

Noel Cook.

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A Note to the Reader

These reminiscences were written by Noel Cook at the latter end of his life. He never showed them to anyone and they remained among his multitudinous papers in spite of several removals overseas. They exist as rough pencil jottings along with scribbles, shopping lists, a faint sketch etc. He never spoke of his experiences, in common with other returned soldiers but the injuries he received were a constant reminder. It was typical of Noel that he never sought a war pension until near the end of his life.

The site of the Messines action has been photographed in detail in 1991.

Bromley, Kent, U.K.

Peter N. Cook

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The N.Y. Observer.



ARMISTICE DAY, 1920.—TRIBUTE TO THE GLORIOUS DEAD.—"THEIR SOULS GO MARCHING ON."

A Great Adventure

It was the morning of my ninth birthday and I remember my Grandma remarking "its as stiff as a board". She was talking about a large dead rat caught in a break-neck trap she had set the night before. Without noticing me, she lifted the rat out of the trap using a pair of tongs and after wrapping it in an old copy of the "Police Gazette" she deposited it in a huge dustbin which stood just outside the kitchen door. My Grandpop kept copies of the Police Gazette under his capacious bed; I had discovered them when, with nothing better to do, I had investigated every nook and cranny of that old house. I had examined the Gazette with avidity and in my formative years the paper was certainly not meant for my innocent eyes. The front cover usually displayed a large damsel with very little on which at that time left me quite cold, but the pages within! well, I wonder even now if our magazines and newspapers which leave very little to the imagination, could surpass them. There were pictures and headings of stories which had great impact on me; murder and mayhem were surely as evident as they are to-day -anyhow my Grandpop thought it sufficient to keep them under his bed, whilst in other rooms was displayed all the current literature, including a beautiful round table of the Encyclopaedia Britannica which in those days -I'm talking about 1906 -was not in every middle class home.

As I've suggested, and at that time I didn't think it odd, my Grandma slept in another room. She was very kind to me although not too happy about my always wondering what Grandpa was up to. I was not aware then that she had no love for Grandpa but she must have had once. When probably bored with me she'd say, "he's very likely pottering about in the garden". That was my cue and I'd go search for him but I never found him in the large garden of my temporary home. First I'd better explain that my parents were in Fiji where my father ran a newspaper and I was to remain and school in New Zealand and the time I am telling you about was during my school holidays. So, I'd head straight to where I knew I'd find Grandpa and there he always was, in a big barn-like structure in the garden. The great rafters of that barn always fascinated me; it was more than a barn really, also a buggy shed and storage place for junk accumulated over, so it seemed to me, hundreds of years. My Grandpop had been a lawyer in Yorkshire England and I heard later that for some reason I have not got round to even now, he left England under a cloud and he'd brought all his nostalgic appurtenances with him that didn't fit in with New Zealand requirements. But apparently the most adaptable and useful old world gear was that necessary for the distillation of whiskey or spirits and he'd transported that whole. In a corner of the immense barn and carefully separated from the junk and screened off like a latter-day back room private den, the mass of pipes in gleaming tubular steel met my gaze

again(I had seen this all before but had never seen Grandpa in action).The distillery was really working and Grandpa, not a bit concerned on seeing me there said words to this effect, "Yes, Jimmy, things are going well!" He was perspiring and I felt the heat too from a stove which for the first time was in full blast.Can you imagine the effect of seeing the intricacy of those shining pipes and of hearing the faint gurgles of the bubbling liquid? I watched the perspiring face of Grandpop, a great scientist I thought, as he anxiously surveyed and almost counted the clear drops of liquid that appeared at the end of a pipe and fell into some coppery vessel. I had no idea what all this was about and didn't worry too much at the time. There was another concoction Grandpa produced and which he and Grandma drank at every meal time that I know now was beer, whilst I was given Ginger Beer, also home brewed, and a wonderful thirst quencher it was which I remember to this day, but then of course I had never heard of whiskey or gin or rum except by being able to read the words.

