F. J. Foote written 1970.

Thr. Auckland Mt. Rifles.

During our idle chat the war was mentioned, the man remarked, that you young chaps

should join the army, it would be a great opportunity to see a bit of the world, at the Governments expense." We laughed and joked about it a bit, and the subject changed, but the remark stuck. There were three of us chatting to Curly, and we all ended up over seas in the army. One never returned, one the cadet, came back, having sacrificed his health, and died at an early age. I was the other one, and though i probably saw more action in battles than the other two put together, and was very badly wounded, i am still well enough to enjoy life.

F.J. Foote/2

We left Curley, and the other two came home with me for dinner that night. I do not think the war was mentioned again , if it was i dont remember it but that remark of ,"going to the war ", was some thing i had not thought about, and i could not shake the idea off. Everyweek that passed seemed to build up a source of pressure, that i was becoming less able to resist. I did not want to go but that war remark, had changed my thoughts, and i think, changed me as well. Life could never be the same again, and it never was. The future held some strange fate that was beyond my power to analyze, and though i did not want to go, the Defence Office seemed to have the same power over me, as drugs to an addict.

I knew i was going, but was resisting the mental pressure as long as i could, for i was gradually becoming convinced that i would never return. This strange feeling was cultivated by my ***** imagination, until it became real, and convinced me, that somewhere along the war path i would meet my fate. I began to take a great interest in the hills and rocks around Taiwawe Bay, some old trees that i had played around as long as i could remember, and slowly, with sadness, patted my little pig dog and my pony that had nearly killed me on several occasions. I was with great affection attached to the life that was about to pass, and realised it was something that my parents had given me the opportunity to enjoy, at great sacrifice to themselves. Thinking over the remark,"you young fellows shouldgo to the war" and considering it from all angles, gave me no relief, and AFTER MANY DAYS

nights, I came to the conclusion that I had to go. Some power beyond my control was forcing me on and go I would. I was not afraid -- I had made up my mind I was not coming back, and was satisfied to accept my fate. This was early in the war, about the second reinforcemant. The Main Body had sailed and were somewhere in Egypt I think. I could not rest, I volunteered for the Mounted Rifles. My people pointed out that there was no need to go, but I knew I had to, and I might as well get it over. I passed my medical and got my instructions to be at the drill hall Whangarei on a certain date and time. I was ~~seventeen~~ NINETEEN years old when I left home to ride fifteen miles to the station. I cannot remember if anyone came with me or not, but I rode the fifteen miles with my own thoughts. There was the old gate that was swinging a bit off true, I thought you dear old thing I will never open you again. I looked with more fondness than I had ever realised on the scrub covered hills and the grass and bush and creeks. They had all been home to me for as long as I could remember. I re-lived the time my dogs baled up a large wild boar in heavy scrub. The dogs had him surrounded and the small half bred terrier was barking twelve inches from his nose as was his habit. If the pig rushed he side stepped, crouched low then set his teeth into the back leg as the pig passed. The scrub was above my head, with walls of fern obstructing the view. With my rifle barrel I opened a hole in the fern to get a view and then work my way through. Finally I knew I was very close and breaking a hole in a wall of fern I saw the boar. He was not more than three feet away from me. His eyes were as red as fire and the froth was dropping from his jaws and tusks. He was a large black, dangerous and ugly brute, and in his day must have killed hundreds

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of young lambs. I was too close to sight the rifle and he was ready to pivot on his back legs and rip me with his tusks. Believe me a boar moves and acts very fast. When I saw him my rifle was pointing to the neck, just below the base of the ear, I did not hesitate, I pressed the trigger, and my move was about one second ahead of his. He dropped almost on my boots. // One large kauri grew in solitary splendour right on the side of the track. It had always been a land mark, and it stood there now like an old friend and it seemed to fit in with my mood, an accepted sadness about my fate. When I got to the train there were other would be soldiers I joined, and the excitement of travel began to take control. They said that the Guard on the train was a German and every time he came through the carriage, we sang the old song "We will hang the German spy on the sour apple tree as we go marching by". I don't know if he cared or not, but it passed the time in a very satisfactory way for us. In those days there was no fuss or crowd farewells, we marched, ~~to~~ from THE DRILL HALL to the railway, with a five minute stop in the centre of Whangarei and the Mayor gave a short and unimpressive farewell speech, then walked off on his own business, and we marched off on the country's business. The people took no notice and we did not care. We were wrapped up in our own adventure, excitement and strange novelty of army travel. It was steamship travelling from Whangarei to Auckland in those days. On arrival at Auckland I was told no reinforcements for the Mounted Rifles were being taken and I could transfer to the Infantry if I liked. I asked for my papers back and they gave them to me and I walked out free from the Army, but not free with myself. ~~I had little money in my pocket and I did not~~

~~know what to do~~. I had left the HELENA BAY district, as a volunteer soldier, and I did not like the idea of returning. I did not know how to get employment and wandered down Queen Street, lonely and half lost. I got down as far as the wharves and there was a square topsail schooner tied up, I felt a bit more at home looking at it. Within ten minutes I walked on board and asked a man there if I could have a job. It happened to be the Mate and they were signing on a full crew. I was signed on as the boy, but on leaving the ship after a trip round New Zealand, I was given an Ordinary Seamans discharge. The ship was the "Huia" carrying explosives for the Glasgow Powder Company. She was a lovely ship and very like a private yadht. The Master was a Captain McKenzie, well known on the waterfront in those days. We were in port a week before we sailed, and took on a load of gelignite and percussion caps to be spread round New Zealand. As it was considered too dangerous for us to be alongside a wharf to load, the cargo was brought out to us on barges. We were supposed to keep a mat on the rail, as the small cases of explosives were passed over. This mat was always falling off and the longshoremen were always running round putting it straight. They were nervous with the tons of high explosives. I never remember anyone on the ship worryihg about whether the ship might blow up or not. As far as I can remember we could not care less. We placed the boxes weighing about fifty pounds each, on a plank and slid them down to the hold. Crew members caught them and stacked them so they would not break loose in rough weather. One time a case of gelignite shot off the plank high up and fell flat on the floor with a great whack. Everyone stood still for two seconds and then carried on as usual. If that case had gone off the whole ship would gave blown up. Now for a little about life

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at sea. My work was to get the meals from the cook and take them forward, and wash the dishes afterwards. The officers lived in the saloon aft, and the crew lived in a deck house forward, known as the focastle. We did not have much work to do. The cargo was clean and the ship was well kept. It took the mate most of his time finding suitable work for the crew to do during their watch on deck. The ship was run under "deep water rules", when relieving the wheel you went aft on the lee side, as the officers had the weather side to walk about on. Porpoises used to join us for a frolic through the waves and if we were doing fifteen knots in a strong wind they seemed to greatly enjoy the play. After leaving Auckland we passed Coromandel and headed for East Cape. Here we were soon out of sight of land and the crew decided I should take a turn at the wheel and control the ship. The steering of a sailing ship was easy as far as I was concerned, but being out of sight of land and steering by compass was a different matter. The weather was calm with a light breeze aft. I got tangled up with the swing of the compass and the swing of the ship, and nearly jibed the outfit. The mate gave me a little instruction and with my general knowledge of boats I soon got adjusted and had no further trouble. A few days later I was on the twelve to four o'clock watch and was at the wheel from 1 a.m. to 2a.m. It was a bright moonlight night and I could see East Cape in the distance. The night was calm with a light breeze when I took the wheel. Sometime towards 2 a.m. I was looking shorewards and saw a peculiar white line stretching for miles parallel with the shore. I had never seen anything like it before, but my experience on the sea had taught me to be very suspicious of anything unusual, or anything I did not understand. I was in the first mate's watch,

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and he was having a drink of coffee in the cabin. I stuck my head down the gang way and called him. He came up at once, enquiring what was the matter. I pointed to this long white line, then probably five miles away. He gave one look, grabbed the wheel and told me to call all hands. The crew turned out with a bound. My job with the ordinary seaman and the younger members was to take in the square topsails. We started up the mast, about half way up the wind struck us. The ship took a great list, we stopped and hung on. In a minute or two the ship began to right herself and we went on up. Looking back as far as I could see in the moonlight there was a froth boardered streak, the wake of the ship. We were travelling before a howling gale with all sails set and must have been doing twenty knots. Sailors walk out a slack swinging rope, hanging below the yard arm and endeavour to lash the heavy wind blown canvas to the spar. This was hard, heavy and dangerous work. The rule at sea is one hand for the ship and one for yourself. The sea was getting rough, the wind was tearing through our hair and the ship was belting at high speed through the night. Fifty feet up, standing on a rope hanging on to a spar, after an hour we began to get cold. I forgot the rule of the sea, and was working two hands for the ship, trying to make better progress. Now this is where this story should have ended -- The wind tore the sail from my grip and I was left standing upright on a slack rope with my hands in the air. I was fifty feet above a very rough sea with a ship below me doing twenty knots in a gale of wind. Some say it was and ~~xxx~~ act of God, some say the Devil looks after his ~~won~~ own, and others say my number was not up yet. What ever the reason or the luck,

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the next movement of the ship threw me against the spar instead of over backwards into the ocean. If I had gone over nothing could have saved me. We were by then at least thirty miles off the East Cape and the ship could not have been brought round in the gale that was blowing. I had learnt my lesson the hard way and I have always been grateful for the chance that put me back against the spar. Sometime after daylight we had the ship reefed down and hove to. Great waves were running across the decks and life for the cook was not so good. We all filed aft and the captain distributed heavy tots of rum to all hands. When I came along he looked hard at me, thought for a moment and then passed mine over. Though doing able seaman's work I was signed on as a boy and boys were not given rum. The language that came from the galley would equal what came up from the engine room when the old kerosene engine would not start and the engineer got a little peeved. Talking of language I found the captain equally capable if provoked. One of my jobs was to stand on the cabin top and haul up buckets of water first thing in the morning. The captain stripped, stood on the deck about ten feet below me. I poured the water over him for a cold bath. I did not like this job much as my hands got very cold, down round the South Island in the winter time. I began to use my head one cold morning in Westport. I poured a stream about as thick as a pencil on to his bare shoulders while he crouched for the heavy splash to come. All of a sudden he realised what I was doing or not doing, and he began to talk. I understood the language and began with great energy to use my muscles instead of my head. Somehow I did not notice the cold, it had got much warmer. We were in Greymouth tied up along side the wharf.

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The river was in flood, and logs, trees, an odd bullock and sheep would come floating past on the current. We were bar bound and had been there for a few days. The ship was ready for sea and we were sailing as soon as the bar was open. The crew went on shore leave. Greymouth in those days was only a small town, but it supported many hotels. I was new to the life of sailors, having never had a drink in an hotel bar, Some of the crew decided I should be educated so they took me ashore with them. I don't want to infer that I was not quite willing to go, and in fact would have been very disappointed if I had been left on anchor watch. We worked our way round the town on a pub crawl, four hotels to every block. I had numerous street women pointed out to me. I remember one standing close to an hotel, a tall woman very strongly built in her early thirties, I would guess she was of Norwegian descent. There were plenty of ships trading to Greymouth in those days, so I would guess that from her point of view she would be collecting a satisfactory income. I don't know how many hotels I visited, but somewhere towards 9 o'clock I knew I had been on the pub crawl long enough and left my companions, returning unsteadily and wavering to the ship and my bunk. Next day we were able to put to sea again. On the south side of the channel was the rusting hull of a steamer stranded on the sand bank. At low tide the hull was almost high and dry. We paid this hull a visit before leaving Greymouth, but there was nothing of any interest left on board. The ship had touched the bottom when in the hollow of large waves, lost steering way and was pushed off the channel by current and waves. There had been no loss of life. We lived well on board "Huia" and the work was very easy. The weather was bitterly cold down the West Coast of the South Island

and through Cook Strait, but was much easier by the time we reached Gisborne. At Dunedin we were anchored well away from the city, just in case we blew up and took the city with us. A couple of girls waved to us from the Port Hills, my companion and I took the ship's boat and rowed ashore. We climbed the hill and spent a couple of hours one Sunday afternoon with them. The novelty of girl pick ups was new to me, and the experience was interesting and attractive. On our way north we called at Gisborne and the ship was berthed within easy walking distance of the town. Here I tried again for the Mounted Rifles reinforcement. I received notification at a later date that I was accepted for the Sixth Reinforcement. I signed off at Auckland and collected my pay and reported to the Military. That seems to be a long time ago. I nearly did not report. I was still sure I would never return. A big schooner the " "Elizabeth" was signing on a crew for the South Sea Islands, and I spent some time thinking about joining her as an ordinary seaman. At some later date the "Elizabeth" was wrecked on a coral reef, but I can't remember if the crew was lost or not. Small decisions can make such a difference to one's life story. There was many a time afterwards that I wish I had stayed at sea. In fact I don't think there was ever a time that I would not have dropped the army like a hot brick and gone back to sea. I should have let comfort rule my way and stayed with "Huia". The captain, mate and crew suggested I was better staying, and they could have been right. The "Huia" went on the Island run a bit later and was lost on a reef.

~~My wife and I belong to a mineralogy club and one Easter went with the club to Coromandel. The secretary had booked~~

~~tilly again.~~ CHAPTER 26

At the defence office I got my orders for Trentham. I returned to the Auckland Drill Hall on the right day and hour, and with about twenty others we walked off to catch the Wellington Express. In those days the Auckland Railway Station was where the bus terminal now is, behind the Post Office at the lower end of Queen Street. At Trentham the camp was being constructed and used at the same time. Carpenters building huts to hold around eighty men, and as they were constructed they were occupied. I am sorry to say that I am ashamed of the treatment these young boys and men received from the people responsible for the health conditions of the camp in general. They were not responsible for the rain that fell every day; but they could have closed the camp till they had the ground in front of the huts metalled, so that less mud and water went in with the occupants. They could have stopped the method of breaking in new recruits, by making them carry wet stones in wet sacks in the mud and rain to metal the front of the huts when there were horses and waggons on the horse lines idling the days away. The obvious happened, meningitis, measles and pneumonia swept the camp. In three or four days the eighty men in our hut had dropped to ten. They were walking away and going on stretchers, the medical organisation was shocking. A telegram to a family in a northern town was sent to the effect that their son was sick and sent to hospital, brought the parents rushing to Wellington to see him only to find he had been dead for two days. I mention this to a friend last week and was told their family lost an uncle and cousins the same way. They never knew that they were even sick. My turn came -- I walked to the medical parade and stood

in line in the cold and wet waiting my turn. The doctor took one look at me and said hospital. Now I should have been all right then, but that was not the story. My standard of living dropped. All the women and women's organisations in Wellington were crying to get out to the Trentham Field Hospital, to help and care for those sick men and boys, and the Military Authorities would not let them in. There were thousands of Wellington women who would have put everything aside, gone there and worked their fingers to the bone, helping the to save their sons and the sons of other mothers; but no, they could not get past the guard. I do not know how others were treated -- as I was a patient and very sick, I can only give you my experience, and see no reason to suppose others were any different. I arrived at the Trentham Band Rotunda and was allotted a bed. I got into it and was very sick with the 'flu. I did not want to eat and left what food was offered, two slices of bread three quarters of an inch thick with a small smear of butter in thecentre and a mug of strong black tea. The next morning the rations were the same, and it was easier to leave them than eat them, I took the easy way. By that time I was scarlet with measles, and had to go into isolation. They picked me up and moved me to a loose box with an earth floor. The horse had been moved out to let me in. It was not as draughty as the band rotunda, but naturally very cold. I was there by myself for a week or ten days. The only visitor I had was the orderly coming with his thick slices of bread and mug of strong tea, three times a day. It seems incredible that that was the only food I had, but I cannot remember ever having anything else. I remember having a wild craving for some fried fish that never came. If it had,

