping notes)

9th Jan - 73 Indian drivers att. to us. Sproston is sent for from War office we are going to see him in dock tomorrow and give him notice of the order. French class started.

10th Jan 21 drivers left us for bleo for duty up the line again - poor devils!

16th Jan - Censorship of letters removed.

21st Jan - Order published to wear 1914-15 stars
" " 39 men on list to prepare to leave

for Signal Base Depot, Alex, on short notice. Sproston awaiting U.K. orders. ^{24th} Clark, Buckley, Menden, Ripley, Glock, ~~9th~~ Sproston + myself from Section 4. to go on 23rd.

23rd - Sproston went to U.K. via Kantara. We others to Alex.

25th - Had to revert to "Laffer" along with Bost, Whitehead, Howarth, on our arrival in the Base Signal Depot, Alex. We went to see John Farrugia.

26th - J. Clark + I were invited to John's house to tea, we stayed till 11.45. (Sunday)

27th - A pleasant evening at M. Agzopardi learned much French grammar.

28th - Warned for the big draft, 400 odd strong, for Palestine Syria

29th - Went to the American Consulate Alex

30th - Kit inspection &c

31st - Went to say goodbye to John Farrugia + his family first going to tea at his aunt's Mr. Agzopardi, whose Lawrence taught us some more French, then John came for us and we went to his house from 8pm to 11.15, having a late pass. I learn that M. is coming to live

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a late pass. I learn that M is coming to live

in England with her intended after the war, and John & Caesar also on a visit, so I, of course, invited them home. Received a present from John & M., which I sent home next day. I had Mr. W. offer of work, & to purchase the business if desired.

Saturday 1st Feb. - Came away from my dear friend Bill John Clark, after being together 4 years, it was like parting from a brother. Travelled all night and reached Kantara G.B.D. at daybreak Sunday morning. Paraded for breakfast (rationations). Went with Pte Buckley to find Sprouton at the Demobilization camp but no trace of him among the thousands there.

Thursday 6th Feb. - Munden & Whitehead & Doyle went up the line at 4.30 in a blinding sand storm, which blew a large number of tents down.

Monday 10th Feb. - We of W. Corp drafted still at G.B.D. KANTARA where everything is dreadfully boring nothing but tents to see, nowhere to go, and very little to eat, and without being able to buy

canteen stores we would be badly off. Over in the demobilization camp they are sending home about 10 my. bat., while we are bound for Aleppo, as the poor old signals are excluded from all that, so far.

11th - Sew leather jerkins, trowsers & third blanket - ready to move off at 5.00 Semern.

12th - ~~Entained~~ for Aleppo & were glad to leave Kantara. Saw Herbert at Rafa, he said he was going to Demob Camp, Kantara next day.

13th - Arrived Haifa 0200. Day's leave in Haifa to look round - from 10.00 - 2.130. Haifa settles in front of immensely high hills and is a seaport town of fair size. Two British battleships were in the harbour, across which can be seen the foot of Acre. Plenty of Jews & Arabs in Haifa.

14th - Left Haifa 1100 passing thro Afule, Beisan over the Jordan which wound snakelike near the railway, we came to the Sea of Galilee and across the ^{Thames} sea (some 12 by 50 miles) we saw Lydda & Baperniam. We reached Damir 2220, after a pleasant journey thro a beautiful country.

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15th - Left Damascus 2000, the train climbing completely over a range of mountains and at times one could see we were running on mere ledges cut in the sides of deep canyons or cliffs and hundreds of feet above the stream which flowed away down beneath us. When a few thousand feet above sea level we found some of the mountains covered with snow and easily saw Mount Hermon beautifully white & shining in the sun, in the distance. We reached Rayak at 1500 where we saw Johnny Turner who was linesman at that station. We hung on at the station, entrained on full gauge rails again and finally left there at about 2000. for Aleppo we were crowded like sheep in closed wagons. The country between Rayak & Aleppo is barren except for the fairly large towns of Hamah & Hama. Reached Aleppo on 16th at 1400.