My Grandpop was a very kind man too, though of variable moods; and his not sleeping in the same room as my Grandma being different from my parents even then. I knew that everything was not right in the household although a more amiable atmosphere could never be desired. Everything was so comfortable and my Grandparents on the surface were the epitome of politeness to each other.

Every day my Grandfather harnessed up Grace the mare who to me was quite active and young-being a horse-but I was told she was all of twenty years old and he had acquired her when she first arrived in New Zealand aged five years. He would drive,with me seated beside him, teaching me much about the flowers along the wayside, the trees and shrubs, the different farms we passed and the crops they grew, the hedgerows and the animal life and the songs of the birds; and then there was the river, a wonderful sight, and I learned where it made its way flowing into which sea. These were the horse and buggy days and everything so pleasant on the drives I remember. Sometimes he would meet people he knew or he would stop old Grace to talk to a stranger in the district: "Swaggies" he called them and then he would pull from under the seat a bottle of amber liquid which sparkled in the sunlight and I got the feeling that liquid gold was at Grandpop's fingertips. He would also produce an enamel cup and give the stranger a drink; he would not drink himself but seemed to get every satisfaction at the sublime look of gratification that even I could see, that came on the faces of the beneficiaries. Then on we'd go and the clip clop of old Graces' hooves on the dirt roads was very pleasant to hear.

In the town, Foxton, near the river, the buggy would be halted and I had the intense satisfaction of holding Grace until Grandpa had made the visits that required this three mile or so journey from his home. Sometimes he would let me hold the reins outside the hotel where he'd retire for a

while; he "had to see someone" and would always come back in a very loquacious mood: "Jimmy, those chaps don't know what they're selling! Terrible stuff! Your old Grandpop could double their trade." Then perhaps we'd trundle on after many "how do ye do's" to many passers-by and including the local policeman standing just outside the Police Station; he was a special friend. We'd leave Grace tied to a post and Sergeant White, whom I held in great awe (to me he was a mountain of a man-but probably only ordinary), showed me the cells with the bars and also from his desk I'd get the frightening glimpse of handcuffs and there was much joviality between the two before the Sergeant bid us good-bye, and with a hearty slap on Grace's flank we set off on the round trip for home.

Grandma was always outside the front door to greet us; usually she held sewing or knitting and sometimes had pins in her teeth. Even then I thought that Grandma was so pleased to see us back but still couldn't believe that we had returned-she always seemed to have a look of continual wonder on her face. Grace was put out in the four-acre paddock and I was sent inside to get ready for tea whilst Grandpop would invariably return to the garden, which meant the barn, where probably he had adjustments to make to the complicated system of machinery which was going full blast.

Tea was always a happy affair for me; both my Grandparents saw that my every want was satisfied and I was allowed to stay up until seven-thirty. The kitchen with its stove and kerosene lamps was cosy and warm. A gramophone stood in a corner and Grandpa would play a record or two, which, to say the least, was an absolute wonder to me. I remember one record, it was a laughing record; a few words I cannot remember but all the rest was just laughter. Both Grandpop and Grandma laughed too and I laughed so uproariously that their dear old tabbie cat, I remember, looked at me rather reprovngly and then, wonder of wonders, started to laugh too! My room was next to Grandpop and he'd see me up, light the candle and see me to bed and then Grandma would come up and take the candle to her room across the landing. Then I'd hear her go downstairs and hear them say a word or two and then he'd say, "Well, I'll just go for a little stroll round the garden. You go to bed dear and I'll see you in the morning, good-night." "Good-night" she'd say and it was good-night to me and I'd be in dreamland in no time in my comfortable bed. The dreams were varied and sometimes vivid, especially one night when I thought someone was shaking my bed to and fro and I screamed and awoke in the gloom, my door opened and there stood Grandpa in his night-gown, a candle in his hand and surprisingly not only my bed but the whole house was shaking and creaking.