come I was probably too sick to eat it. I had no clothes and no boots -- the toilets were across a field as big as a football ground. As I drank as little of the cold black tea as I could, and ate practically nothing, the toilets were not a great problem, but I had to make the journey at night time, in my pyjamas and bare feet on several occasions while in that loose box. I was so weak that it was a staggering effort to walk and I was never sure that I would get back to my loose box. I was probably turned nineteen by this time and I can still remember the loneliness of nothing to read, nobody to speak to and nothing to see except the walls of the loosebox, the dirty floor and the big double doors. So the days passed, till one day the sergeant came past asking "anybody here want to go to Kaiwarra?" I called out from my bed "Yes." I did not care where it was or what it was as long as I got out of where I was. They did not take my temperature, I had never had it taken , nor had I had a wash or bath from the time I went into that hospital, and no one looked to see if I was fit to get out of bed. The sergeant took my name and number, and an orderly brought my kit bag. I struggled into my clothes, for I was so weak I could scarcely stand up, then stood at the door waiting. Others came along and we were told to pick up our bags and march to the station. I do not remember how far it was, I could not pick up my bag, and was going to leave it, but I was going myself if I went on hands and knees. Another man said he could carry his bag and would help me to drag mine. I think he dragged the bag with me struggling to keep going. We arrived at the station and eventually reached Kaiwarra. Here we were sent upstairs to the top floor of a wool store. Believe it or not I was up there for six weeks before I got down those stairs. This

was their idea of isolation to stop a measle epidemic. It was like heaven -- I had company and my strength was returning and the rations must have been reasonable because I never remember being unable to eat the meals. Six weeks was a long time for a big crowd of boys to be shut up on the top floor of a building. However in time it passed and we were let out on leave. I think I had been in camp about ten days, a week in the loosebox and six weeks in the wool store. The wool store was quite a nice kind of prison, and make no mistake it was a prison, with a guard on the stairs. One or two enterprising individuals got out once, down the lift well. They ~~slid~~ slid down the black greasy wire ropes and were away for a day or two. On final leave I travelled to my home and reported back a few days before sailing. I had a few hours to spend in Auckland, between boat and train connections and I called at a dentist to enquire if by chance he could do a few stoppings for me. I would like to express my appreciation for the trouble he went to. He must have put off patients, for he did some two hours work and when I went to pay I was told there was no charge. I have never seen him again and also I might say I have never forgotten his kindness. I left for the train and later found my overcoat pockets full of very useful presents. ~~I have h~~ These had been donated by the two nurses associated with his business. I wrote thanking them for their multiple kindness. As a soldier in those days I was taken very much for granted, and this was an exception that made a very strong impression. I was issued with gear and sailed in the old Tofua from Wellington. Many of us crowded the rail as the ship cleared Wellington Heads. I gazed on the shore and the hills for the last time, feeling that there was my land, my home land,

and we would never meet again. If I could have been put ashore with all honour, I would not have gone, for I had said unto myself my own farewell, and I was prepared to take what might come. 'Breathes there the man with soul so dead, who never to himself hath said, "This is my own my native land"?'

I attended a daily "Fall in " on board, but the ship was too crowded to do much of that sort of work. I think, if my memory is correct, we had around fourteen hundred soldiers on board. The ship was afterwards restricted to eight or nine hundred. One of our troopers had a foreign mate's ticket and took a watch on the ship going over. A young lieutenant, very unpopular, and quite a bit effected by his star, had the duty of reporting to the ship's officer on the bridge at 10p.m. daily, that all was well on board. The officer on the bridge happened to be the trooper referred to. The lieutenant, using the trooper's given name, reported that all was well on boart and started to move off. It gave the trooper great satisfaction to call him back and tell him he was the officer in charge of the ship and when the orderly officer came to the bridge he would address him as "Sir" or he would not take the roport and have him disciplined in the morning. The lieutenant corrected his approach.

We made a stop at Port Adelaide, Australia, and later had a death at sea. I cannot remember now what happened but I think it was some after effects of shore leave at Port Adelaide. A burial at sea is a very impressive ceremony, and exemplifies the sad loneliness of the poor boy, in his canvas shroud, weighted with iron bars as he was slid into the ocean, the sea smoothed over the slight disturbance and the ship steamed on leaving behind no mark or sign where the mortal remains of that young

man reposed. A little later on, while still in the Indian Ocean, we passed a square rigged ship in full sail, one of the very few remaining sailers left in the world at that time. These full rigged ships are vrey interesting to watch as they press their way through the sea.

Our next call was at Aden where the copper coloured natives came out in their trading canoes in force. Trading was brisk for a while,,till greed encouraged trickery. Every type of trick -ery was practised. We lowered a string down and they tied a basket on. We put our money in the basket and let it down, the native put the goods in the basket and we pulled it up. Hundreds of baskets were travelling up and down to and from dozens of large canoes. Beautiful boxes of cigars, with cigars on the top layer only and many such other tricks. One soldier annoyed at something put across him, picked up a three foot heavy iron bar, and let it go from the deck through a trading canoe. Goods had to be transferred rapidly and his days trading was finished. Aden was the first Eastern town I had been in, and probably the toughest looking town I have ever been in, with prostitutes, robbers and pirates, grasping shop keepers, and extreme poverty, the dirt and heat, the lack of any vegetation made a mystery of how thepopulation existed, or why the place was populated at all. Those who lived there lived crowded up close together. Many of the early settlers of New Zealand were also short of money, but they made use of the area they had at their disposal, and lived clean and law abiding lives. I have often wondered to what extent the topography of the land and the climate, influenced the population to higher or lower standards of behaviour. ~~The early settlers of New Zealand with their freedom from regi ent-~~

CHAPTER 27

The S. S. TOFUA passed through the Red Sea, with its heat and red burnt hills, a most depressing sight, and tied up at Suez.

We had a few hours leave, and wandered round the little town sightseeing, keeping in parties of four or larger. Suez gave us an uneasy feeling, the air seemed to breath treachery, robbery and violence, a sort of survival of the fittest, and he who gets in first is the fittest. This may not be so correct about the town, but it was the sort of impression we all took away with us. We were new to the conditions of Eastern slum areas, and were shocked at the conditions and depressed, at the standard of living, and the way of life of the ordinary, or poor people, we met on the street and around Sueez. Toddlers up to five years old, living round the filthy gutters, with their eyes full of flies, and inflamed con conjunctivit and looking as if the pours of their skin had never been cleaned with anything but the sun.

The people we past in the street were hostile, sullen and treacherous looki and all were of the lower strater of the social class.

Being a sea port, the lower levels of prostitution were very evident, and we were continually molested by their touts.

The shops may have held goods that were actractive, but the populace seeme so hostile, that we never left the footpath, and in fact returned to the ship as soon as our quriosity was partially satisfied, to find the winches working fast, unloading mail and general cargo of all sorts.

We said a fond farewell to the old Tofua, and were soon travelling by fast train to Cairo.

The Egyptian trains were a new experience for us, who had lived our lives i a hilly land. Egypt, being a flat country, the rail guage was wide, and the carridges were locked together, dispensing with the jolting familiar with our trains. They travelled at about sixty five miles per hour,

and were so smooth that you never knew when they actually stopped or started from a station. The run from Suez to Cairo was a great experience for we New Zealanders. At every station we stopped at, crowds of paper boys and adults would flock round the carriages selling fruit, water melins and fresh cooked eggs -- "sleep with them all night and keep them warm", they said. If I bought six pennyworth of oranges they gave me the oranges, but instead of giving the change, they would bolt and that was the last I would see of that one. Some of our chaps got even by wrapping a penny in silver paper and in the rush for trade the youth, popped the silver penny in his mouth, bit it to find out if it was hard, passed over the oranges, then bolted. So the robber at one station was the victim at the next. From the soldiers' point of view the Egyptian native was quite untrustworthy and I think the Egyptians regarded the soldiers in much the same way. On the whole the Egyptians did very well by the army being camped in Egypt. Vast sums of money were spent in Egypt for rations for men and horses. The pay packet for the armies was all spent in Egypt. The soldiers took the natives down when they got the opportunity, but on the whole the natives were never so well off. We were very interested in the marvellous crops that were grown on the land irrigated by the Nile waters. I being accustomed to hill country before the days of top dressing, had never imagined that the miles and miles of wonderful crops could ever be grown by man. No fences, no waste land, only paths through the crops and ditches to run the water along. Human labour to lift the water by canterlever into the small water courses from the small canals. The heat of the sun, the rich fertile land and the result -- phenomenal growth, such

as I had never imagined could exist. Every type of crop was growing in abundance, from cotton to maize and lucerne. I think there was a large labour force per acre and weeds never got a chance to show their heads. All day as we passed in the train through this wonderful cropping land, we could not get accustomed to such an area and such a display of lush growth. We came to a stop at Zeetown Camp, and here again, though the other extreme, was something we had never seen before. Zeetown, about ten miles from Cairo was where the N.Z.Mounted Rifles, with their horses were camped. The railway passed close by. The camp was on the border of a great sandy desert. No trees or grass, no green of any sort, sun baked sand, sun baked unpainted buildings, sun baked men in sunbaked uniforms and pith helmets, sun baked tents, pitched parallel with the long thatch roofed stables where the horses lived in stalls, the coolest place in the camp. The cook house with its open fires and half thatched buildings, and again numerous great long canvas water troughs so that the horses could be watered by a company at a time. Once a year one might expect a shower for ten minutes. You could count on a fine day, a month, two months or more ahead. Added to this sun baked camp was the dry heat, the flies and the dust. We arrived as lads with fresh complections, soft and new to the Eastern way of life. The sun and dust dried us out and the hot wind frizzled us like cut flowers. We drilled hard in the sun and dust and in a few short weeks we were a burnt up, lean and tough looking crowd. We cared for the horses, but we did not use them much. Most of our work was as infantry. At the time we did not realize why, but the Peninsular war was just round the corner. The varieties of life and the way of life had us fascinated for a long time.

A great fat man weighing eighteen to twenty stone riding a little donkey, so small that the rider's feet could touch the ground with ease. We felt like making him get off and carry the donkey for a spell, but we had been warned that it was not wise to interfere. The paper boys coming round the camp selling the evening papers, had picked up quite a good flow of English. Some of it from the English Dictionary, but more from the Anzacs. They would say "You buy paper from me, I'm bloody Australian bush bastard". We used them to get even with officers we did not like. By giving the boy a few pence he would go through the camp calling at the top of his voice "Egyptian times, very good news, Capt. X bloody bastard", or any other expression that we thought suitable. We usually travelled by train to Cairo. The trains were of a high standard, much better than we were accustomed to in New Zealand. The guards were the perfect example of politeness and patience. We as troopers were not allowed to buy first class tickets, they were for officers only. We would buy our tickets and travel first class. The guards would ask us to return to our carriage, they could do no more and we remained. From the entrance to the Cairo Station, one looked down on every race in the world, in national dress, moving to and fro across the station square. Fascinating a moving picture, a subject for a book on its own. As you walked down the street every second shop had a bar and sold liquor. The modern part of Cairo was well kept with lovely shops and beautiful clean streets. One grade lower housed the ordinary shops, brothels, horse cabs and the xxxxxxxxxxxxxx cosmopolitan population of Cairo. A grade down again was the native quarters, over crowded, footpaths, overcrowded with sitting or standing people, hostile to the

foreign soldiers -- a definitely unsafe area. Four of us walked through a part of this area one day. We had our hands in our pockets clutching loaded revolvers. We were very glad to find a way out of that hostile, ugly crowd. We never went back. The speak easy young girls following the oldest profession of hiring their time and bodies, would often sit in a chair on the footpath in the sun. The streets were warm and very pleasant, because of the heavy stone buildings shading down some of the glare. These traders would wear one garment of such material that it could easily be seen through. They seldom spoke unless spoken to. Others would occupy small balconies and they would keep a running commentary as people passed below. They seemed to know all the nationalities that passed. There were all colours from the darkest to the fairest in this trade. As we walked down the street a native walking just in front, would suddenly step sideways and pick something from the gutter, and we would see the gleam of a diamond ring. A few moments after, he would approach us and offer to sell us a diamond ring. We would be observent enough to know where he got it and that in itself tempted us to buy. If we were walking down the right street we would hear a roar of voices out on the foot path and let us say we were curious and walked in the open doors. We entered the ground floor of a three or four story building. The room was large say two hundred feet by one hundred and fifty feet It was packed with small tables and chairs, every table was crowded and each one seemed to have a girl or two attached, to supply drinks and other requirements at a price. Wild, noisy and crammed full of excited youths, was the impression this area of abandoned morality and discipline conveyed.

Every now and then some youth would jump on top of a table and call out "Rough House". Half a dozen tables with bottles and glasses of drink, would be turned upside down and the chairs piled on top. The patrons would move to another section of the room and carry on as before. Native orderlies would run in with mops and brooms and straighten up the disorder, and again the tables would be filled and the show go on as before. Such a place was the El Dorado. So in this atmosphere, we boys, who in the past, had felt venturesome in drinking half a bottle of beer, grew up. What was there to do? If you had money you got leave and went to Cairo, if you had no money you did not get leave and stayed in your tent. Payday was every fortnight. A few days before payday every one was staying in camp. The soldiers would get restless and some one would organise a party to raid the wet canteen. They would, a dozen strong yell like fury and jump on the counter. The natives who ran the canteen were well trained, at that stage they would bolt and leave everything, except money. The soldiers would help themselves to what beer they wanted and then get a couple of forty gallong kegs and roll them round the camp looking for a place to hide them until they got tired and left them for the natives to collect later. The regimental funds paid for the beer and we soldiers donated towards the regimental funds. The natives got their money direct in cash and we paid indirectly and never noticed it, so everyone was happy. While on the subject of out of bounds leave, four of us spent an evening visiting brothels. We walked into each one, and took a mental note of the type and number occupying the room. the age group, and then passed on to the next. On the average there would be from six to nine women occupying a central room. Each girl

Each girl having an adjoining room for her own use, many of them in their late twenties or early thirties. Some of these women were European, such as Italians or Greek. If a girl from those countries stumbles as she is stepping out of her stepins, her family will not condone the mistake, and if she has no money of her own, there is little chance of her receiving shelter except through the brothels. There they are registered, given a certificate and have to parade before a doctor to get their certificate stamped every ten days. That was the law of the land while we were in Egypt. Some few wander the streets as free traders, using cabs, seats in the parks or tables in coffee restaurants. These women usually were of the country and wore the attractive little white veil across the bridge of the nose. They were got up in attractive outfits of black flowing robe, white veil and dark eyebrows. Their big soft luminous eyes, ~~that~~ held a sad hopeful, come to bed look. We were warned that they were mostly heavily diseased and were dangerous to look at, even across the street. We must have visited some twenty brothels that evening. Some of them had up to a dozen girls, pale to white Egyptian children, the average age would be around twelve to thirteen we guessed. These places were not in a part of the city frequented by soldiers and were for the convenience of the business section of Cairo citizens. These rooms have an old woman in control. Life for these girls is short as disease catches up with them eventually, or if they escape disease age cannot be escaped. In their thirties they have had their life and are not wanted any more. They probably work for a while and die of hunger and want at an early age. I saw women sitting in the streets, sorting rags and cigarette butts from the dust in the gutters. The

breasts of the native women grow long, and hang down like eighteen inches of tyre tube as they sit in the gutter sorting through the dust and waste. They are not all homeless. The social standing of a man depends to a great extent on the number of wives he can support. If he can get ahead enough to feed three he can get them all working and then soon acquires more wives. Thus our sophistication and education was rapidly advancing. I have often thought that we could profit by copying the licensing laws of Cairo There the drinking laws had only one restriction, and that was customers. Everyone seemed to have drink for sale as a main or side line. There was no novelty in having a drink, and all the time I was there I only saw one drunk Egyptian, and now I am not sure if he was drunk with alchol or drugs. He was a cab driver that we hired to take us to the station. We got in his four wheeler and being soldiers he thought we were bound for Zeetown Camp. Without asking for directions he whipped up his horses to a gallop knocked down a policeman all dressed in white, and over end, narrowly missed many others obstructions from people to vehicles. As We passed the railway station we left the flying cab one by one, and watched it disappear in the direction of Zeetown. If we in New Zealand stopped the novelty of drinking, and let everyone grow up with the knowledge that it was always obtainable and that there was no social novelty in procuring it, each one would learn to live with alcohol, control it and not be controlled by it. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, but I think something could be achieved along these lines. Some small percentage of alcholics we have always had, and will always have with us, sad and all as this is, I see no reason to suppose this percentage would increase, with the open door, round the clock type of licensing. ~~By~~ youth

CHAPTER 28

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Dry heat and dust, grey sun baked CAMP, filled with brown sunburne youths, and stabled horses -- everything organised by the clock, from reveille to lights out.