Working on permanent telegraph routes in Aleppo each day except Sunday, when we work in the morning only. Thousands of demobilized Turks poured from Constantinople back to this town some even riding on the engines of down trains and many were killed, in all, by being pushed off the crowded trains. On March 1st there was a terrible massacre of the Armenians in this town, 500 killed & in all, 1500 casualties. The Arabs & Turks did it for loot & because the Armenians are Christians & they Moslems. The most bloody deeds were added to those already on the black list of atrocities by the Turks. This was all done on a very wet night and next day the town was alive with troops - machine gun detachments were at all the street corners in the area & also on the housetops of some important buildings with signals on vial stations. Indian lancers with

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drawn swords & Hedjahi's men with anything up to six revolvers in their belts, several ammunition-bandoliers, a bayonet & knife & rifle galloped among the crowds aiming and firing their revolvers blindly. One of their own officers was accidentally shot by a Hedjahi's machine gun, also two Indian sentries were killed in the night. The town quietened down quickly after a few hand to hand combats with the Arabs in the Beggar area, one m.g. armoured-car man was wounded in the head. Next night the armoured cars & squadrons patrolled the streets, and also for every night since there has been some patrols out. We hear that similar massacre was carried out in other towns from Damascus upwards. The Armenians are unable thro' lack of organization & transport of any sort, to get back to their own

country North of here. They are a progressive race and their ancestors were from Europe. They are a defenceless race tho' but happen to be in the midst of their enemies which is unfortunate.

10th March - I am excused Duty with a septic arm caused tho' a mosquito bite soon, now the weather is getting warmer this place will be a hot-bed of disease it is already in many ways.

Mr. Buckley has gone home today.

11, 12 & 13th - Excused duty.

14th - Duty. About two or three men per week leave here for home.

15th - Letter from H. Normanton, dated 28/2/19, to say he went home 1/3/19.

22nd - I left Aleppo for "Homeward".

26th March - Arrived at Kantara depot at 0600, and proceeded from the Reception marquee to Section E, the dispersal section for Shorncliffe, but we soon learned that from Sunday 23rd, a state of war

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had been declared in the camp, though it is reported, the riots in Egypt, but the general strike in England may have something to do with it. All the infantry in (demob) were given ammunition and field dressing again and were sent away to the Sudan, while the REG & RFA and the like were all mobilized in their own respective units ready for duty if necessary, no more drafts for home to go until further change. So things look black again.

Becil Manden here with me.

2nd April - Kantara "reinforcement" late "demob" camp. - Most of the Signals and many RODREs have gone to Egypt on emergency "stunts".

X It attended an address on "The Mohammedan Religion", some notes as follows:-

X The Mohammedans believe that theirs is the only God, who they call 'Allah', and they

read the 'Koran'. They have mosques in every town or village where their religion is believed, and these have minarets (a kind of tower) with a gallery near the top, and from this gallery one of their chosen men calls the people to prayer five times daily, which was the number of times (which they suppose was ordered by 'Allah'). They believe that Christians will be tormented in the life to come, while they will be exalted.

They prostrate themselves in prayer ^{5 times daily} at the appointed times daily wherever they happen to be. Their marriage customs are strange: - when a child is born, say a girl, she is at once destined by the parents to marry a man (another neighbour's 'boy' baby) when they grow to be about 15 or 20, the marriage takes place, and if the man has grown to be a villain or downhard it makes no difference, their engagement is binding. The bride is veiled and usually has never

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^{proceeds}
+ a week celebrations ~~follows~~ wedding - men staying at groom's house & women at bride's house.

been seen by her intended husband until she is unveiled to him then a mohammedan is allowed four wives and usually they are kept apart. The girls have ~~an~~ utter lack of ambition and whoever is destined to marry them or whatever happens to them they believe it is useless to try to avoid it, being inevitable, according to their religion. Therefore the custom at the wedding is that the husband always beats the girl with a stick - thus showing that there is to be no doubt who is to be master. Once a year they are supposed to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca. Their belief is that women are inferior to men and therefore they always can be seen doing all the work ^{grinding corn (describer)} ~~carrying faggots~~, or any load and walking behind the man who is usually too lazy even to walk about, and rides a donkey or camel while the children and