"It's all right, my boy, it's only a tremor." An earthquake! Then there was a terrific shake and immediately a crash down below and I jumped out of bed and followed Grandpa down still creaking stairs. It was quiet when we reached the kitchen and there was a shambles there; the

heavily laden dresser had fallen and broken crockery was strewn all over the floor. Grandma had arrived and with her arm about me assured me that it could have been much worse. It was back to bed and next morning Grace was harnessed to the buggy and Grandpop and I were on the way to town again to assess the damage. The town clock and rubble was strewn across the street and many brick chimneys were down. There were a few big cracks in the main thoroughfare but although it was agreed it had been a nerve-wracking night fortunately no-one had been hurt. There had been many tremors before the one that awakened me and then there was the big jolt that had done most of the damage.

(The scribbled pencilled notes end with "Luckily there had been no casualties and..."). Dad did tell me once that at his school he had asked to be excused from the classroom(Please sir, can I be excused sir) and on his way to the W.C's across the playground he experienced another tremor when he saw the school chimneys topple and the ground crack. Perhaps you'd know where this was Nancy.(Palmerston North?)

The following notes I've titled (from his first lines)
"A Great Adventure". Dad did tell my brother and me a little about the tragic incident in the First World War when he got a "blighty" wound but lost his good friends, and also about the German prisoner. Boris and I were both very young: I think at bedtime story age and we read Chums Annual and probably inquired about the war in that spirit and we enjoyed the bits about the Mills Bomb and the prisoner's kiss of gratitude. The scene stayed with me though making a deeper impression than I could have imagined particularly the bit about the farewell letters and wishes. I think he was scribbling these notes upstairs at Inchmery Road Catford where he was busy with his many Maori motif paintings. They are very rough and perhaps he would have developed them. He also had to recall some of his experience for his war pension. However we have now visited the battlefields of that terrible war, generally the Somme (Villers-Brettoneux AIF Cemetery, Corbie, Albert, Beaumont-Hamel) to Arras, then Vimy Ridge, Armentieres and Flanders (Ypres salient) and particularly Messines Ridge. We have been in the trenches full of atmosphere and walked through the sad, beautiful cemeteries so terrible in size and simplicity. We have spoken to David Friedman of Rainham Kent who is writing a book on the Messines battle and to the curator of the museum at Messines, M. Albert Ghekiere. From various books and maps and a grand contour map of the battlefield at Messines just before the mine explosions and the attack I was able to locate Dad's position with the 2nd Auckland Battalion in the trenches which faced the Germans (Uhlans) and their trench and pill-boxes on the ridge. The Steenbeck Stream ran between them. The field of the shelling of the platoon is pictured and it is not difficult even now to find remnants of that battle.

The Great Adventure (2)

My elder brother had been wounded in Gallipoli and again at the Somme so I had to go to the great adventure and altering my age slightly was accepted and not surprisingly as the mounting casualties from the battles filled many pages of the newspapers. Training was speeded up and I found myself six months later in the heart of Salisbury Plains England and after a twenty-four hour leave in London I went across the channel to spend a dark ominous night on "One Blanket Hill" Boulogne. After that cold one-blanket night we went to Etaples, the staging camp where we learned the first reality that you could be killed by Germans. We moved to a quiet sector at Armentieres where veterans of the Somme battles were in charge of our welfare and we were allocated dugouts and bays that very evening in 1916. Our Sergeant Roberts warned us "There's always a strafe about 6am every morning here, the morning hate; our guns go and Jerry replies so this is what you do-See this fire-step? That's to stand on so you can look over and see if they come. But what you do, as soon as they start their strafe, is get under this fire step and stay there until it stops." When the usual morning firing started we did as advised and felt like staying there but on seeing the veterans still sauntering about nonchalantly we began to ignore this precaution. Then a shell landed in the next bay and I saw my first deadie, just lying there. He was a veteran of the Somme and a brother of a young fellow in my platoon who was undergoing his baptism of fire (later I had to restrain him from bayoneting my German prisoner).

I can remember some relaxing days at Ploegsteert in the summer of 1916 when the sector was quiet. When it was warm the lice would bite however and even after a session of de-lousing the next morning you were as lice-ridden as ever. A few singular incidents remain clear. There were two brothers in the same unit in the same bay and one of them, lifting his Lewis gun to another position accidentally shot the other. And one of my pals was on look-out when we heard the explosion of a mortar bomb: Ginger just fell at my feet as a tiny splinter had gone through his brain. There was a minute puncture, no bigger than a pin-head, on his brow when we searched for a cause.