Route marches to expose the weak, and toughen the strong, all under the glaring sun, for "mad dogs and English men go out in the midday sun".

The orderly Sgt., sallies forth and demands my presence before the Commanding Officer, in the Orderly room ,,with another trooper, to be told we were too young to go to the Peninsular War, and if we liked we could stay behind and look after the horses.

The other boy said he wanted to go , so what else was there for me to say

So staying with our companions we both sailed in the troopship across the Mediterranean to Lemnos. It took two or three days and was a nerve racking trip. No smoking and no talking on the upper deck. Submarine guards down both sides of the ship. A zigzag course was the means of protection. Most of the time we were in heavy fog and could not blow the fog horn. There were a great number of ships about and we could only see half the length of our own ship. Once we ran into a clear patch and had to reverse to stop running into a little island, and on our port bow a big square rigged ship put about for the same reason. Ships and enemy subs were everywhere and after the second day every one was nervy and jumpy. I felt sorry for the master and ship's officers, their responsibility was heavy with a ship packed with young troops -- an enemy torpedo and very few would be saved. Lemnos harbour was packed with ships of all sizes, loaded with troops and supplies. We had to thread our way through them to find an anchorage. The next day our lot went ashore and were marched in company line over a stony paddock, halted and told to

rest our kitbags, that we had been carrying. In a few minutes someone told us that was our camp, just where we stood. Spread your blankets in front of you and do not lose your place. Believe me, with rows and rows, north, east, south and west, with blankets and kitbags all the same army issue, it was not easy to find where one slept. We slept on the soft stones and pushed the hard ones aside. In a little while the hard stones made little stone walls and little wind breaks, and the place began to get a home like feeling. We could pick our bed out with out much trouble. It was here I joined the signallers and learnt the morse code. It was here we worked and studied ten hours a day seven days a week. This stony patch, without roof or walls, just six feet by three feet was our home for six weeks. We had been issued with great thick woollen shirts and they were so hot in this climate, that we took them to the river and scrubbed them with stones to try to get them thinner, but they were such good quality that it was a long and tedious job. We knew if you washed every day it helped to prevent the infestation of lice, we knew that lice and armies in those days were a natural combination. We stripped off and bathed in the cold creek and hoped the lice would not like us. I cannot remember having any soap, but we may have had it at times, I do remember using sand. We were issued with heavy padded flannel, to wrap round over our kidneys and tie with tape. We were warned of dire consequences if we neglected to wear these. We did not like the wearing of this hot bandage about nine inches wide and yards long. One day three of us were at a beach and decided to swim out to a war ship anchored off shore. We stripped off and as I felt a bit itchey I examined this flannel bandage closely and found it alive with lice. I remember to this day

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the shock of this discovery, the feeling of horror as I threw the thing as far as I could, and never wore another as long as I was in the army. I must also add that I never got rid of the lice either as long as I was on Active Service. They were big grey horrors of body lice. Oh for some of the modern dust that could be shaken into the seams of your clothes. We got accustomed to having them with us and developed various ways of combating the evil. My favourite method was to put my clothes in a water bucket and cover them with water, put a stone on top to hold them down, and leave them for twenty four hours. The trouble was the twentyfour hours was not always easy to get. However to return to our swim and the warship -- we swam out hoping they would take us on board and treat us to a meal. A change of food from army rations was greatly desired. However they would not let us on board, they had just painted the sides and were not having them marked, so we had to swim back. Half way in one boy complained of cramp, so we swam slowly with him and he kept going until he reached shallow water and stood up. I was amazed to see his side all black, blue and yellow and to see the same fade to a natural skin colour almost at once as he stretched himself in standing. We were sad and disappointed about missing the anticipated ship's rations. A stony walk to our six by three plot in the middle of a field, a struggle for food one could not care less about, and the sun had gone down and the night life on Lemnos Isle had started. On the island, for rest, refitting and receiving reinforcements were the Australians and New Zealanders. We were all getting paid and there was no where to spend monay. In the evenings the gambling schools collected the crowd. There were Crown and Anchor boards by the dozens, small two up rings

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all over the place, and one large ring, where it cost £50 to start tossing the pennies. Most times if you liked to idle a little while, ~~xxxxx~~ you would see some boy throwing the pennies for £1,000 or more. In the big schools they carried their money in haversacks slung round their necks. When the centre was set side bets would be set and collectively, there ~~was~~ were always huge sums of money lying round the ring. If a boy got low in finance in the big ring he moved out into a smaller ring and endeavoured to build up his funds to get back into the big school again. A few men sent large sums home through the ordinary post, as you could not register it without declaring what was in it. One man I knew always wrapped up £50 in a brown paper parcel, tied it with a bit of string and threw it in the post bag. At the time I was talking to him he had not lost a parcel. Another man had an account of over four figures in the Bank of Egypt. We had one gentleman, known as C. & A. Bill, with a Crown and Anchor board, whose cry to attract attention was, "Come on boys, flop it down thickly and heavily, when I die it all goes to the Red Cross". He was calling out this advertising and adding, "you comes here broke and on hoof and you goes away in gold lined carriages, bulging with me profits" This attracted the attention of a Brigadier General one evening. Our board proprietor got very uneasy but was encouraged to carry on. The General put half a crown on the square and lost it he tried, again and lost again. He remarked as he moved off that "He could not see much profit in the game". The proprietor of the Crown and Anchor Board thought differently. He did not die, and came back to New Zealand to collect many of his posted brown paper parcels. Some well educated young lady had bought his name at a Red Cross

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function in Auckland and wrote regularly to him. He was a good correspondent, and came to the signallers' ~~hut~~ tent to read his mail and his replies. What he lacked in English grammar and spelling, he made up in imagination. I am sure they each supplied the other with a great amount of entertainment.

Lemnos was only an army camp, set down in stony fields. Its main attraction for the army was its position adjacent to the Peninsular and its good harbour. The ground was full of lice and other germs. A severe type of disentry caused a long sick list. Those who got this complaint suffered badly, as the medical conditions were poor to the extreme, no proper food nor attention. If you did not recover some one from the reinforcements would take your place. The latrines were of the ditch type some three hundred yards away at the back of the lines. Many of the boys were too sick to travel this distance so they lay on the ground by the ditches and stayed there. Some who got into the field hospital found the conditions worse than at the camp and with the assistance of their mates who came to see them, just left the field hospital and crawled back to the camp lines. All this time those noble souls in New Zealand were working hard collecting funds and making woollen clothing and Christmas comforts for their boys in the army. These lads always greatly appreciated every thing that was done for them by the ~~floks~~ folk at home. These same folk would have willingly supplied and could have supplied so much more if given the opportunity, and if the army authorities had only been sensible enough, to bring some trained nurses into the Field Camps, who could have supplied a little care and affection, a feeling of security, and some help with the distressing ~~xxxxx~~ symptons of the disease,

These lads might have been saved a lot of the agony that caused them to prefer sleeping the open by the latrines in preference to the hospital. No one to my knowledge has ever recorded how those poor boys suffered, and how callous the army was to the sick soldier who was not a wounded soldier.

The Peninsular, Anzac Cove. Pretty coastal scenery lovely symmetrical Olive Trees, steep hillsides close to the shore, piles and piles of stores stacked close in under them. The high hills full of snipers, who knew how to shoot, our roads -- trenches for protection -- rain, snow and freeze. Great blocks of ice floating in the water tanks, very little relief from excessively hard food. Biscuits that you could boil all day and still remained hard lumps. Hillsides full of burrows, like large rabbit warrens. We were hardening. To enlarge our burrows in the hillside warren we dug the floor out and took out with the earth, a Turk we had been sleeping on for a week.

I was sent on messenger patrol the day before the snow storm, it was raining steadily and I was given a message to be delivered to the three regiments. They occupied the trenches for miles, I walked all day in the rain, on slippery tracks on the steep hills. During the first part of the day I walked in the creek beds for protection against snipers; but late in the afternoon I was so tired I walked on the bank and let the snipers shoot, and many bullets fell uncomfortably close. Towards dark I got back to Head Quarters with my signed copies of the message and handed them in. I asked the officer in charge if I could go as I was not sure if I could find my camp. He said "Yes you can go, your message was cancelled half an hour after you left this morning". That taught me a lesson the hard way, and never again

was I so concentious that I would sacrifice myself for an unimportant message. I got back to my lines long after dark, wet and cold, having gone without lunch or dinner. I walked straight across the hillside calling out for my mates, to answer, so I could find some shelter. I fell in one burrow and took water and mud down on the sheltering men. I got my answer and found our shelter, where I dropped my rifle and gear on the ground crawled in fully dressed and wet and pulled a blanket over me, with my wet overcoat on top I knew no more till morning. In the morning it was like Fairyland. It had snowed during the night, and it would be hard to imagine how beautiful everything looked.

The gullies were steep and narrow at the bottoms. We lived on one side of the hill, the latrines were at the foot of the hill on the other side. Bullets came down there and odd boys were getting shot while occupying the latrines. You did not go there unless your need was great, for that bullet might just have your numbers on it. I am not writing about the war -- enough has been written about this Peninsular War. Two examples of unnecessary suffering will suffice to expose the callousness of the army of those days. One Waikato boy with dental trouble had all his teeth extracted the top teeth first and the lower the next day. He had to sit on a stump without painless or local anaesthetic and was sent back to the trenches to live on hard biscuits and tinned meat. The dentist said he had no anaesthetic. Why did he not have any? Or any special rations to help him over the next few days? These would have left less bitter memories and explain some of the reluctance to being part of the army today. A sick soldier, I knew him well later in civil life, suffering from rheumatic fever, kidney disorders

and other complications, with others, marked for evacuation, were left lying in a tent with a single blanket covering them, without attention over the period of the snow storm and the deep freeze afterwards. A soldier in our forces was just a boy from an ordinary New Zealand home, and was no tougher and no stronger than a boy from an equivelant home today. In general he suffered in silence when wounded or sick. I have often wondered why the treatment should have been so callous just because he was a soldier Of course we all understand that there were exceptions, but on the whole, wounded and sick got a very rough spin until they got right back to base in Egypt where nurses, God Bless Them, ran the wards. The patriotism of some men was very great, and in many cases, I am afraid was never recognised. I remember one mail sorter -- He had both feet frozen and instead of boots had sugar bags and sacks wrapped round his legs and feet. He had a marvellous memory for names and when the bags of mail were being sorted could keep half a dozen men supplied with information as to where the recipient was at the time, dead, wounded, hospital, or front line or base. He would not parade sick and be sent to hospital, for he knew he had specialist knowledge of men and their movements and felt it was his duty to keep the mail moving in the right direction. His memory could be likened to a computer. It was simply marvellous how anyone could cultivate a memory for names and initials such as he had. Eventually he ended up in hospital and we heard later that he paid a heavy price for his conscientious patriotism..

A canteen close to the front line would have been marvellous where a sick man could buy a tin of milk, fruit or a bar of chocolate. On two occasions our sergeant, without leave, bordered

boarded a lighter and got out to a small island, MUDROS Mundros, and bought some of these luxuries. The second time he was warned that he would be court marshalled for desertion if called for and was not present. However the need and his sympathy were great and he tried a third time, but just missed the lighter by a few seconds. He returned to the regiment to find a message for him to report at once as an attack was pending. If he had caught the lighter he could not have escaped a charge of desertion. Occasionally we were successful in stealing a case of tin milk or other luxuries, such as fruit or rice. The huge dumps were usually guarded by units from the English regiments and they were more conscientious than the Anzacs, and very hard to out manoeuvre. When the evacuation came, we were the last unit off the Peninsular that night, and got on board the troop transport just before daybreak. Evacuations had been going on for some time but had been kept very secret. ~~Of~~ The great dumps of food, and army equipment etc., that could not be taken, were burnt, broken or blown up by heavy guns; and we would have given so much to have acquired one of those cases from the food dump. We were issued with tobacco, so much weight per man, whether we wanted it or not. The brand I am thinking of was called "Half a Mo". It was a cigarette tobacco and the troops did not like it. It was issued all the same and lay around the regiment in rotting soggy wet heaps. Apricot jam and only apricot jam was issued. We got tired of it and could not eat it. It was a bit thin and watery, but we were issued with it just the same. We punched air holes in the tins so they would not explode, and used the tins of jam for fire places instead of stones. It lay discarded everywhere. How we would have enjoyed a variety of plum or berries instead of this continuous awful apricot jam.

Soldiers cultivate an intellegent skill in the art of guessing, the moves, high ranking personal controlling an army are likely to make, regardless, how secret they try to keep their thoughts.

We, the men in the ranks, knew, and had known for some days, that we were either going into a major battle, or getting off the ~~Peninsular~~ Peninsular, and joining our horses in Egypt.

This knowledge, gained by intuition, was barely mentioned, more than "there is something".

I was in the signal office, and no message or word, other than ~~the~~ normal ever came through the office, and yet we all knew, and were waiting for the "something big" to happen.

It came, in the form of a regiment, just after dark one night, to relieve our brigade. The moment we saw the small number of troops relieving us we knew, that we were off to Egypt, and the rest would be following.

The evacuation was a master piece of work, but the waste was realy pityful-- stores stacked close under the steep hill, that could not be removed were blown up with shells from the Navy.

Stacks of rifles as big as houses, shattered skywards with high expd osives from the battleships, likewise those great piles of rations as big as barns, including tin milk and tin fruit, that we would have morgaged our future to get, disintegrating in the air, mixed with the black smoke from the high explosive shells.

We silently marched away in the dark, ~~and by the jetty~~ from the trenches at the head of Waterfall Gully, and before reaching Anzac Cove, joined thousands of others on the same mission, moving a few chains at a time all night. My company, after splashing through overproof rum runni across the road, from a demolition party, were picked up by the last bar that nigrt, and put on board a large troop transporter.