women follow on foot. X To a Christian mind their treatment of women is disgraceful. X After their marriage they go to their new home and the woman newly-married carries a picher of water on her head to the house to show she will do his dirty work for him, also she carries a lump of dough which she throws at the door, and if it sticks it is considered a good omen, if it don't, the reverse. Many other strange customs, such as tying a piece of cloth from their garments to railings of shames, etc. where they worship, this I saw at Jerusalem. X ^{Mosques on many} ~~canal, the port~~ hill tops in open country - many have wells of water (strangely enough) also on the hill top. Some Mesoloun similarly situated - Khirbet Hallabij

been seen by her intended husband until she is unveiled by him then.*

*A week celebrations follows wedding – men staying at Groom's house & women at Brides house.

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Demobilization Camp, Kantara. Sunday
6th April: Last evening a meeting
of men affected by the suspension
of demob. was held outside the camp
on the desert, and representatives
were appointed to put forward
numerous grievances. The spirit
of the troops, who have been so
disappointed after having stopped
letters from home, and told their
they are coming, and now seem
like being kept here indefinitely,
is rather ugly, and very little
would make an uproar. Now
today arrangements to have letters
addressed here, are being made,
so what hopes! the men are kept
in the dark re the reasons for
the stoppage. We hear that the
Military Service act is passed
in England.

8th April - Delegates from each section
have interviewed the O.C. with requests

that the men's demands be forwarded
to Hdqrs. One clause is that the G.H.Q.
must contradict the statement made
by Mr. Borehill in the House of Commons
that the troops had volunteered
to remain in Egypt while the
trouble continued - This is not true
as the troops were sent sans any
option. They also state that as
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long standing it should have
been dealt with earlier
instead of waiting for the trouble
and then claiming men who
have done over three years
active service abroad. Some
favourable replies have been
received.

April 12th - Given out that 1000 men
are to be sent home on 15th, also
1000 from those sent to Egypt from
demob. There are 3000 in demob
camp + 4000 on service from here.

Demobilization Camp, **Kantara**. Sunday

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that the mens' demands be forwarded to Hdqrs. One clause is that the G.H.Q must contradict the statement made by Mr. Churchill in the House of Commons that the troops had volunteered to remain in Egypt while the trouble continued – This is not true as the troops were sent sans any option. They also state that as the Egyptian trouble is one of long standing it should have been dealt with earlier instead of waiting for the trouble and then claiming men who have done over three years active service abroad. Some favourable replies have been received.

April 12th:- Given that 1000 men are to be sent home on 15th, also 1000 from those sent to Egypt from demob. There are 3000 in demob camp & 4000 on service from here

There is a gambling game allowed in the army called "House". A cardboard covered with 20 numbers in four rows is given to each one playing, as they watch these numbers a man had a bag of counters each having a number from 1-90 and as the numbers correspond with the card numbers, as shouted, the players mark the numbers until the first one who gets them all covered first wins the money pooled, less 2d in the 1/- retained by the owner of game. Some of the code calls are amusing:- No 1 is "Kelly's eye" 10 = Good old 10 (10th Div) 30 = blind 30 9 = Medicine + Duty (No 9 pill) 66 = Glikety-click 90 = Top of the house = Bonnaught Rangers &c.

April 13th - Draft called out, my pal Beil Munden, and I are not on it & rotten luck, so we are "grumpy" and, having no work except occasional paper-chasing fatigue (sanitary patrol - or rubbish collecting off parade ground) we are morbid and homesick, more so in my case because Will Smith (Vap) has just got his name "up" to go. He has offered to call home and explain my position on the map! 16th April - The above draft went today.

I must not forget to here mention my esteem & respect for Miss Kamey, an elderly lady of 75 yrs who does much here in Kantara, by providing a large reading & writing hut & also a tea & "wad" marquee for the benefit of we soldiers who are stranded in this God-forsaken corner of the desert. There is also a piano there. Miss Kamey's devotion to the worship

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of God also is of the highest order, added to which she spares no effort to make us comfortable under the circumstances. She is about to have a lawn tennis court prepared, and she also runs a Hostel for soldiers at Sidi Gaber Station, Alex.