When darkness fell we had our jobs to do and to do quietly as the enemy trenches were only twenty-five yards away in some parts. There was the listening post, alone and just a few yards forward from our own front line. You kept down with any available protection from the raking German machine guns, rifle fire and shrapnel. You heard the ricochet of bullets coming off the wire or the crack of a bullet aimed right at you. You could tell it was aimed at you by the crack; the others giving a hissing noise you ignored. There you were, a black prone figure, in winter on an oilsheet sometimes in the snow, listening. If you heard the enemy repairing his wire or noticed any movement you crawled back to the trench and passed on the word and our machine gunners would pin-point the spot and hell would break loose once again as the enemy retaliated.

Then there was sentry duty. I was alone in the blackest of nights, standing in mud and water almost to my armpits, about me a fantastic dead world. It was our intention to send gas over; one had little hope of surviving the resultant retaliation by an indignant enemy and I was then envying the rats dug in although I vouch that millions of those great rats that infested our dugouts died in resulting barrages from friend and foe alike. Anyhow that night I envied them and thought of how they got at your feet or snuggled beside you in the comparative safety of your dugout. There was one that patrolled our parapet we called Joe (Parapet Joe) and some, big as cats, would stand on their hind legs upon my shoulders reaching for the bread that was put on the top of the beams supporting our low dugout roof. The gas was sent over but the wind changed and it blew back on our own troops.

There was a chore in the support trenches (the quiet line Estaires-Fleurbaix): it was my job to collect an immense iron container full of hot soup from the cookhouse and carry it over the duckboards, shell holes and trenches, with the staccato of machine guns and flares against a leaden sky. The container was strapped to my shoulder and with my other equipment I made this hazardous journey over slippery and sometimes non-existent duckboards up to the lookouts in the front lines. The job was to arrive intact and although one night I arrived in a semi-drowned state through being immersed in mud and water in an invisible shell-hole, I managed to stay upright and arrived at the front line covered in mud but the soup was still warm and nourishing. Then back to my kneeling high dugout with the knowledge of a job done and my dugout colleagues oblivious of my wet and very muddy entrance, and no sound but the sawing of a rat who had been investigating the rafters. Surprisingly, sleep again until stand-to.

We were mending the support trenches right back to reserves where three nights shelling had damaged some of the saps. There was an almighty explosion close by and a piece of what looked like a wig with flesh adhering to it hit me right in the face and my nearest sapper fell down dead hit by I found out afterwards, a great hunk of "Plum Pudding". The Germans had found with one whizz-bang a great dump of what we called "Plum Puddings" or great round mortar shells and the lot had gone up and in pieces: some of the twenty-five men working there were never found for burial. The Plum Pudding was put in a mortar gun and had attached to it a long steel handle, something like a German minenwerfer, and could be seen going across. It burst on contact and then the handle usually flew back with swishing sounds and the force of it could decapitate one and many did. There was another mortar we had called "The Flying Pig" and it was sent by another mortar gun and you'd hear it go over and your imagination ran riot wondering how deep it was going; in the soft soil it seemed ages before the explosion-like a miniature mine-and you could imagine the German dugouts with their occupants were blown up. But on

the receiving end we dreaded the minenwerfer, the huge German mortar, not only for the unholy noise it made on bursting but for its ear piercing parabolic course through the sky at night and the many pieces of it that were searching us out. Its effect was diminished by ones ability to see it but asleep you and your dugouts were demolished if the range was right.