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We sailed for Lemnos Harbour at once, and lived aboard the huge troop transporter for a few days. Here we suffered some starvation. We were told that the quartermaster and cooks were selling the rations, whether this was true or not I could not say, but I can say that the troops ~~xxx~~ were in a state of near riot, starved men confined to a ship can become an ungly mob very easily. Things came right again, and we got into a shore camp for a few days before sailing back to Egypt to take over the horses. On the way back to Egypt one of the men contracted pneumonis and died at sea. He was a very strong young man and his mates did what they could for him. However they blamed the ship's doctor for neglect, and according to them the doctor could not have cared less, and paid as little attention as possible to the dying man. They were so upset at the doctor's callous behaviour, that if a suitable opportunity had occurred, some of them would have thrown him overboard. Others were angrily talking of a demonstration, but in a day or two tempers quietened down, and the usual army routine continued. There is little doubt that if the boy had been fortunate enough to have had skilled nursing, even in the year 1915-1916, he would have stood a good chance of recovering. The submarine ~~xxxxxxx~~ menace was still very strong, and we escaped ~~with~~ the atmosphere on board was nervy and jumpy. Though THE TORPEDOES As we understood it a troop ship a few hours behind us was torpedoed, but the ship managed to get the troops on to a small island that was adjacent to the torpedoeing. We believed this rumour, it may have been true, or it may have been an exaggeration, or quite without any foundation. It makes little difference, as we were boys making up the army, we accepted it all as facts. Coming back to Zeetown had a home like feeling and we were over-

joyed to get our horses back, we loved the creatures and they in their turn gave us a great feeling of security. All the horses were good patient helpful animals. I will admit that some were better than others, but then some horses had better masters than others. In all the years I was there I never remember a case of a soldier neglecting or abusing his horse. When we took over our horses they had been well fed and under exercised. They were very excited when led out of the stables, and some funny little scenes took place. With great difficulty in some cases horses were mounted. The horses did not know the camp and were inclined to bolt in directions that were embarassing. When a horse stopped suddenly in front of the cookhouse, and the rider carried on, the big dixies of stew looked very menacing. The water troughs were another obstacle where riders had but one moment to wonder whether their fate was wet or dry. One horse tangled himself up in the Commanding Officer's tent, but most took the road out of the camp into the desert and there ran their energy down. It was wonderful how quickly we got organised and man and horse settled down to steady training. The desert was hot and dusty, but we had grown tough and accustomed to the life of a big army. We fell into the routine, but out of the routine we had little or no energy. In looking back I think most of us had vitamin deficiency. The wet canteen with its mild beer, kept us going but the money we had to spare was not enough for many extra luxuries to increase the supply of vitamins. If we had only known, table salt would have quite likely helped. Looking back I can see the sunbaked thatched roofs where the horses stood in the shade the bleached white tents where eight men slept and lived, the dusty sand around it all, with the long water troughs, cook

houses, farriers' shops, feed dumps and what you will. While we were at Zeetown a reinforcement train pulled into the station and we walked down to see the new recruits. They looked so soft and their complexions so fresh, that we could hardly believe that a few months earlier we had been the same. I overheard one member of the reinforcements remark "Gosh, what a tough looking mob". That was the first time I realised how truly we must have altered. We rode many miles day after day, with flank patrols, advance guards and rear guards, galloping into mock action and handing over to horse holders to take the horses back, and practising again galloping in to pick their riders up. All in the hot sun with quipment on the saddles and rifles and ammunition. The horses seemed to enjoy the exercise and were always ready for a gallop. The men were much more efficient when xxxxxxxx there were a few bullets flying around, but they became well trained and accustomed to the type of life we were to live for years to come. A boy's whole world swung round his rifle, his three mates who made up his section and his horse. Every morhing the same thing took place. We with our horses on parade, would hear an order, "Get mounted" and then "The regiment will move off in column of route from the right walk, march". The colonel or officer in xxxx charge would lead the way, the bugler would ride behind the colonel, some staff, and the regimental signallers next, and then the leading squadron. The horses knew the orders as well as we did. In those early days we led the horses for twenty minutes and halted for ten minutes in every hour. The horses knew every stop, every start and every rest, and knew the time when they were due. They knew their places in the section and liked to walk there. Sand was the greatest enemy of the horse. It did

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not pass through him, but settled in the lower part of the stomach. When this sand gave trouble, medicine would relieve the problem ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ temporarily, but after a year or so horses were liable to become debilitated and sent to base.

CHAPTER 30

The day came when we left Zeetown Camp for good and I never saw it again. We knew we were leaving for active service in a war zone, but did not know where. We were on the march for four or five days, and during those days we got the only wet weather Egypt gets in a year. We were unaccustomed to this type of life, riding all day, putting down horse lines at night, watering and feeding them, making our own shelters, getting our rations, shift duty in the signal tent, or in the case of the troopers, guard duty, a mile from the camp, or picket duty in the horse lines during the night. Horses were restless and the men tired with the new conditions. However the teething problems soon passed and never returned, and we became most efficient. I remember on one occasion, after being camped for a week in one place, we got a sudden order to march, and in twenty minutes we had struck camp and were a mile away, an organised, fully equipped fighting force. When we got settled into a routine the days became easy and pleasant. We crossed the Suez Canal and were camped some ten miles out in the desert. This was excellent training and we were half expecting an attack on the Canal. Outposts were about five miles from the camp. The area was clean not having been camped on before, and we were able to keep free from the friendly closeness of body lice. As signallers we often had messages to deliver into a town on the banks of the Canal. This place was Ismailia, the name was spelt in two different ways in the town. All this w[illegible]leasant and we enjoyed our life here. Discipline was

easy as we were on active service, and being handy to a base country like Egypt, our rations were fresh and good. To counter these advantages our camp was very exposed to climatic conditions. The sands travelled continually with the winds that blew, and the heat from the blazing sun rebounded from the white sand. The camp was devoid of natural shelter, and we were in the desert learning what the Arabs grew up knowing. The mirage in the desert especially in the area along the Suez Canal, is very interesting and very deceptive. One can see shallow water flowing over flats at a rate of one or two miles per hour and coming quite close, to within about fifty yards. The addition of palm trees to the phenomenon, makes the scene so realistic that an experienced desert rider will find it necessary to look a second time in case the view is real and not an illusion. A horseman one hundred yards away will appear to be riding through water a foot deep, and making no splash. It can cause other optical illusions such as the following -- One of our boys on outpost duty one afternoon saw a Turkish regiment marching in columns of four straight on to his outpost section. He alarmed the section and they took the usual precautions, while he rode fast to the Regimental Headquarters and gave the alarm. The Officer Commanding was a bit puzzled as he could not understand how a large body of Turks could get so close without being seen. However he sent a squadron out on patrol to be on the safe side. No Turks and no sign that any had ever been there. This outpost had definitely been deceived by a mirage. We were never quite sure of the reason why this phenomenon occurred. The general belief was that it was a reflection from the sky of an actual happening in some other area. It was very deceiving and very interesting. One explanation refers to

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the fact that a mirage is due to the unequal heating of different parts of the atmosphere, which bends the light rays and so produces reflected images, but whatever the explanation, I always found them most interesting to watch. We moved to the Egyptian side of the canal and were there for a spell, in what one might refer to as a rest camp. Here we swam nearly all day in the canal. It was much further across than it looked and made a lovely swimming pool - the water was just nice and warm. We swam across and back for a start and then practiced floating in the centre of the canal. We became expert in the art and could stay out there for three or four hours at a time. When a ship was passing through, the draw towards the vessel was just amazing. The suction caused by the ship would create a very strong current and drop the level of the water some three feet. We could not swim against this current, and if unable to get ashore, were carried past the steamer by the surge. We did enjoy our stay there -- it was a seaside holiday in a lovely climate without care or worry. All good holidays come to an end. In an advanced position in the Sainai Peninsular an English Company held an outpost. They had been there for some time, and as far as they knew no Turk troops were in the vicinity. Bedouin and Egyptian traders came in and out of their camp. Turkish spies dressed as Bedouins mixed with those who walked in and out at will. The Turks collected their information and prepared a plan and attacked early one morning. A Scottish troop occupying a redoubt held their little fort. A small terrier dog barked furiously and the occupants of the redoubt stood to. Being warned they fought it out and held up the Turk attack, the rest of the camp was over run. It would be wise for me to

brush very lightly on the scene. Some troops escaped into the desert, but from lack of water, distress of not knowing where to go and sunstroke they died. Very few were rescued, and of those very few recovered. We got an order to occupy this over run camp and guard the outpost, which gave us a long forced march. Here the scene was distressing and a warning always to be vigilant and never get careless. I would like to say this about our Commanding Officers that for the two and a half years that I was there, I never at any time saw any slackness in the command, or any risk taken where the enemy could get the advantage of surprise. We took up our positions in a new area, cleaned up the camp, and burned the dead. The lesson went home to each and every one of us. This was a game where you grew mighty careful or you did not survive to tell the tale. We were in the sandy desert again. When the wind blew, which it usually did, the sand would travel about three or four feet high, one could not sit down for long, as the moving sand made conditions so uncomfortable that a change to standing became preferable. To have to stand up all day on outpost duty got very distressing and tiring. We longed for the days that were calm and the sand stayed still. Sometimes when out on patrol for a day we would find on returning, all our camp gear and shelters standing on small hills, through the wind having shifted the sand, and the camp level being dropped some twelve inches. On other occasions the sand would shift into the camp and everything would be buried up to twelve inches deep. Drifting sand at meal times created problems -- if we were unable to eat our stew at once it became coated with sand too thick to eat, if we ate it at once we merely kept it stirred up and ate the coating of sand without seeing it. This continual intake

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of sand created inflamation in the bladder and caused a discharge from the penus, giving some of the symptoms of veneral disease. This created a feeling of panic among some of the men, until an explanation of the cause was forthcoming. Lectures were given on the lasting harm that would result from the intake of excessive amounts of sand, and we were all advised to take what precautions we could to reduce this problem.

CHAPTER 25 31

These were the days before roads or rail crossed the desert, with only a camel trail that wound its way through various Hods, with biblical names, between Palestine and Egypt. A land where wells in various Palm Hods supplied the water, where date palms flourished. Perhaps half an acre up to two acres of them, on the outer edge the palms got smaller and smaller till it was too dry for them to grow at all. Nearly all the Hods had a stoned lined well with good water, and were usually about twenty feet deep; but on one occasion we watered our Signals Section at a well that was one hundred and eighty feet deep to the water, all stone lined by craftsmen, we were informed that this well had been supplying water by the bucketful, long before the days of Christ. This area from Egypt to ~~xxx~~ Palestine was so old in history, and so well worth the time to study and explore, that it is a pity we did not get more opportunity for this, but as it was a case of the survival of the fittest, survival took all our time and energy. There were underground caves on the camel route that would hide hundreds of horsemen. Here in days bone by, raiders would watch for convoys of traders passing along the trail and attack, not always successfully though, for the traders travelled in convoys for their own protection. I lived on this sand for nearly two years riding backwards and forwards on patrols

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and outposts and thus covered every inch of it many times. On the desert one travels by compass as there are no land marks to to guide one. An unusual looking hill looks unusual from one angle, from all other angles it will look flat or completely different. In the early stages of this desert travelling we had a bit of trouble with our navigation, but after a time we overcame these teething problems. The homing instinct of some men was remarkable. After riding for three days and three nights over a roadless and featureless desert, it is not easy to pin point a camp lying in a little hollow, surrounded by miles and miles of unoccupied barren sand. On one such occasion the Officer Commanding decided we had better stop as we were within a couple of miles of the camp but he was afraid we might miss it, so he gave the necessary orders to stop. A trooper rode up and told the Officer the camp was half a mile to the right, when asked how he knew, he did not know "how he knew", all he knew was the camp was half a mile out to the right and we were riding past it. The Officer Commanding said "You might be right lad, but I cannot take the risk". In the morning we picked up the camp as the trooper said we would. About one man in two hundred had this instinct of direction so highly developed that they stood out on a pinnacle of their own. ~~I saw similar~~

Returning from patrol on Xmas Eve, 1916, after three days and two nights continuous riding, and still a further all night ride before reaching camp, my thoughts ran on other Xmas days, and my own folk. The night was black, with heavy clouds obliterating the stars, and by 8 a.m. rain was steadily falling. Our camp amounted to a ~~water~~ water supply, and a ration dump, for men and horses, with out shelter of any kind from the elements, the horses were tired and so were the men were the

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~~men.~~ WHEN If it was raining we picked a spot close to our horse, put down our ground sheet, and got into our blankets while they were still dry and hoped for the best. Going to bed wet did not seem to affect us, as we dried out under the blanket or the next day when the sun came out. On this occasion it was Christmas Day and we were issued with a big slab of cold plum duff as an extra course for the breakfast we did not bother about having. If we got hungry we ate a biscuit if we had one that was not too hard, or a crust of bread that had been carried on the saddle for three days. I remember standing in front of my horse, eating this thick slab of duff, with the water dripping off my hat onto my hands and on to the pudding as I ate it. It was not attractive under these conditions, but it was a change and we were grateful for the effort the home folk had made to give us some change in our daily routine on Christmas Day. We were in this camp for seven or eight days, just long enough to get into trouble. Scouts, riding the desert to our rear, found, about five miles away an English regimental camp. They had two things we were interested in, one was a wet canteen and the other a rum dump as big as a country hall. We gate crashed the wet canteen. Gate crashed is the word, because we were not asked nor wanted. We could not stand in a long queue and wait our turn, as we would be away from camp too long. Our army moved fast and quickly at a moments notice, and if we got an hour behind, it took a long time catching up. We went to the head of the queue and crashed in. I do not remember any fights, but there were plenty of protesters, referring to "Criminal looking Australians, making excessive use of the word bastard". It was a word the English regiments did not appreciate. However the authorities put a stop to this and we had to give it up. We

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then concentrated on the rum dump, unsuccessfully at first. During the night hours we tried two or three ways of stealing a few jars of rum. I have always found guards supplied by the English regiments very trustworthy. The English Regiment had too many men on guard, and there was no cover for the convenience of our approach. They would not sell and there was no sign of slackness at any hour during the night. We held a small meeting over the affair with the following result. We went round and collected all the money in the squadron. The sum collected was recorded as the individuals lent it. We cut paper into suitable sizes and rolled them up with notes on the outside, till we seemingly had a huge amount of money. We handed all this to one loud talking salesman. He filled his shirt with it, his pockets and his hat. That night the salesman with a companion led the wayto the rum dump, six others following well behind, established their headquarters in a hollow one hundred yards or so from the dump. They handed their horses to a holder and the five crept close. The salesman had asked for the sergeant of the guard, and said he was wanting to buy a jar of rum, for which he would pay £20 or £50 for one jar, he would pay what the sergeant wanted, but he wanted a jar of rum. He pulled rolls of notes out of his pockets, he pulled them out of his shirt, he took them out of his hat, he passed double fistfulls to his companion to hold. He would pay £200 or £300 or £500 for a jar. He kept on juggling money and talking. Gradually the guards could not resist the talk, they hoped the sergeant would deal, they crept up the sides of the dump to listen in. They had never seen so much money. Our five slid into the end, got all they could carry and moved off into the dark to the waiting horses. The horse

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holder rode past the salesman and gave a signal, the salesman told the sergeant to "go to hell" got on his horse and rode off with his companion, so the party returned with all their money and all the rum they wanted. Operation Rum had been most successful. The first thing they did was to pay back the loan money to the various troopers, who had been "holding well" enough to help finance the little scheme. A teetotal corporal was put in charge of the rum and a file past made out of bales of horse feed. The corporal had a half pint enamel mug. Every one, as he filed past got three quarters of that mugful tipped into his container mug. What is army rum? Fifty per cent over proof I think. Most filed past a second time but I never heard of anyone passing a third time. We were all on deck next morning having enjoyed the whole adventure, and having brought in the New Year in a grand style. I will always remember the feeling of satisfaction acquired by the success of the scheme to raid the Rum Dump. The Officer Commanding decided it was time he shifted camp, so without any further delay we were on the war path again.