Easter Sunday - 11pm. Meeting of all demob. of about 1500, at which it was decided to give the authorities till 1pm Tuesday 22nd to grant following, in view of the fact that most men had been here from one to two months and were still being sent to Egypt instead of Home. All had done from 3-4 yrs active service, in nearly all cases without leave. Demands: 1- That no further drafts of men be made from this camp to anywhere except home.

2- That all those already so drafted should be recalled as soon as possible
3- That demobilization be resumed

immediately!

Another meeting was held at 1730 Sunday because 3 drafts for Cairo, Tanta, and Zagazig were ordered to leave at 0400^{hrs} Easter Monday and thus attempt to break us up. We marched in column of fours in front of the C.O.'s office, and when the delegates had interviewed the C.O. we formed up on main parade ground in a large square and gave the C.O. a most orderly hearing, but got no satisfaction, and ~~at subsequent~~ so we "downed tools", and no parades or anything has been done since, in spite of orders posted for groups of individuals and everyone is in dead earnest, and at 0800 another meeting unanimously decided to stand firm. At 0900 we were interviewed by C.O. (deputy) of the area, and at 1600 by C.O. ^{Gen. District} himself (of area) who failed to impress the men who gave both an orderly hearing, but not because there were about 20 armed

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Officers there, but because the meeting decided to make only orderly representations unless threatened, and this cannot be done to an orderly deputation.

22nd Tuesday. - 0800 Meeting in which the same firmness is meant.

23rd April to Sunday 27th - Nothing done except voluntary ration & mess but fatigues. Meeting each morning on football ground 2000, where questions of the day were discussed, also where many disclosures of Authorities' perversions of truth were made, such as Authorities claim that there were no transports, to which the chairman (P. McArthur ^{RAMC}) read a letter from a man who was in Kantara, just come from Port Said, in this letter was stated names of four boats lying there - two of which had been sent on to India empty because

there was no use for them, and the other two leaving for ~~the~~ Marseilles with only 2000 odd passengers on each, whereas their proper capacity was 4000 each. Also an advertisement of Thos Cook & Son for special ^{cheap} rates of second-class passages to U.K. with request to book as soon as possible (cutting from an Egyptian newspaper) was read. Also it was proved that there were plenty of R.O.D.R.E spare drivers to take trains to Port Said, as well as some volunteers of them in demob camp. This was the way the meeting defeated all the excuses made by the authorities re the stoppage of demob. We had offers from seven units in the area to come out on strike in a body in sympathy with us, and because they had hundreds of eligible men waiting to be given demob. papers. Our delegates told them they were

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best where they were, so long as we could defend on them to "down tools" if we needed them. One lot 700 to 800 strong wanted to march from an outlying camp n. the canal, to in a body, to the demob. camp, but our delegates restrained them and so they from that time reduced their 14 different guards to 5 only - which were absolutely necessary, such as Field Bashi. On Friday morning, at our 0800 meeting, we passed a resolution to give the authorities till 1730 on Sunday 27th, as a time limit for the fulfilment of our demands. On Sunday morning Notices were posted on all Boards that the men were to move to their own sections (dispersal + not Unit sections) to restart demob. Also notices were sent to all Units to return all men posted to them from Demob.

camp, at once. We thus agreed to return to duty, and marched from the Football Ground to the section parade grounds, where we were soon sorted and sent to our original sections.

During our passive resistance, many times Mr. Churchill's name was mentioned as the common enemy of the soldiers; and what things he has stuffed into the people at home, about we men volunteering to stay in Egypt, while the trouble lasted, while in reality no man had any option in the matter, were fully dealt with, and promises were given by a certain N.C.O. that he had friends who would guarantee to get the true facts published in England, and the feeling was that Mr. Churchill would likely lose his position, especially at

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It might be recalled that owing to the level-headed way in which our chairman (a London school teacher) had conducted the whole affair, not one unseemly incident had occurred during our "strike".
28th Monday - Men returning to camp pending demob. One draft of 200 men, ^{preparing} ~~for~~ a cargo of horses, were called, to sail on 30th April.

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