Training for my first raid took place back of the lines. Then we went over, battalion strength, eight thousand of us and my platoon mate who had lost a brother on the first day remember, showed no mercy on the more scared Germans who were the subjects of the attack and had been thoroughly demoralised by what was said to have been the most intensive barrage before a raid in the whole war. I got myself a prisoner, or I should say he attached himself to me, on his knees. My friend wanted to bayonet him too but I prevented him with a similar threat aimed at himself. We were now in the German support trenches and it was time to retrace our steps to our own lines., our mission having been accomplished. We had to speedily return through a barrage directed by a now thoroughly infuriated enemy. I beat my prisoner to the seeming safety of our own front line trench and he as scared as me, fell right on top of me in a dilapidated and shell-stricken trench. I got him in what remained of a dugout and then I discovered that a shell splinter had gone right through my shoulder. There was hardly any bleeding, just a trickle of drying up blood where it had entered and departed. The spew of shells and the lumps of dirt continued for some time and it was then my prisoner proffered me his pocket book in which I conjectured were the photos of his wife and family.

The barrage lifted and I, more conscious of my duty, beckoned the German to follow me. At the entrance to supports (trenches were front line, supports and reserves and linked..ed) was a first-aid station where all the surviving members of the raiding party were doled out with a nifty tot of rum and the wounded prisoners were also to be given a nip. I had mine and offered one to my prisoner, but he, poor fellow, pointed to his cheek and opened his mouth and pointed to the rum and then to me, so I had it. The Sergeant Major, a little further on in the sap was checking on the returnees and white faced and shaking he muttered "Good work, boy". I must have been much more relaxed than he and I put it down to the rum. Heading back to the dressing station my prisoner and I were joined by some of my platoon and we all were somewhat elated in coming through intact after another raid. One wanted to put a Mills Bomb, minus the pin, in my prisoner's pocket; this I restrained him from doing so I really saved my prisoner's life twice that morning. That the German had understood what had been going on I didn't realise until the moment I handed him over to medical care. Before I could get away he flung both arms around me and kissed me so I gather he must have realised his debt to me. I was blushing when I left but was glad that he was a certainty to go home to his loved ones he had shown me in his collection of photographs from his pocket book that morning.

We had a rest behind the lines when we tasted champagne at six francs a bottle. I won the welterweight boxing championship of the brigade and a prize of 250francs and entertained all my platoon mates with champagne. Then there was more training in a big ground at Etaples (Eat Apples, we called the town). Large relief models of battlefield objectives were drawn up in a field and after studying them we were reviewed by General Haig-how we hated those turn outs -and then General Plumer; I remember him a funny little man in staff dress and white moustachios: a comical appearance-its really humorous when you think of it now. This was all in preparation for a few days in the trenches at Messines.

It was early June 1917. I was in the reserve trenches which were almost on the same height as Messines which lay on a ridge across a low wide valley. A small stream ran through the valley (the Steenbeek) and no man's land. The German defenders (Uhlans) were entrenched along the ridge between us and the town and there were pill boxes about 440yds from us. When required we would have to move down the slope, cross the stream, get through the wire (our artillery having made gaps we hoped) and advance towards the ridge.

We were to go over with the third wave in platoon order -that is, not spread out, but as if we were marching on route in fours. I was to be officer's observer; he was a nice chap (lieutenant Armitage?) and apparently thought I was reasonably intelligent. Anyway the waiting was the most harrowing ordeal, I can vouch for that.

During the night there was a short summer storm and a heavy fall of rain. Later the artillery began shelling the ridge and machine guns were firing from both sides with a few flares against a clearing moonlit sky and then stand to. There were some glimmerings of dawn very early on June 7th. We'd had little sleep and were all lousy; we had been for days. It was possible from a part of the line, to hear some nightingales singing for a moment before a lone plane flew low over our support trenches and over the eighty thousand men in position ready to make the assault. Then a mysterious quiet and more flares appeared in the sky above the German lines when our ridge seemed to sway as in an earthquake, and the ridge of Messines ahead rose as an enormous black mass of smoke and earth illuminated by a red and orange glow. The mines prepared for two years by our engineers had exploded under the enemy forces and with that all of our artillery opened fire. and our objective was a cloud of fire and smoke as we clambered over our now dry revetements and in platoon order moved down the slope across the forward trenches towards the stream and tangled wire. We had not advanced two hundred yards when we ran into a barrage of 5.9 shells which exploded right and left of us. The German artillery had not been completely silenced and had been expecting the attack. Shrapnel burst overhead and a shell fell close behind me.