CHAPTER 32

The Turk army was moving forward for the second attack on the canal. We were riding hard most of the time. In one camp we rode the first three days and three nights in every week, this was a non-stop ride, it took us that long to go out, shoot up an enemy outpost and return. We met the Australians going out as we came in. These were the days of thirst! Reader have you ever been thirsty? When you pull the cork from your water bottle to have your horse call to you, softly and pathetically, and follow you. It softens you and if there is enough moisture in your carcase, the tears fall. After wetting my mouth and swallowing a spoonful, I pour half a cup into my dixie lid and

let my horse do the same. He seems to understand. I have sucked a button till it stuck to my mouth, and still the sun poured down with hours and hours to go before water could be found. On one occasion I found a well and drew up a bucket full. My horse tasted and refused -- I got rid of the button and drank my fill. It was then I noticed something queer about the water and on inspecting the well carefully I discovered a dead mule in there. I was a bit uneasy for a day or two but suffered no ill effects. On coming into camp at night we would line up at the water troughs, every horse would plunge his head in up to his eyes, and every man would plunge in his dusty sun burned face between the horses and drink his fill. For extremes of heat and cold the desert is wickedly supreme. I think it must be the differ ence between night and day temperature that caused us to feel the cold so much. We ride through the day and up to 8 p.m. in a cotton shirt with the sleeves torn off. At about 8 p.m. we pull on a jersey and by 9 p.m. we put on our jackets, by 11 p.m. we stop and spread our horse rug full length on the horse's back, put on our overcoats and anything else we have, and from then on till daylight we and our horses shiver as we ride through the night. At daylight we see the sun start to rise, a great ball of red, all out of shape and distorted as it creeps above the horizon. We stop at once and take everything off and from then till 10 a.m., we suffer what appears to be the hottest part of the day. No one feels very clever during these first hours of daylight, war strain and weariness from lack of sleep show on every face. Hot morning cups of tea were not for us. Sometimes if we could gather some fast burning and hot firing scrub, we could boil a cup of water in a dixie lid in the ten minutes

stop, into this we would put a small handful of tea, and carry the brew with us until it cooled enough to drink. I can remember this strong black tea bracing up my sagging muscles like strong alchol; but it was very seldom that material and timing could be co-ordinated to achieve this object. During this period for security reasons, we were capturing and keeping in control every Bedouin that saw our movements. Many of these people were fine big upstanding men with fine physique. If one of them got a start of one hundred yards we could not catch him on horse back, they could run on the sand like a deer on the hills. We were doing a lot of small patrols, such as four men and a signaller going out for about ten miles and setting ~~xxx~~ up a signal post on a high sand hill and searching palm hods for Bedouin. In a palm hod the Bedouin will always run to the well and hide when he saw us coming and so long as we did not disturb him he stayed there. We soon learned to take advantage of this trait and left him there, as he needed no guarding till we were ready to move, then we would go to the well and bring him out, take him prisoner. One tough character on outpost duty on the top of a high sand hill, saw a one man Turkish patrol mounted on a camel come into the Hod three hundred feet below him, dismount and tie his camel. The Turk started to climb the sand hill, which was sunbaked, steep and soft. The tough guy dug a little groove in the top of the sand hill for his rifle and waited till the Turk got almost right to the top, then he pressed the trigger, jumped down and grabbed him before he could roll too far. He removed his pay packet and some other odds and ends and then let him roll. He then went down and collected the camel and led it back. When the post was returning to camp, the

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sergeant wanted to shoot the camel, but the guy made so much fuss that he was given permission to lead it back to camp. To do this he had to walk because a horse will not go near a camel. He put his heavy gear, helio, rifle etc., on the camel and started walking after the horses. As soon as a hill came between him and the horses he attempted to make the camel lie down so he could mount it and ride into camp. To do this he jerked the lead rope, making a "ha ha" sound, the rope was rotten and broke, the camel turned about with his rifle, helio and other equipment on its back and bolted for Turk land. The guy was not so tough after H.Q. had finished with him that night. The helio would be worth £50 in those days and rifle, amunition, signal message etc., would be quite interesting souvenirs for the Turks. This outpost duty was very tiring, the sand usually blew along about three feet high, to keep clear of it we had to stand up all day, we did not do so of course, we took turn about standing up to get above the drifting sand, and sitting down in it to get a rest. The strain on our eyesight was also severe. Receiving and sending a number of messages from a small one man out post, in the hot bright sun with the heat reflecting from the white sand, caused very severe eye strain in some cases. On one occasion I went nearly blind for three weeks and my eyes never completely recovered. At that time we were one hundred miles from El Arish...., one hundred miles of soft white sand. From our post we watched the movements of a small boy, he was alone and working his way across the sand hills towards our lines. He was missing our out post by about two miles, whether accidently or intentionally I could not tell, however I asked a couple troopers to go out and get him. He was about eight or ten years old, but the troopers could not

put their hands on him, he was like a wild bush tom can, his teeth finger and toe nails flew into action if he was touched. His only words were "English Officer", repeated over and over again. They guided the child to the post and I informed H.Q. by helio and asked if they knew anything about the child, and did they want him. In a very little while I got an urgent message to put the child on a horse and send him in with an escort, with all care and speed. I did this and on returning to camp that evening, I made enquiries as to who this V.I.P., child was. This was the story -- His father held an official position in El Arish, he was a British agent and his little son travelled alone, backwards and forwards, between the British lines and El Araish with secret information. Born and bred to the desert, half wild by nature, this child could navigate and live off the land while he walked the one hundred miles between our lines and his home. While writing these desert stories I will refer to another case that I found of great interest. I was the signaller on a long patrol, there were two sections on this patrol, eight men, we were about fifteen miles out in "no man's land" when we saw a dozen goats in a hollow a mile away. Where there are goats there should be a Bedouin in charge, so we rode down to the goats, there was no Bedouin, he must have seen us and got away. There were a few old tins and a few small bits of rag the size of half a tea towel, lying on a little desert shrub. The troopers rode around, but there was no one in sight. There was a tin with a little ground grain meal, about half a tea cup, but I did not see any water, one of the goats may have supplied milk to mix with it. We dismounted and had lunch, and were mounted and ready to move off, when the farrier pulled a rag off the top of a small shrub, about

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eighteen inches high. Beside the shrub and half under the rag was a woman, crouched in a little heap, hiding like a wild pheasant. A patrol of eight men riding and walking round that shrub for an hour and a half, yet no one saw her, she looked so very old, her face was lined and creased in wrinkles. She was bent and slightly humped backed, and seemed to have ~~xxxxxxx~~ trouble with one hip, she could never walk the fifteen miles back, but we had to take her with us. We "sold a horse" for who should have the pleasure of carrying this frail old Bedouin woman in front of him on the fifteen miles ride back to camp. The farrier won the doubtful pleasure. He rode his horse up close beside her, we men with an arm on hers and a hand under her seat, shot her up on the saddle before she knew what was happening. All hell broke loose, teeth and finger nails flew into the farrier's hide, he put both arms around her and tried to hold her, but the vicious and consistant attack beat him. With an oath and a heave he shot her back to earth, she hit the ground and bounced upright and this time she was a youthful person, say around the ~~xx~~ early twenties. She gathered up her rags and tins and gave a sign that she would walk, and walk she did, keeping up ~~with~~ the horses with ease for the fifteen miles over the hot sandy desert. Without seeing the whole performance I could never imagine such a perfect piece of camouflage and acting. I am sure she could have travelled much farther, The Bedouin are a wonderful people with grand physique, their very existance was based on the survival of the fittest.
As far as I could tell their main diet was dates, grain and the milk and meat from goats. Grain was piled in heaps under sand cones, camouflaged to look like natural wind blown sand cones.

FRESH dates were very attractive when we got accustomed to eating them. They grew in big bunches and were very plentiful. At first we found they had a very satisfying effect on our appetites, and a few at a time were all we could eat. After becoming accustomed to that way of life, the overeating effect disappeared and we could enjoy a large meal of this lovely fruit. The horses enjoyed them too, and would take a mouthful of dates rolling the stones out of one side of their mouths and swallowing the fruit at the same time. These tales of desert interest gave some variation to the monotony of riding in convoy, of dust and weariness, of outpost duty and war strain, and the everlasting precautions to guard against surprise attacks. I was leaving one night as signaller for a troop on outpost, we were about two hundred yards away when a call stopped us, I was relieved by another signaller who was sent in my place. It was just getting dark, I was given an escort of four troopers and told to be on the top of a certain sand hill by daylight and get in touch with an English Regiment about sixty miles away to the East, and send a certain message. To reach our destination by daylight we rode fast. It was the early stages of the second attack on the Suez Canal. I was riding parallel to the front and we were passing through various Palm Hods. Fog was lying low and thick in the hollows. We did not know where our outposts or our front line were. Machine gun fire was spluttering off and on close on our left flank. We were riding by compass through the night and our course led us through fog bound hods and low valleys. By 3 a.m. we were getting a bit nervy, with continual periodic bursts of machine gun fire, some distant, but some very close. I called a halt on a low siding. and said we

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would wait for daylight as I felt we were running too much risk. The sand hill we were going to was steep and high with a big palm hod on the Turkish side, we were close, but just how close I was not sure. Daylight came slowly and we were just about to get mounted and move on when one man spotted a camel rider on the skyline towards Turk land, we could only see him for a second as he topped a ridge. We paused and counted fifty or sixty riders as they passed over the ridge, they were heading for the Palm Hod at the foot of the hill. We had ridden all night to make use of this hill for our signal post, we needed that hill to get our message across to the English Regiment. I decided they might stay in the Palm Hod for a while and if we did not get too high on our side I might get time to get my message through by helio. We approached the hill and rode up it on an angle. Just when I thought I had gained enough height and was consider-ing calling a halt, to try to get contact, we rode past a little sand mound, right on to a troop of the Turkish Army, they were not ten yards in front of us, They gave one SNORT and fell over backwards down a sand gutter aout of sight. We decided we were out numbered by ten to one and felt that "he who fights and runs away will live to fight another day". We evacuated the hill and left it to the Turks and never sent the message. We all got back by evening to the camp. Now this story is not yet finished -- a few days before this we raided a Turkish outpost at break of day. Some Turks were shot up and some escaped. On going through the poskets of a dead Turk I collected a Turkish £1 note, which I got tired of looking at after twenty four hours, so exchanged it for an English note, with another signaller. This was the man that took my place when I was called

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back and sent on that special night ride. The signallers and his troop, with the exception of one man were all captured that night. Their horses were in a small hollow and their post was on a low ridge, whether it was well positioned or not I do not know, but the first the outpost knew was two long columns of Turks were already past them, one on each side. The Officer in charge surrendered, but one trooper mounted his horse and rode down between the two columns towards Turk land. He found a gap in the line and rode through. Two Turks ran out and half levelled their rifles but did not shoot. He found his way back during the night, the others were all taken prisoners. I think the only one that survived the starvation conditions of the Turkish Prisoner of War Camps was the officer. That timely call, one minute longer and it would have been too late, I would have died with my companions in that prison camp. So it is recorded that life swings on such small decisions made at a moments notice. A week or so later we found the following message left by the Turks for us to pick up -- "8/8/1916 We regret that we are not only German Troupers and have not cavelerie as the Englishman then we would gain the play shirtenly. Now we will wish that you will not follow to fast into the triste deserte. 10 C.M. cannon Batty."

"8/8/1916 Hear was a German Artillerie observation poste and had seen all movements of the English cavalerie. Lt. Allsopp A.M.Rifles now prisoner of war a gentlemann had eaten in our Batterie. 5/6/VII/16" Lt Allsop referred to in the enemy messages, was the officer in charge of the outpost captured a day or two previously. This was the outpost that I was recalled from, to be sent on the special mission. These were days of great stress and strain, month after month of contact with the enemy at break

of day, after riding day and night for one, two or three days, when we were not attacking we were always on edge for fear of being attacked. On the march we rested for ten minutes in every hour, and during this rest we would slip the bridle reins over our arm, put our hand in a pocket and fall asleep. When the army was about to move the horse would waken us, If anything happened that you were not awakened and got left behind, the Bedouins dispatched you and took your clothing and rifle and leftthe corpse lying in the sun on the sand. The rear guard had to be extra careful that they did not have the last four men cut off and dispatched by riders with lances on Arab ponies, or snipers or a mixture of both.

We were continually engaged in taking Turkish forts, which had been built on a suitable hilltop and manned in strength. These places we would surround at day break, and then stay beyond machine gun fire till about 10a.m. As the place was surrounded no reinforcements could be rushed in, and around 10a.m. the battle would begin and the pressure steadily increased till about 3 p.m., when a series of charges with fixed bayonets would take the place. In some of these forts there were huge Turk stores of clothing and footwear, which were thrown open to the camel drivers, "Egyptian labour corp" who brought up convoys of camels with horsefeed and rations and water for man and beast. The camel drivers rushed these stores. Their philosophy was that what they could wear they could keep, but what they carried they could be robbed of. The result was that next day walking for mile after mile on the burning sun baked sand, were hot and distressed camel drivers wearing two or three Turk uniforms all at the same time bulging with new clothes, and wending their weary way back to camp.

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The wounded from these battles had a gruelling time on the return journey, as the only way they could be taken back was by pack camel on a kind of rocking stretcher slung on each side of a camel. These stretchers would sway, rock and swing as the camel's rolling gait took him across the sand for twentyfour, thirtysix or ever fortyeight hours. The wounded were evacuated at once and the army followed some hours later after clearing up, burying the dead and destroying the fort. As we travelled faster than the camels we usually passed the camel train with the wounded on our way back. The suffering of some of these men was beyond belief and it was not uncommon for wounded men to appeal to us, if we had any feeling of mercy left in us, to take down our rifle and shoot him so that he could escape the agony of travelling any further. One of our signallers unslung his rifle and was only prevented by his mates from giving way to the appeals of a wounded Australian, it was all very distressing to witness such suffering. Though many died on the journey back, many more recovered to live and enjoy a useful life. The people in charge did all that was possible and gave the wounded every consideration and help in supplying the best available form of transport. The country we had to travel over often, put the wheeled vehicles of those days beyond consideration and air transport was not known, we had a few small planes that were used for observation purposes only. It was war. We were thirty to one hundred miles or more, out in Turk territory and the wounded had to be given transport. The camel train was the only transport that could travel across this sand. Horse drawn waggons were too slow and too heavy to pull up and down the soft sand hills. we were always many miles ahead of roads and rail, usually around fifty miles but sometimes much more. The railway followed up and

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kept the base supplied with the necessary equipment for the largest mounted force that had ever been assembled in the world. The railway was pushed through behind the troops, built by hundreds of Egyptians. The Egyptian overseers had short whips and used them, mostly lightly, to keep the construction going at a steady pace. These labourers were signed on in Egypt for three months' work up the Sainai Peninsular. On signing they were given £1 and told to report back in a week. This was the attraction, they signed on, took the £1 and went off and spent it. Some reported back, but some did not. It made no difference, the Police picked them up and they went up the line for three months. They were then brought back to Cairo and paid all their accumulated wages and discharged. They then had money greatly in excess of their usual wealth. It soon went and back they came to sign on again get their £1, spend it, hide and have the whole set up repeated. Our regiment was getting in a distressed condition. Fights were breaking out along the horse lines, weary men were very irritable, boils were common among the troops and festering skin sores were on most hands and arms. Flies were always with us, flies by the millions. Unless our food was boiling hot, or bone dry it was crusted with flies, if we put jam on bread it immediately became a black heap of flies. I remember one signaller pouring some golden syrup, he got in a parcel, on to some dry bread. He ate it by pushing the flies back with his lip as he ate. What was he to do? He had to eat something poor chap, as he was weak from starvation.

