

Lyttelton Times. 24 August 1915 (Papers Past) [22/04/2024]

IN SOME TIGHT CORNERS. BUT WOUNDED AT LAST.

Mr V. S. Graham, of 52, Coleridge Street, Sydenham, has received a letter from Private Percy J. Graham. It is dated from Zeitoun on June 30, and states that the soldier then was well.

He was in the first attack on the Gallipoli Peninsula, and, describing his experiences, he says: — “I got to work with a shovel I had brought with me, and got a bit of a trench dug and got some of the wounded chaps into it, and they forgot all about their wounds, they were so pleased to get into safety. There were twelve of us just here — four killed, four wounded and four not hit (**Tom Smallridge**, I, and two Temuka chaps). We stayed there until dark, when we were mustered up, and we had lost a good few men. We dug a proper trench after dark — this in a front of about two miles — and we were there for three days and nights. We were pretty safe now only for snipers. We were relieved after the third night at dark, and we started back to ‘bivies.’ We had a pretty rough time of it. We got into a creek a little way back, and I slipped in and got wet. It was pitch dark and most of us got lost, including myself. To make matters worse, it came on to rain, so I lay down on the grass and was soon asleep. I was tired out. I woke up pretty cold, but the rain had stopped, so I lay there about an hour waiting for daylight. I got back all right, but very wet.

“We did a bit of work on the beach for a day or two. Then we were shipped back to the other end again. We had a few days’ spell there and then we went into the trenches at Quinn’s Post, a pretty hot shop, being only about ten to thirty yards from the Turks’ trenches. It is mostly bomb-fighting there. The bombs shake a fellow’s nerves a bit; they make an awful noise and wound a lot of men, but I managed to dodge them. I have been in some tight corners, but I got out without a scratch until they got me at midnight on June 7. when they winged me in the right arm. But it took them seven weeks, so I had a good run. I am back in camp again.”

Timaru Herald. 15 November 1915 (page 4) [21/07/2015]

NO DETAILS OF WAR

IN HIS LETTER HOME.

The following are extracts from letters received by Mr H. Smallridge, Kensington, from his son Tom: -

“Sept. 5th. — Just a line to say I am still well. We have been busy lately, and this rough country soon knocks one up, so a good few are away sick. Bob Miller is not too good on it, but he is still hanging out. I am having a lot of trouble in writing this letter as there are swarms of flies here and what a nuisance they are, and I am in the trenches with no convenience for writing. You will have to excuse the dirty paper, as it was just given to me by a mate, otherwise I would have none. We are progressing very well now, and I am looking for the end of this war. One did not know what he was coming to. What sights and experiences I have been through would take too long to tell, and I don’t want any more after this lot. It is a very monotonous place we are in. A lot of people think there are some cities here, but there is not even a house. It is just one mass of big hills, and they take a lot of climbing. We get some hot days here, but will get a solid winter when it comes. But I hope it

will all be over by then. Hoping this finds you all safe and sound, as it leaves me sound but not safe.

“Sept. 12th. — I have not been feeling too good, so the doctor sent me to the hospital, but I am getting on all right now. I was properly run down, and I hung out too long. I am on an island not far from the front, but it is a relief to get a spell for a while. I am getting treated very well here, but I will have to rough it when I get back again. I don’t think it will last much longer. Sid Wilson is away. I heard he was wounded, but not seriously. The boys have all had a bad spin but never neglected their duty. There is a lot of sickness through bad water, etc., but we can all hope for the best. Tell Will Jim Hagerty was killed by a shell. He made a great fight for his life, but it was too serious. He was well liked and it broke the boys up.”

Timaru Herald. 10 February 1940 (Papers Past) [21/04/2024]

BRIDGES GUARDED

Great War Recalled Platoon At Pareora

The call for volunteers to assist the Empire in the present crisis has brought to the mind of a Timaru resident the beginning of the Great War in 1914, and he has contributed particulars regarding the activities of members of the South Canterbury Honorary Territorials, ex-Service Division, Number 3 Platoon.

The correspondent states that members of the platoon had offered themselves for duty and were duly sworn in. The platoon, under the late Captain John McNab, were ordered to entrain for the southward railway bridges, and in a few minutes they were dropped on the south end of the Pareora bridge. The workmen’s hut, about eight feet square, built of sleepers, was the headquarters. They were hurriedly instructed in their duties, given the password, and a number were detailed for “Sentry Go.”

Challenge Issued

Patrolling this bridge on two frosty planks, was not the most pleasant exercise. No one was allowed to approach the bridge, but should any person do so, the sentry was to challenge and fire a shot in the air. This was the signal for the guard to turn out. The late Private William Gibb was one of the sentries, and peering through the darkness he saw two men approaching and called on them to halt. They wondered what the joke was and continued their walk, when suddenly a shot rang out and the guard came over the bridge at the double. The men explained that they were working near the bridge, and that they were just taking an after-tea stroll, and were surprised when told the bridge was under military control.

“Enemy” Busy

Later in the evening some men came across the paddocks from the main road. The sentries on duty outside “headquarters” allowed them to come right up to the fence and seeing they were in uniform, thought it was all right to allow them to pass without a challenge. The sentries were, of course, duly reprimanded, and it was a good lesson to the whole platoon.

During the night another sentry distinctly heard the enemy sawing bolts at the bridge head. On making investigations he discovered that a cow had got her horns through a nearby wire fence and in trying to extricate herself, set up a noise very similar to the sound of a hack saw. Naturally nerves were a bit strained, which perhaps accounted for the little incidents during the first night on duty.

Father Time has been busy in the intervening years as a glance at the list of names will show

Number 3 Platoon—J. McNab (Commander)

Members—W. F. Alexander, R. A. Bagshaw, C. F. Burrell, W. E. Boys, W. W. Blair, G. Burns, W. J. Cotterill, J. Campbell, J. Christmas, G. W. Cordell, D. J. Caldwell, D. Cunningham, J. Currie, F. E. Coe, G. Chapman, H. E. Dick, J. Davidson, C. D. Donn, J. Evans, P. W. Eiby, F. H. Ferguson, F. H. D. Foden, G. Glover, J. Goodman, C. Glue, R. Green, W. Gibb, E. Howden, J. E. Hosie, R. F. Hill, A. Hope, G. Hadley, W. Hindmarsh, D. Hooper, Hunter-Weston, W. G. Irwin, A. E. Izzard, J. D. Jupp, C. E. Knowles, J. Kinlock, F. Karton, A. E. Lewis, H. Lowry, L. U. Miles, S. W. Marsh, R. Mahan, R. Malcolm, J. McConachie, Angus McLeod, J. McNab, H. Naylor, G. Newlands, H. R. Parker, John Pearson, W. Pratt, R. R. Randle, W. D. Revell, D. Stuart, **T. Smallbridge** [sic], J. Simpson, P. Sinclair, A. Sterndale, W. Thomson, W. Thomson, E. Tubb, C. H. Tripp, D. C. Turnbull, J. W. White, J. L. Wright, H. H. Webb, S. Wilkes, Jas. Watt, W. H. Wall.