My position had been a little forward of the platoon and when I turned and faced them they were all spread out in agonised positions. One mate near me said "Remember me to my girl, Cookie"; another requested I look up his Mum and another handed me his rifle and screamed "shoot me" then died before I could help him. With the smoke and smell of burning flesh and the churned up ground already reddened with blood, the groans and screams of the dying, and the continual shelling I could not believe I was alive. For a moment sounds drifted away and my Lieutenant pointed towards a trench and told me to get into it. The red hot shell splinters of which I had been liberally sprinkled along with the sickening smell gave me the impression of mustard gas or liquid fire but the smell was of death and I weakened and fell to the ground. My friend, a sergeant I had known from early days in the platoon, told me to tear my shirt and apply tourniquets to my legs; I had been severely hit through both ankles and the right knee. He then went on and I crawled to the trench and fell seven feet to the dry duckboards. Men were traversing the sap and flung me into a bay where there was no traffic. The sounds of screaming and exploding shells continued and I gazed up at the column of brightening sky and felt very much alone. Suddenly a great dark shape of the front of a tank reared up into my limited view only a few yards from me and nosed in with most of the trench.

I was dazed, somewhat numbed but my skin was burning from the splinters. I was not completely sure as to what had happened. I was to learn after that the 5.9 that got my platoon had killed sixteen and wounded twenty-three of my mates. As I lay in the trench I could not believe all I had seen and became anxious to rejoin my platoon. I blacked out a couple of times through loss of blood but remember a plane flying low along the line of the trench. It came right above me and got caught in the barrage and the pilot fell out as his machine seemed to shudder and disintegrate. A shell must have gone right through it and then carried on to burst on the ground.

Four German prisoners of war, under surveillance, arrived to carry me to the dressing station. By then our troops had occupied Messines but casualties had been heavy. Initially the enemy had lost around ten thousand men from the artillery barrage and the explosion from nineteen of the twenty-five loaded mines. Our troops in disciplined order were not spread out and were also held up as they tried to avoid shell holes and the massive craters of the ridge so they presented a target as they advanced to occupy their objective. I believe we lost 17000 men; why? one asks now. There was in those days a rather vague (but implicit) code of behaviour before even (wondrously) a lance corporal and the acceptance or subservience as we understand it became most accentuated to the higher grades of seniority. How many good and sincere souls were sacrificed at the altar of authority: "theirs not to reason why--".

The German stretcher bearers hoisted me over Gas Trench and soon we passed our little group; I recognised it from one of my mates half buried in the earth with his tunic and equipment forced up and revealing his money belt loaded with badges-that I had admired! Poor old Peter Nelson. There were others in one piece but unrecognisable now as their faces were blackened by sudden death and the blood draining away. As I passed that dead group-mine-I picked up a great clod of dry earth as we traversed a shell hole and hurled it at the German bearer ahead of me and cried out "You bastards!". I did not hit him fortunately because soon after I felt ashamed. I had lost a lot of blood and only had obfuscatory views of what went on.

There was the sun, and the smell of blood heated by the sun and again the smell of death and then there were voices and the living smell of the dressing station where there were thousands of wounded and I revived somewhat. My stretcher was deposited next to a man who was trying to tear blood-soaked bandages from his head. I held his hand-on direction from an overworked orderly. I have a vivid recollection of a German, a fine looking man, smoking a cigarette with his right arm from where the elbow should have been in bloodstained shreds. He smiled at me and I know now that he was glad to be out of it, minus an arm.

I have vague recollections of being dressed by many doctors in this chateau; dressings done only to ensure safe transport to hospital, and of being hoisted into a field ambulance and I'll swear it was raining. I was placed on the lower tier on the left and was driven away to where I knew not. That was June 17th 1917 and that vow was incorrect as it was a record hot day and no rain fell.

I had many operations in the 2nd Australian Base Hospital at Boulogne. When the nurse cut my blood-drenched clothing away from me she found a blood-stained 5 franc note, all that remained of my boxing prize. I thought about my friends and was ready to "go" again but the wounds were blighty ones and I finished up the war at Tidworth camp in England. I had hoped to get in the Observer Corps-anything to get above the mud-but the Armistice came and all I could do was drink on the ground; and drink and drink to forget for a while this crazy world.