CHAPTER 34

Eventually the regiment was relieved and we went to Alexandria for two weeks, where we were camped about two miles from the tram terminus. The natives had dozens of donkeys at the camp for soldier transport to the terminus, for which we paid 1/-

These very well trained donkeys would run along very well with the native trotting along behind. When a suitable distance had been travelled, the donkey would throw himself down, the rider taking a fall on the metal, the donkey got up quickly and ran back to his owner and the pair returned to base for another fare. The natives grew quite wealthy, in comparison with their usual financial standard. I think the donkeys acted on some form of signal from their owners, such as a whistle or call, and immediately threw the rider, who getting up sees the donkey going back at a run, brushes his clothes, attends to his gravel rash and walks the rest of the way. Two of us hired donkeys and rode off in good style. My friend's donkey went half way and refused to go any further, he got off to find out why. The moment he was off the donkey wheeled round and bolted back. Mine threw himself down, losing his rider that way and also bolted back. We both walked the last half. We took a tram some distance then got out and walked along the street. We asked a boy the way to the Zoo, but all he said was "English lady, English lady". He led us down a back alley and we thought we were being taken to some brothel and very nearly turned back. However the boy was very pressing and we dicided to follow him, he was right and finally led us up some steps and knocked on a door. An English woman answered and asked us in. We gave the boy some "Buckshee" and went in. This all seemed so strange as it was over two years since I had spoken to an English woman or been in a private dwelling. I cannot remember the lady's name, it is all so long ago, however I remember the interesting parts of her life story, and all she told us that day. For the sake of a name I will refer to her as Miss X. Miss X was a well known Welsh singer about the

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turn of the century, unfortunately she developed diphtheria and suffered a very long illness. When she recovered, her singing voice was damaged beyond repair. Miss X turned from singing to music teaching and accepted a position of music instructor to a very wealthy Egyptian family. She told us a great deal about the lives of her girl pupils, how they lived a normal life until about fourteen years old, then they 'took the veil', and from then on never took part in mixed company. They go out veiled with a chaperon, and if by accident they meet their father or brothers in the street they pass them by as strangers, for others would not know their relationship. These girls usually travel to Europe or elswhere before taking the veil. On these occasions they travel with a chaperon as ordinary travellers. Miss X invited us back one afternoon and there we met the Ex Kedive of Egypt's son. He looked about twenty and was a very nicely spoken, quiet boy. His English was very good. Miss X told us a very sad and interesting experience that happened to a friend of hers. This lady was a governess in a wealthy Egyptian family home in Cairo. The governess gained the father's consent to take his eldest daughter to Europe for a second trip though she was due to take the veil. The governess was taking the second daughter and thought it a pity not to take the elder sister too. This was arranged and the governess with the two sisters sailed for Europe. Everything went according to plan except on the way back to Egypt, an attraction developed between the elder sister and one of the ship's officers. The young lady invited the officer to call and gave her address, all unknown to the chaperon. The day after their arrival in Egypt, from the balcony of the Harem, the chaperon saw this officer

approaching the building through the park like grounds. She realised at once what must have happened, and anticipated the tradgedy that would occur if he got too close to the building. She ran down the steps and out into the grounds and stopped him. She urged him desperately to go back at once, and return to the ship and stay there. There was no time to explain, just go and she would write a full explanation. Her very urgency brought sense and dispelled his reckless intentions. He got back to his ship and safety, the letter of explanation warned him that he was lucky to do so. If he had got any further there was little chance of his ever coming out alive. The young lady was a witness to this episode and in revenge, the chaperon had an addition of ground glass added to her soup. She did not die, but was very ill, and spent nearly a year in a private hospital. She was very well compensated financially by her employer, and when she recovered she had sufficient funds to start a convalescent home of her own, and was reported to have done very well. The poor unfortunate girl lost all the priviledges that were her due. She was removed from the association of her family and sent into exile. The young ladies of Egypt had their marriages arranged, they did not meet their husbands till after marriage, and were then not permitted to return home on a visit till one year had elapsed. This was a precaution against any very young bride becoming homesick after a visit to her family. Many of these marriages were made for a financial or political reason. Any girl who was fortunate enough to be married as a first wife to a young man could consider herself very lucky. Usually they were so situated that they could observe, without being seen themselves, the visitors to and from their fatherÜs house. Through this practice of watching they knew the men,

through the gossip knew the news of all the doings in their society. We understood, that through the restrictions placed on these better ~~cales~~ class ladies of Egypt, their attitude toward men was anything but reserved. True or not I am not experienced enough to say, but the experience we gained on two occasions, led us to believe that this could be correct. Firstly we were on leave in a big Egyptian city, and were walking down a tree lined street in an obviously wealthy suburb. Over a high stone wall we looked at a large residence with a long high balcony, well back from the street, behind park like grounds. We two stopped by a wide double entrance gate to admire the setting of this house and the lovely cool grounds. The clean tree lined dustless street, the beautiful grounds and the great house, with its long high balcony was a picture worthy of any artist. We stood commenting and absorbing this scene. However we were observed from the house, and some three or four young women ran along the balcony waving to us and calling, and supporting their calls by signs that fully conveyed the meaning of their calls. We were between one hundred and two hundred yards from the house. The women looked very young and attractive at that distance and were very insistant and persuasive in their endeavours to persuade us to walk through the grounds and call on them. We talked it over, surveyed the ground and the back ground. If there had been four of us so that two could have stayed in reserve to give a helping hand, or tell the tale if the position got bad, I think we might have gone in for a closer look, however the grounds looked too peaceful, quiet and nice, it looked too open and inviting, and we got too suspicious that some hidden enemy was lurking in the background, and that we would be able to

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do little or nothing about stopping a report of "Two soldiers reported missing". The women were very persuavive , and the grounds and the setting of the house so attractive that there wss a curious feeling of temptation to walk through the gates and under the big trees in the park like grounds, and get a closer and better view of the whole area. If we had decided to go in, the decision could have been fatal, but as we decided to go on, we will never know how attractive this harem, if it was a harem, might have been, or in what danger we might have placed ourselves by entering. There was evidently great wealth, conservatively displayed by the gracious surroundings, very lovely exterior living conditions. Were these women the daughters of the house, who had not yet taken the veil? Was this building a harem belonging to some wealthy plutocrat and these encouraging females some of his wives? Or was it a brothel? I do not think so. So I repeat that these people showed no reserve -- we on the other hand were full of reserve! If we had trespassed and been captured, we would have been very lucky if we lived to tell the tale. The Egyptians were very fussy about who got into their harems. We were well aware of this, and also well aware of the fact that if you got caught you never got out. On a later occasion on the same leave we were fortunate enough to meet and hold a short conversation with two veiled young women from an Egyptian society family. This took place in a Public Park. They were sitting with their chaperon on a large park seat when we two walked along. They gave no sign of encouragement by look or action, but we decided to interview them. We walked up -- there were two young and pretty maids together and the chaperon beside them. I walked up and sat beside one of the pretty maids

and my companion sat beside the chaperon. We took off our hats as a mark of respect and kept them off, and asked them if they spoke English. They did not. The maid in the centre stood up, and in no uncertain manner , ordered the chaperon to move over, and sat down beside my companion. The chaperon looked uneasy, but we felt encouraged. I started to talk, a few words of Egyptian, an odd word of French, plenty of signs to convey my meaning and pencil drawings when in difficulties. My companion was doing likewise. We were getting on fine and making real progress, they let their white veils drop almost off their faces and so I would not feel repulsed my pretty maid moved a few inches along the seat until she was in a position of nice friendly closeness. Alas all things come to an end, and so the end came to our little adventure. Some distance away they spotted the approach of two obviously wealthy, aristocratic looking Egyptians, men. They immediately stood up, straightened their veils, held out their hands and shook hands, turned round and walked straight off in the opposite direction. We sat down again on the seat, the two men walked up and as they passed, they gave us a look that would have stopped the engine of a deisel tank. We left that park at once, and did not feel comfortable until a tram had taken us a mile or two from the area. Again may I say that those pretty maids welcomed our attentions without reserve, and only gave up when trouble approached in the form of two men of their own class. These two pretty maids were very beautiful, their complections, eyes and features were so easy to look at. Cream to white skins, very well cared for, lovely dark eyes, with long dark eyelashes, left with us a general impression of personality intelligence and an interest in us that was in excess of our sincere interest in

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themselves. The poor old chaperon was not in the picture at all, and yet if we could have spoken the language, I am sure we would have found her knowledge most interesting. When they stood up it was difficult to judge their figures because of the overflowing type of dress they wore, from neck to feet, but we paid them the compliment of thinking how nice they would look in WESTERN DRESS

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western dress. We had been back up the line for a long time and were getting worn and nervy again. Enemy outpost raids at break of day, or "Stand to", before daylight, in case of being raided, heat, dust and flies, in the day time, and lack of sleep at night as we tried to force the enemy to retreat faster than they wanted to, in order to over run their rear guards. We had come in behind the infantry lines, to rest man and horse for a few days. The time was xxxxxxxxxx the evening twilight. English regiments had been marching past our camp for hours. In the evening twilight, camel trains with their luggage came rolling by. We stood watching this moving line of anumals stretching for miles, away into the night on either side. The pack on one camel slipped and the driver pulled him out of the line and put him down to adjust the load again. One piece of this load was a box about eighteen inches long by nine inches. It was a rough box strongly made, with two or three pieces making the lid, well nailed down. It attracted my attention. It was a chill evening and I was wearing my overcoat, which I took off and walked over to the camel and dropped the coat on the box. I picked it up and walked on and the box was there no more. I could not get rid of my mates so I sat on the sand pulled out my bayonet and prized off the lid. As I was doing the job I could not get into the box first, that priviledge fell to one of my audience. He filled his hands and

pulled out boot blacking and brushes. I was second in and going deep, got hold of a full whisky bottle and took that as my share. If I remember correctly some one else got another half bottle. My bottle stood me in very good stead and by using it with discretion, it lasted for some time, I have very satisfying memories of the help I got from that bottle. We were leaving the desert and coming into Palestine, the war strain, the lack of rest, night and day, week after week, month after month was beginning to have its effect on the troops. One poor lad in our troop put a bullet through his leg to get some sort of relief from this continual mental strain. He went off to Egypt and base, and we who stayed behind, stayed with mixed feelings. I never knew if I was envious or not, believe me it takes courage to shoot yourself and a man who does it is getting in a very run down condition. One of our Red Cross personell thought up quite a novel way of getting a spell from the flies, dust and sleeping on your horse, while continually moving. As a baby he had never been circumsized, he took a scissors and made a jagged cut in his foreskin. He told the tale that he was carrying a heavy tin of medical supplies on his saddle when his horse stumbled and the tin damaged his penus. No one had any method of proving this tale false, so he got to Cairo, was circumsized in an operating theatre and had a very good holiday without loss of any prestige. We were moved on to the Mediterranean Coast for a few days and were able to get our clothes reasonably free from lice. We swam in the sea, we sunbathed, slept and rested. We got mail fresh bread and wrote our letters. Four or five hundred yards out from the shore was a sand bar with some three feet of water covering it. We swam out to this sand bank and played around

in the surf for a while before swimming ashore. As I was coming in one day a man was calling for help, I swam across and found he had a mild attack of cramp and was in a poor way. We were fairly close to the sand bank and I decided to help him in to the shallow water. I swam hard with him for twenty minutes but made little progress, I was done, so used my voice and waved for assistance, three good swimmers came across and I handed over. I started out for the sand bank on my own, but was more exhausted than I had realised. I swam till I could not keep my head up and was not sure that I was going in the right direction, I was swallowing too much water. I decided to sound for the bottom, I knew if I could not touch I would never get up again, I stood up and hit the bottom, up to my shoulders in water, I was able to stand there for five minutes and recovered enough to swim the short distance to the bar. There I rested till I was ready to swim ashore. Meanwhile the three men with their patient tried to reach the sand bank, but making no progress they realised that they were swimming against a strong current, so turned round and successfully got their man ashore. He was unconscious but artificial respiration brought him round and he lived to fight another day. Among the farriers was an Irish man, he was tall, about six foot three inches, lean, brown and very untidy. He never laced his boots and scorned puttees. His jacket was more comfortable if unbuttoned and his hat was well past the envy of any fisherman. He was very popular and had many taking ways. He lived better than the Colonel. He knew horses and knew how to handle them. He shaved with a scissors when his whiskers became a nuisqnce . He was kindly and good natured, but had one hell of a temper if anyone tried to double

crossed him. He was a bit like that old character "McClusky", who intended to win before he got into a fight, and was not fussy by what means he did win or how quickly he achieved his object so long as he achieved it. He did not wear socks and his feet did not get washed. The heat and the dust kept them dry and they merely flaked. Now every time a number of reinforcements came to the regiment and were paraded at Head Quarters to be posted to the different troops, Paddy would go up and walk down the line in front of them, giving each man a close inspection and passing round the end, came back along behind them and give each one a close look from that angle too. This was a regular performance and every one was accustomed to it. One day among the reinforcements was a small chap. He looked about sixteen and small at that. I am sure by the look of him he had never been away from home and I would think, lived in an isolated area where he had missed the advantages of mixing with more sophisticated children. It was bad enough to send him overseas in the army, but wicked to put him up in the front line. He should have been kept in Base. Paddy had another look at him and said "My little man and what might be your name" On being told he went to the Adjutant and asked for "The little man" to be put in his care, attached to the farriers till he grew up. The Adjutant discussed it with the Colonel and that was how Paddy got his Batman. "The little man" was shown how to make a bivy with palm leaves and one blanket. He was taught how to cook, Paddy supplying the rations, for it was easy for him with his "taking ways" to supply whatever he and the "Little Man" had a fancy for. Perhaps I should say that the Brigade Head Quarters, the Ambulance, the Regimental HeadQuarters, the Australians and the English, all

helped to supply their rations. The Little Man lived well, he cooked Paddy's meals and watered his horse and anyone who interferred with the Little Man had to deal with Paddy first. He put on weight and grew up fast and was a good type of lad. I understand that he was one of those who were fortunate enough to come back to his father and mother again, and let his parents see that their effort in rearing him was not all in vain. I often wondered if he ever fully appreciated Paddy's interest in him. Paddy would be regarded by any old hand as a specialist in "how to live well and stay alive in the army". He came back to N.Z. with the Regiment, having served in all campaigns, never wounded never sick, never off duty, and very seldom doing any work. Sometimes a thought crossed my mind, that perhaps I might live to see my homeland again. Death had missed me so narrowly on so many occasions that my feeling of certainty of death could be wrong. We had charged under heavy machine gun fire into a palm hod, the horse holders had grabbed the bridles from their dismounted mates, turned their horses round and gone back at a mad gallop. The sand hills adjoining were strongly held by the enemy and we were there to shift them. Head quarters were established in the hod and the troops were in action one hundred and fifty yards ahead of us. I had a groove scratched out of a sand mound that I backed into, for reading signals. The position gave me a feeling of reasonable safety, and was the envy of others scattered around in uncomfortable positions. I was there for an hour before the call of nature demanded my attention. Under these circumstances we never worried about privacy, but it was necessary to move some yards . A palm tree fifteen yards away looked a suitable place. I was just about to move when a

machine gun sprayed the base of the tree with bullets. I thought it unlikely that a second burst would land in the same place. I moved and got nearly there when a second burst tore up the debris where I was going. I realised this palm tree must be in the traverse of an enemy machine gun. There was no where else I could see that would be covered from enemy observation. The desire died and I turned back. A man had jumped my possy as soon as I had left. He was shot in the back and they were just picking him up. He lived but never walked again. I took over the possy again and occu-pied it for the rest of the day. In the morning the enemy had re-treated, so as I have mentioned, I could be wrong with this strong "no returning" feeling, and that perhaps fate had changed, or more likely the Devil had decided to guard his own and had challenged fate. We never talked about our near misses, so I do not know of others experiences, but I had many very close calls. I never worried about bullets from aeroplanes' machine guns, till one day when we were being straffed by a 'plane, I was standing under my horse's neck, when I felt a stinging feeling down my bare arm. I looked and blue paint was scattered down my upper arm. A bullet had passed through my saddle wallet through a tin of bully beef and sprayed my arm with the paint off the tin. Neither I nor my horse was the worse for this attantion, though after that exper-ience I paid a little more respect to straffing aeroplanes. Another time I was expecting a long distance helio call and was up close to the enemy lines, it being the most likely place to intercept the call. I never got the call but stayed on late in the evening, hoping to still pick it up. This was a dangerous thing to do, as our outposts were liable to be over run if we stayed on after the supporting troops started to move. However

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if this call was coming through I wanted to be there to take it, and I stayed as long as a helio could be read. Wer were all ready to clear out and I said I would run to the top of the rise and have one more look, I did a foolish thing, I exposed myself on the skyline and nearly paid the price. A sniper got me in his telescopic sight and let me have it. The almost silent swish and sucking sound as the bullet passed within inches of me, followed by the crack of the report, that you hear when a rifle is fired directly at you, made me drop like a stone and take off. That sniper might be still wondering if he scored a hit or not.

CHAPTER 36

In army days of the First World War, we were paid 5/- per day, of this we were allowed to draw 2/-, the balance being kept in reserve, or paid to our dependants. This always seemed adequate, the main reason I think, was because everyone was in the same financial state, prices were adjusted to the money available, and it was no disgrace to be completely broke. If some leave was given for a few days in Cairo, and one was lucky enough to draw their name from a hat, he went on leave if he had enough money, if not and he could not raise a loan he gave his leave ticket to someone who had money. One man drew a leave ticket and had no funds, he borrowed 10/- and went to the two-up ring and lost his 10/-. He came back to give his leave ticket away, I lent him another 10/- and he went back, soon returning with £40. Needless to say his satisfaction was great. At this time we were having a spot of trouble with the Tommy Military Police in Cairo, they may have put it the other way round. On two occasions a few New Zealand and a few Australian men, barricaded themselves in the end of a restaurant and fought it out with the M.P.'s using chairs, bottles or anything else that came to their hands.

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These little sideline centres of amusement would sometimes take the Military Police four or five hours to get the upper hand. New Zealanders and Australians knew from birth that chairs and bottles had uses other than sitting on and drinking from. When the M.P.'s eventually won a restaurant battle, they put their prisoners on the train and sent them up the line, with long charge sheets and N.C.O's stripes following by post. One of our chaps was attending a school of Instruction, and had an evening at a hotel. The session was long,and he slept late the following morning. He came on parade at the School of Instruction, without breakfast, unshaven and a hang over. The Tommy Sergeant Major dressed him down before the parade while the officers were walking on. This got under the trooper's skin and he took three paces forward from the line and in a loud voice he said to the Sergeant Major, "You are a bastard, you always have been a bastard, your ancestors have been bastards for thousands of years and you will breed more bastards, you bloody bastard!" He was arrested and sent back up the line. He came before the Colonel, and the guard had three sheets of charge and his two stripes, he had been a Corporal, the Tommies had derated him. The Colonel read the charge and looked him up and down. "I see by this charge you have been getting into a spot of trouble?" "Yes, Sir". "Did you believe what you said?" "Yes, Sir." "Well don't let me have any more of this, go back to your troop and put up your stripes again." "Yes, Sir." So in that way the Colonel held the respect and goodwill of his regiment. We were in Palestine, the riding was harder and the fighting fiercer, Thousands of acres had been planted in barley, it was a wonderfully good crop considering the very primitive means the Arabs had for

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cultivation. They plowed with a branch from a tree, iron shod, scratched the soil loose in a strip four inches wide and three inches deep. The power plant consisted of a donkey and a camel, or an ox and a donkey. It was sad to see this lovely crop of barley slowly ripening and fall down as the war was being fought over the barley fields, and harvesting was impossible. How wasteful war can be! The enemy had many fortified areas across Palestine, and these we had to capture one at a time. They usually took about four days to surround and capture. By sending the mounted forces round the back of these fortified positions, we stopped reinforcements being filtered in. About twelve hours hard and fierce fighting, ending with a bayonet charge, usually forced them to surrender. It was not unusual for a group of Arab women and children to be sitting out in "no man's land" watching and waiting for the war to end, so they could go about their business. I never saw amy of these people shot up, though they must have run a very big risk. The Turks evidently avoided shooting where they sat and we endeavoured to do the same. They would be surrounded by fighting armies for at least two days, I hope they had water and food, while they huddled together on an exposed knob or ridge till the show was over. From our point of view the Arabs were a trecherous type of people. They would cut off a few troopers from the rear guard if possible, charging down on them, mounted on Arab ponies and over run them with their ~~xxxxxx~~ lances, they would strip the clothes from the dead and leave them unburied. If a traveller got into an Arab encampment he was safe while he stayed there, by their law of hospitality. However there was no restriction on finding out where the traveller was going when he left, ambush him, kill him

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and collect his personal belongings. Men women and children, all kinds of animals, including donkeys, live and sleep together in long semi-open type of tent shelters. I remember one hillside in Palestine that was honeycombed with caves. The whole area would cover six or seven acres, and the caves were used by the Arabs as dwellings; but most of the Arabs had left the area when we were there. We took a walk and had a look at them, and found some of the caves had been considerably enlarged by man. One Arab, shot through the calf of the leg, asked us by signs how to treat the wound, we replied by signs until a young man came along, who could speak a little English and acted as interpreter. This man had a Standard 4 Graphic Reader and was studying it for English. He asked us to help him read a few pages. He was frightened to leave the caves and frightened to stay. He hoped the Turks would not come back and hoped the English would leave him alone. We did not want him and he was left there and the Turks did not come back. On some selected hillsides on the desert, the Arabs had acres of watermelons growing in profusion. I have never seen growth better and as ~~xxxxxx~~ far as one could tell it was only bare sand. There must have been water coming up from below. The large melons were too big to be put in a chaff sack. We ate great numbers of these melons, but experience taught us to eat them before they had fully ripened. It was too difficult to tell a melon that was one day over-ripe, if we ate one of these we never forgot it, we spent hours rolling round with the most violent stonach pains, thunder and lightening amidships was a mild way of expressing it. We would collect them by pack horse and take them to our camp. I wish I could grow them here like the Arabs did.

I can remember feeling so weak and tired from lack of sleep that it was an effort to get on and off my horse. We were so tired and lacking in energy, that I think we must have been suffering from vitamin deficiency. Riding, riding, day and night battles, and more riding, our eyes were sore, a bath or swim was a thing of the past. We had not seen enough water to wash our faces for weeks. Tea leaves from the cook's dixie was a great relief, a handful wiped and rubbed round our eyes was very refreshing and cooling; but we had to be quick or every single leaf was gone I remember being in a creek bed, a dry one, with banks on either side about twelve feet high, and the hills went up steeply from the top of the banks, the bottom of the creek bed was about twemty feet wide. We had our horses jammed into the bank on one side, and the shells came whistling down the hillside almost cutting the grass and bursting over the centre of the creek bed. The shrapnel and explosives flew into the xxxxx base of the bank on the other side. Shell after shell, hour after hour, the din dust and powder smell, waiting for that order, "horse holders take over, fix bayonets, advance." There was a dedd horse in the middle of the dry creek bed, shell fire had got him and the rider. A pair of spurs was lying on the saddle, I had lost my spurs, so I picked that pair up and put them on, and if I am not mistaken I still have them, anyhow I had them till recently. That was one time the order to go into action did not come. By dark the enemy pulled out and we were on the move again. The strain of waiting to go into action is very real. You are lined up in a trench or behind a bank or some protection, and the enemy keeps dropping an odd shell on your position or tickles it up with machine gun fire at odd times, letting you know what

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lies in store when you leave your cover. The faces of the troops look strained and white, there is nothing to do but wait for the time to drag by, and zero hour to approach. The enemy are very well entrenched and you have a flat field with no cover at all away out in front of you all the way up to their trenches. The time comes and you go over on to this flat field with an odd skylark flying up with his little song, you take up a line and move forward in short rushes, judging the enemy pressure. The artillery behind you starts firing and the shells drone along not so far above your head and burst on the enemy trenches. When you are an old soldier you get to know a lot about war, you know when a sniper had you picked by the sound the bullet makes, or when you are in the traverse of a machine gun. When you start in action the strain leaves, you are busy, you have things to do, you are frightened no longer, you do not even think about it; but the effect of the strain is still with you, it wears you out physically till you only have enough strength to climb into the saddle or lie down and press the rifle trigger. The second stage is the mental exhaustion, you cannot write a letter, you can only do and think what you have been trained to do and do from force of habit. Nervous breakdown or what was known as shell shock followed this mental exhaustion.

No wonder soldiers become fatalists. I was watching a trooper leading his horse along, when a shell burst right on him, there was a cloud of black smoke which obliterated him and his horse, in a minute he staggered out into vision, but as the smoke cleared the horse was gone, a small piece of the saddle was found but that was all. The horse must have received the shell and disintegrated with it. A shell passed very close to me one day and

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the vacuum or the expansion of air, knocked me down. When the enemy knew that a squadron had halted somewhere behind a hill, they would drop a shell every hundred yards or so, in the hope of landing one on an occupied area. The bugler's horse was very intelligent. When the first shell landed he would clear out on his own for three quarters of a mile and stand there till he saw movement towards the horses, then come back at a gallop, get picked up and fall into line as usual. It was quite wonderful how well he had worked out this little safety manoeuvre, and how efficiently he carried it out.

We used to get a little fresh meat occasionally from the few Arab stock the Turks left roaming the fields. An odd bullock we by chance might pass, would not miss the eye of the cooks. It would take them very little time to kill, dress and put that beast on a pack horse and catch up with the squadron again. Arab sheep were more plentiful and more often found their way to the stewpot. I remember one occasion an Arab tried to protect his sheep. The cook stuck a bayonet in him, not very deep -- it could have been less trouble if he had pushed it in further and pulled the trigger as well-- The Arab toned down and was quiet, the cook put four of his best sheep on pack horses and went off. He killed two and tied the other two up at the cook house to keep fresh for the next day. The Arab got to the General Commanding the Division, showed his wound and lodged a complaint. The General took a ride round all the squadrons to see for himself what was happening. I remember our Officer Commanding, denying he had ever seen any sheep and was quite certain none of his men were involved, he forgot to mention that he had greatly enjoyed mutton cutlets for breakfast that morning.

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The General was quite satisfied and headed for the next camp. He had no idea where our Cookhouse was, it was purely accidental that he happened to take that way out. The General stopped, the sheep saw the General, the General saw the sheep. He sent for the O.C., who, on being confronted with the sheep, was very angry and indignant, he instructed the Orderly Sergeant to arrest the cook and bring him to the Orderly Room. The General was satisfied and went on about his business. The cook appeared at the Orderly Room and the O.C. told him what a fool he was to tie the sheep up at the cook house where any damn wandering General could not help seeing them, and further if you get any more for goodness sake keep them out of sight. The cook apologised for the thoughtless blunder he had made, and promised on a future occasion to co-operate fully on the O.C.'s wishes. So a satisfactory mutual understanding existed. The cook went back to his work, and in less than no time those sheep were in a dixie.

CHAPTER 38

We had an all day and all night ride and by daylight we were round the back of a strong Turk position. We had a hill to capture and all day we slowly advanced across barren gound. A friend of mine was killed beside me that day. Later in Auckland Hospital his sister came to see me and asked for some particulars associated with his death. She was a very pretty young girl, and after answering her questions, ~~telling her details associated~~ she broke down. I was not accustomed to girls, let alone girls in tears. I felt so sorry for her I could have sat down and cried with her. Towards evening we took the hill and lying away to the front were a number of Turk trenches firmly held. An Australian Brigadier formed his regiment into two lines and charged from the rear of these trenches. These two great long lines of mounted

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Australians on their beautiful horses with their long flowing tails, galloping in straight lines down across these trenches, was a sight no one will ever see again, and for size and number of hors-es involved, no one had ever seen before. They jumped the trenches, and the riders shot down into them as they rode over. The white flags shot up behind them. In ten minutes the men in those well placed trenches were all prisoners of war. It was a fine piece of work, bravely and dareingly carried out. We had taken the hill and had a perfect view of the whole manoeuvre, no one who saw it would ever forget it, one of the xxx spectacular sights of war.

Our Colonel was a good officer and soldier, we all had great faith in his ability, and all soldiers take pride in serving under an efficient and capable officer. Our Colonel was strong on disipline and expected every man in the regiment to have a great sense of duty. All the years I was there only once did any slackness ever show in his regiment. Looking back it was almost humourous, but at the time it was no joke. The guard on the camp and the horse lines were playing two-up or cards found the feed dump. There it was nice and warm, friendly and companionable, and the time xxxx passed much quicker than walking through the horse lines and round the camp all night with a chill wind blowing. Spies crept into the camp, removed three horses from the Head Quarters lines, including that of the Colonel, took the Colonel's sachel map case, compass and binoculars, rode away on the stolen horses and disappeared in the night. When the Colonel came out of his bivy in the morning the first thing he missed was his shoulder equipment, and then his horse. All hell was let loose. He had us out of that camp and miles away in half an hour. He had the

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horse picket on the mat individually, and found out the full story, but he never got his horses or shoulder gear back. All slackness in the regiment died on the spot. The Old Boy was a holy terror, but he was extremely capable on the march, or planning and carrying out a battle and this gave him the affection and respect of all the troops. I might mention here, that in the type of warfare we were involved in, how easy it is to make a simple mistake. A certain Captain took his squadron in too close under Turkish fire and was held up there, unable to retreat or advance. He got a rider out with a message for reinforcements, support was sent in and I was sent as a signaller with the support force. I might mention that I had trained my horse to lie down very quickly. On the way in the fire was heavy and coming to a protected spot I jumped off and put my horse down. We were covered by a small rise. The reinforcement went in and the heavy firing died down. I got mounted then and ran the gauntlet in, the firing immediately started and I had the whole lot concentrated on me. I got in O.K. but I did not like it, and never again did I do that trick. I found out that the best and safest place to ride in a charge is as near the front as possible, if your horse was inclined to bolt and run with the leaders so much the better. We stayed in there till the evening and then the regiment came in. By morning we had the Turks surrounded and captured the post next next day.

With a feeling of sadness still with me, I mention the time that I was attached to a troop on outpost. We left at break of day and rode out about twelve miles. At midday I noticed my horse was sick and his hair was all on end and he looked pathetic and miserable. He was a very sick animal, he had foundered was the

Vet's diagnosis. I do not know what happened to him other than that he was sent back to base. The poor old chap, my best friend, my companion through many trials and dangers, my good omen and mascot. Here I was left with a tiny little remount, game as a mountain goat, but far too small for my weight and signal gear etc that I had to carry. On the march the little horse did very well but in charges he bolted out into the centre of the heavy firing and becoming exhausted dropped down to a slow jog and kept me out there, while all the other horses galloped past. I was always first into the thick of the firing and last out of it. I assure you that this became quite a mental strain, but for the moment I could see no way out of it. We were driven beyond our endurance. If we stopped for ten minutes we fell asleep. If we got the chance we boiled a pint of water and put a handful of tea in it and drank the ~~xxx~~ black mixture without sugar or milk. You could feel it go through you like a pint of brandy.

CHAPTER 39

I was coming to the end of my days on active service. The Turks were attacking on the flank with a division. Our regiment was ordered in to hold this attack up. We had to charge across the open end of three or four valleys, under heavy machine gun fire. My poor little horse was true to form on each charge, he galloped out to the centre where the machine gun fire was the heaviest and then dropped to a jog and brought me out of the fire last. It was very exasperating and very frustrating, and added greatly to the strain of the action we were working into. As we crossed the first valley a most peculiar incident happened to me -- the galloping horses put to flight a small bird, probably a lark, it rose close to my horse, and as it did it chirped or whistled, a perfect V. E. in morse code. V.E. was used at the

end of every message. It was the abbreviation for 'very end', I read the signal perfectly, my hair rose on end. So this was the battle I had been waiting for, by sunset my fate would be decided. This bird call V.E. was too distinct, far too clear to be ignored. It never left my mind and I have never forgotten it, I was the only one in the group around me that could read the ~~bird-call~~ morse code. If it was not quite accidental I was the one the message was sent to. I am not a believer in the super-natural. Put it another way, say I keep a very open mind on the subject, for I know strange unexplained phenomena do occur. I have never heard a bird since make a call anything like the morse code for V.E. However whether it was a super-natural message or purely accidental, I read it as a message for me. To a great extent we had grown into fatalists in the Army, we felt that when a bullet had our number on it we would get it, whether we were down the line or up the front. An aeroplane would straff us, a bomb would fall our way, or a sniper would hang us on the bead of his telescopic rifle. We crossed all the valley openings and pulled into a little shallow hollow and handed over to the horse holders. The troops disappeared over a very low rise and we rushed up helio and signal station. The bullets were passing about three feet above our heads in a steady drone, a noise like an amplified bee hive. The Turks had a mountain gun firing shrapnel, we had no artillery. The Turks put on the pressure and our men fell back to the rise about two chains above our signal station. We called for reinforcements urgently, and were told the Camel Corp was on its way, but it never came. Our men decided that ten to one was too big an odds to fight and decided to ~~XXXX~~

pull out and take up another position. They called out for the horse holders to make ready, the horses were only three chains away being held in a tight compact group. I slipped down and got a dead troopers horse, as my little remount could never carry me out. The Colonel came along the line saying "There is no retreat from this ridge we stay here. If we are over run, this division of Turks will get behind Wellington and Canterbury and they will be obliterated." The Colonel was walking up and down, cold as a frosty night. The bullets were droning within six inches of his head, round which he had a great white bandage showing a red stain, and no hat. He called everyone into the firing line, tie the horses together and the horse holders come in, signallers, officers, batmen and all get your rifles and get in. It was all open bare country, one hundred yards on our left the sand hills started bordering the Mediterranean. It was a lovely day, not too hot and perfect soft sunshine. The ground was covered with short grass, pretty little dandylion flowers were scattered along the field. The doctor and the Padre seemed to be the only two not in the firing line. Walking wounded were straggling out of the line and stretcher bearers were bringing out others. I grabbed my rifle and spare bandolier and went in, I had only a chain to go. We had such a thin line, about six feet between each man. I took a quick survey of the situation, there were three close lines of Turks advancing on us and in the rear there seemed to be endless reserves. I flopped down on the grass and got to work. During the whole three years I was on active service I never knew if I had ever hit an enemy till this day, twice I saw my target double up in front of me. They were so close that I had some sort of chance of seeing the

effect of some of my shots. Usually you fire at shrubs, trenches or patches of stones, where fire is coming from. The enemy keep too well covered for you to have the opportunity of shooting directly at a man. Of course there are exceptions also. We were getting very short of ammunition, all our machine guns had heated and jammed. During the four or five hours they had put through large quantities of ammunition. We fixed bayonets and carried on, waiting for the final Turkish charge. I kept six cartridges in my magazine, a few bullets are a great help to a bayonet in a rough and tumble. We had machine gun belts passed along and were pulling the bullets out and firing one by one. I saw a Turk leave his place and run fifty yards to the left. It was obvious what he was up to, a little sand mound with some grass on top would enable a sniper to infiltrate our line. I waited and watched for him, his head came up through the grass and he took a quick look, then his rifle came up and he came higher. I already had a bead on the shot and I let him have it. He came forward as he fell, I kept watching for a while, every few minutes, but he never moved. In the excitement and pressure of the battle I neglected to keep watching the sand mound. The Turks were not more than two chains in front of us, three lines of them, we could see the buttons on their uniforms. The drone of bullets either hitting the ground in front or flying over head never ceased. We rose on our knees, took quick aim and flopped down to reload. I had forgotten to watch the sand mound. I was on my knees just in the act of pressing the trigger, I do not know if I pressed it or not, I got a shattering blow in the right elbow, it jarred me back six inches then I got another blow in the left upper arm. The bullet went

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round the main artery, round the bone and out. If it had cut the artery I would have bled to death, there was no one to help, all were fighting for their lives. If I had missed the shattering blow in the right elbow, I would not have been knocked the six inches that caused the second bullet to pass through my left upper arm, instead of under the armpit where the sniper intended it to go. It was fired from the little sand mound on our left where I had shot a sniper twenty minutes before and through the pressure of the battle I had overlooked watching. I heard at a later date that the second sniper was not over looked and died on the sand mound also. The regimental doctor and the padre were sitting down in a ~~xxxx~~ hollow fifty yards from the firing line. The doctor had no equipment for applying dressings to wounds, as it had all been used. I do not consider that that excused them from saying a few words of comfort as they walked with the walking wounded for a few hundred yards on their journey out, or giving the stretcher bearers a helping hand as they so very, very bravely toiled that afternoon. As I staggered away from the line, falling every minute, the doctor and the padre were the only two men sitting down and not helping stretcher bearers or wounded. It is on occasions like this that the real manhood, if it is in a man, shows. My elbow was completely blown out, the shattered bones were protruding, I was badly shocked and kept falling down with my elbow banging in the dust and dirt. The divisional dressing station was half a mile away down a long grassy slope. I made towards it and after a while I could stagger along without falling. Half way down I came under shrapnel fire from the mountain gun, three or four burst and the shrapnel tore up the grass in circles round me. Fate

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has a say in ones life. How those shrapnel bullets missed me I will never know, the way the grass was torn up in circles around me, I would say I had one chance in a million of staggering on and not being hit. There were dead and wounded there, they had been walking out like I was but did not have the one chance. I arrived at the field dressing station, somebody came along and put a field dressing on my wounds and put my arm in a sling. I was shot through both arms and had no hand for service. Somebody came with a cup of soup and held it to my lips so that I could drink it. Oh! the flavour and taste of that soup, it stands out alone all these years. Someone laid me on a stretcher and put a rug over me. I heard afterwards that the Turks did not charge, they stayed where they were about thirty to fifty yards away. Was it the sun shining on our bayonets that stopped them closing, or was it the fact that we stayed in line where we were, and this influenced their decision against coming to close quarters. If they had rushed at the last we did not have a hope, I also heard that the Turks left more dead on the field than we put men into the firing line. At dark I was moved, I lay on the floor of a "press the pedal" Tin Liz van, with five others sharing the floor with me. We travelled all night across country, rough ground, smooth ground, plowed fields, down hills and along sloping valleys. I was semi conscious, the jolts, lurching bangs and bumps gave us the torments of the devil; the two beside me died that night and escaped further torture. I think I was twentyfour hours travelling in that van before reaching rail head and a field hospital. We were there for a day and a half or two days and I was glad to move on. An English Sister with a commission was in

charge. The English orderlies were very good and would have done anything for us; but were frightened of doing anything on their own without getting orders from this Sister. While there I was taken into a marquee theatre, a rough table, two Doctors, some orderlies assistants, and stretchers all over the floor. Some one asked if they would put me out and one doctor said he would have a look first. He cut some bandage and said, "Whack him out". I woke up back in a marquee ward. The anaesthetic had been easy -- some one said take a long breath, I took it and knew no more. I remember little of the journey from rail head to the Canal. The treatment was improving, we were taken across the Canal in ambulances and put into an Egyptian hospital train. We were shocked, we had not seen a white sheet for years and here we were all dirty and unwashed, with hair matted and thick with lice, unshaved, being put into beds with white sheets and pillows. Everything seemed so clean, To us the cleanliness and beauty of that long railway carriage, with its lovely white beds, was overpowering. It seemed a sort of sacriledge to put our unwashed bodies, and dirty matted hair in those beautiful sheets and on those lovely pillows. I do not know how many beds there were, but it was a very large carriage and there seemed to be a great number. In charge was a middle aged to elderly angel dressed in white, and I think she wore a Sister's Medal. We had not seen any one like this lady in years. She went up and down the carriage asking to be allowed to do something for some of us. "Surely some of you would like something done, a cup of tea, a drink of cold water, anything." She had tears running down her cheeks, she was so full of sympathy and so desirous of helping this carriage full of dirty lice

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infested wounded boys. I think I was still wearing my blood soaked trousers and cotton shirt with the sleeves torn off at the shoulders. For so long I had relied on myself to get what I wanted, or if I could not get it, then go without. Time had trained me, and others the same, to be an independant individual, relying entirely on myself for my personal requirements or comfort. These lads did not think about wanting any attentions, they would all be like I was, in a very low physical state. I was semi-delirious, my one arm was in a terrible state, it was so swollen that the wound on the elbow would be twelve inches across. I never knew the carriage sister's name, but all my life I have had most grateful memories of her, for her obvious sympathy and great willingness to help. I knew little of that journey to Cairo.

CHAPTER 3 & 4 0

I must have been unconscious most of the time, I do not remember being removed from the train xx or transferred to hospital. I came round on a stretcher, on the inside of a great building. There was a lawn and some trees, with a great stone, three storey building all around it. The xxxr wards or rooms opened on the inside, on to the lawn. There were many stretchers and orderlies working hard, carrying the wounded in to wards and putting the lads into beds. My turn came and I was in a bed, in the next bed was a companion of mine from the Regiment. ARTHUR. He must have journeyed down to hospital in the same draught of wounded. I do not know what time we got into bed, whether it was day or night, however some hours later I came round, desperately requiring relief, there was no one in the ward, no orderlies or nurses, my companion, I will refer to him after this as Arthur, when appealed to for advice, suggested I used the lawn. I was close to the main door and with an effort got to the lawn, sank

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on my knees and got relief. Now the trouble started, I did not know where I had come from or how to get back. I could not have moved more that a few feet, but I was lost and bewildered, I sank down on the concrete path. I remember feeling bitterly cold and went out. Sometime later I woke up with people bending over me, nurses and orderlies, they were trying to find out where I came from and what I was doing there. The only help they got from me was my name. At last they picked me up and put me in a bed in another ward, but I must have been shifted ~~again~~ because I ended up alongside Arthur again. Later I was taken for X-rays, the big machine swung over me, it sparked, crackled and banged, I seemed to be frightened of it and was in a collapsed state by the time I was put back to bed. I think about the next day I was taken to the operating theatre. I was told to take a deep breath, my breath caught and would not come in, I tried to breathe, but could not, I choked and died of suffication. However that was the exper-ience, for I never remember getting my breath and the memory was very unpleasant. Like most patients I woke up back in bed. the surgeon came to see me the next day and told me what he had done and the amount of use I would get from my arm. He had a nice kindly personality, and I was very grateful to him for taking the trouble of visiting me. He must have thought I was very low for he put me on special diet and care. I was given chicken soup and other like rations, brought in on a tray with a small bottle of stout at mid-day. A Scottish Infantry soldier from a Scottish Regiment was very good to me, while he was in hospital probably for a month, he fed me all my meals, as I was shot through both arms and could do nothing for myself. As I could not drink the stout because I was too weak , I had difficulty in getting him

to take the stout himself. It was only when he realised I was too weak to drink it, and was sending it back on the tray, that he accepted it, and had it every day for the month he was there. Poor chap, he went back to his regiment and was later killed in action. He was a nice boy and was very good to me. For about two weeks the agony of the dressing for my arms was beyond belief. The great raw wound was as big ~~and~~ as a large ~~as a~~ dinner plate. They gave me a glass of brandy, orderlies held my arm, it took four pieces of gauze to cover the wound. The nurse would hold the gauze half an inch above the wound and drop it on, I could not help screaming out with the pain, as the nerves were shattered and exposed all over the wound. Every finger on my hand in rapid succession would be pulled over backwards and broken, four times this happened before they got one layer on, the next layer was not so bad. Once a day this dressing took place, in the evening they put extra cotton wool on and bandage, but by morning the discharge would be through again. I suffered so much myself and I saw others go through such suffering in this great military hospital, that it left an impression on my mind that time had never dimmed. When the dressing team were two beds away I have seen beads of perspiration stand out on a patient's face, when the team was one bed away they start appealing to be left in peace, appealing most dramatically, convincingly, and sincerely. The teams took no notice, they looked as if they were stone deaf and had no more feelings than a tank. They finished and moved round to the next patient's bed, one great six foot Egyptian orderly would move to each side of the bed, slide their hands under the patient, and up in the air he would go as if on a hydraulic lift, nurse or orderly would do his back and down he would come. Dressing done

and the team moves on, repeating the same performance. You got what was prescribed whether you wanted it or not. In ~~the~~ two weeks the appeals for mercy would stop, in three weeks they would take it all with a smile and in a month the patient would be well on the way to recovery. I was in this hospital about six weeks or two months, and all the time I was there I never saw a visitor come into the ward. At the foot of our beds hung a notice saying which church we belonged to. Arthur and I had a notice with C. of E. on it, a Church of England Minister stopped by our beds one day and asked if he could do anything for us, we both asked him to write to our people, as neither of us could write. He asked us if and where we had been confirmed, and as both of us admitted that we had never been confirmed, he just walked away, without taking our address or writing. He belonged to the British Army and he left a feeling, that one would have been better without him. We had the opportunity of asking a minister of some other church, probably a Presbyterian, one day, we told him the C. of E. ignored us on account of our not being confirmed, and would he be good enough to write a short note to our people? He said he would be happy to do so and he did, we were both very grateful and I am sure our people would be also, though they did not know the story. I never slept the whole time I was in that 27th General Hospital at Zeetown, Cairo, I did not want to sleep, for twentyfour hours a day I lay awake, quite happily, and just rested. In our ward we had a little Welsh V.A.D. night nurse, when not busy, she used to sit on a stool by my bed and we would talk softly for hours during the night. I would tell her of life in the outback of New Zealand, and I will admit that some of the stories I told had a slight leaning towards exaggeration.

I hope I helped to pass the night for her, she greatly helped to pass the time for me. It is so long ago, that I just remember her as a very nice pleasant companion. She wrote to me once after the war was over, enquiring of my wounds and general health, I replied that I was still in hospital with one open wound, but was making good progress, and never wrote again. Now I do not even remember her name, ~~only that she was an Australian~~. One day an Orderly Sergeant came to me and asked if I would like to be sent to England or back to New Zealand. Here I made a mistake in my decision, I thought I would be out of hospital in a month or so, and then be sent back to the regiment as so many other soldiers. In that case I wanted to go back to New Zealand to see my people. If I had realised that I would never again pass medically fit for the army, I would certainly have said "England". However I had said New Zealand and so it was, by the next troop ship returning. A dozen or fifteen of us were cot cases in the ship's hospital, and the rest of the ship was filled with walking wounded, both New Zealanders and Australians. With others I went to the ship in a hospital train, and the only part of that journey that I remember was being put aboard the ship. There was a platform or huge tray on the wharf, my stretcher was put on that and the corner ropes from the tray hooked on to the great xxxxx cargo hook hanging in the air above. A signal given and the rattle of the steam winch as I was hoisted away up to the mast head, swung over the ship and lowered down on to the deck without the slightest jar or vibration. It was a bit uncanny, but very gently done. The ship sailed that night, and I stayed awake all night as usual. The second night at sea I fell asleep about 3 a.m. and slept for about three hours. The next day I slept in the

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afternoon, and after that, all the way to New Zealand I was never awake for more than four hours in the twenty four. Looking back, we must have been a very sick lot of boys in that hospital. One lad asked for his kitbag, which was located in the store and brought to him. He seemed quite alright and in his normal state of mind, however he opened his bag and gave away all his souveniers, and insisted on different ones taking them. When all was done he asked the orderly to dump his bag over the side. The orderly took his bag, collected all the gifts and returned the bag to the store. The lad knew nothing about the kit bag or anything in connection with it. When we explained later to him what he had been doing he would not believe it. The explanation was that he was a little delirious that day. The following experience happened to me -- in this case I remembered every detail. I woke up in the night time and called the orderly, I was firmly under the impression that I was to be transferred to an Indian Hospital Ship and have my arm amputated, that we were meeting the hospital ship in half an hour, and the orderly had not got my kit bag nor myself ready for the transfer by boat. I spoke to him in soldiers' language and said there would be one hell of a row if this ship had to hang about while he got me ready. He pacificied me by saying he would see to it at once, and left apparently to get my things. I do not know how long I was left, but the next thing I knew was the doctor and a couple of nurses by my bed, taking the bandage off my arm. I kept telling them I was to be transferred to an Indian hospital ship, but I could not impress them with the urgency. They kept playing round with basins and my arm, and remember them saying, "Here it is". They rebandaged my arm, and I knew no more till

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I woke in the morning. So convincing had been the delirious dream that it was many days before I satisfied myself that there was no foundation for the delusion. I knew very little of the life on the ship, every morning after breakfast I walked along the deck and back, had my arm dressed, and went to sleep. Except for meals I slept the rest of the twentyfour hours. Somewhere in the Indian Ocean, not very far away on the port side, a big steamer put up a series of distress signals. The Captain at once altered course away from her, got the engines worked up to maximum speed ~~and~~ that vibrated the ship all night, at daylight next day he eased the pace again. We called at Melbourne and put the Australians ashore, where I still have very clear memories of the generosity and kindness of the members of the Australian Red Cross. We had never expected or had we ever experienced such hospitality and generosity. As we got to New Zealand my strength was returning and I was able to walk about for some twenty minutes without feeling desperate. I remember little or nothing about our arrival in Wellington, except waking in the morning and finding our ship anchored in the stream. ~~We must~~

Leaning on the ships rail i gazed on Wellington, and decided, this place was to small for the Capital City, so crossed the ship, and looked on an almost uninhabited area of hills. Recrossing the ~~ship~~ the shidp and looking again at Wellingtom, i can well remember my surprise at the miniature city that in my absence had grown, in my imagination, to the size of Cairo, or Alexandria.