.A Note to the Reader

These reminiscences were written by Noel Cook at the latter end of his life. He never showed them to anyone and they remained among his multitudinous papers in spite of several removals overseas. They exist as rough pencil jottings along with scribbles, shopping lists, a faint sketch etc. He never spoke of his experiences, in common with other returned soldiers but the injuries he received were a constant reminder. It was typical of Noel that he never sought a war pension until near the end of his life.

The site of the Messines action has been photographed in detail in 1991.

Peter N. Cook

Bromley, Kent, U.K



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A Great Adventure

It was the morning of my ninth birthday and I remember my Grandma remarking "its as stiff as a board". She was talking about a large dead rat caught in a break-neck trap she had set the night before. Without noticing me, she lifted the rat out of the trap using a pair of tongs and after wrapping it in an old copy of the "Police Gazette" she deposited it in a huge dustbin which stood just outside the kitchen door. My Grandpop kept copies of the Police Gazette under his capacious bed; I had discovered them when, with nothing better to do, I had investigated every nook and cranny of that old house. I had examined the Gazette with avidity and in my formative years the paper was certainly not meant for my innocent eyes. The front cover usually displayed a large damsel with very little on which at that time left me quite cold, but the pages within! well, I wonder even now if our magazines and newspapers which leave very little to the imagination, could surpass them. There were pictures and headings of stories which had great impact on me; murder and mayhem were surely as evident as they are to-day - anyhow my Grandpop thought it sufficient to keep them under his bed, whilst in other rooms was displayed all the current literature, including a beautiful round table of the Encyclopaedia Britannica which in those days - I'm talking about 1906 - was not in every middle class home.

As I've suggested, and at that time I didn't think it odd, my Grandma slept in another room. She was very kind to me although not too happy about my always wondering what Grandad was up to. I was not aware then that she had no love for Grandpa but she must have had once. When probably bored with me she'd say, "he's very likely pottering about in the garden". That was my cue and I'd go search for him but I never found him in the large garden of my temporary home. First I'd better explain that my parents were in Fiji where my father ran a newspaper and I was to remain and school in New Zealand and the time I am telling you about was during my school holidays. So, I'd head straight to where I knew I'd find Grandpa and there he always was, in a big barn-like structure in the garden. The great rafters of that barn always fascinated me; it was more than a barn really, also a buggy shed and storage place for junk accumulated over, so it seemed to me, hundreds of years. My Grandpop had been a lawyer in Yorkshire England and I heard later that for some reason I have not got round to even now, he left England under a cloud and he'd brought all his nostalgic appurtenances with him that didn't fit in with New Zealand requirements. But apparently the most adaptable and useful old world gear was that necessary for the distillation of whiskey or spirits and he'd transported that whole. In a corner of the immense barn and carefully separated from the junk and screened off like a latter-day back room private den, the mass of pipes in gleaming tubular steel met my gaze

again(I had seen this all before but had never seen Grandpa in action).The distillery was really working and Grandpa, not a bit concerned on seeing me there said words to this effect, "Yes, Jimmy, things are going well!" He was perspiring and I felt the heat too from a stove which for the first time was in full blast.Can you imagine the effect of seeing the intricacy of those shining pipes and of hearing the faint gurgles of the bubbling liquid? I watched the perspiring face of Grandpop, a great scientist I thought, as he anxiously surveyed and almost counted the clear drops of liquid that appeared at the end of a pipe and fell into some coppery vessel. I had no idea what all this was about and didn't worry too much at the time. There was another concoction Grandpa produced, and which he and Grandma drank at every meal time that I know now was beer, whilst I was given Ginger Beer, also home brewed, and a wonderful thirst quencher it was which I remember to this day, but then of course I had never heard of whiskey or gin or rum except by being able to read the words.

My Grandpop was a very kind man too, though of variable moods; and his not sleeping in the same room as my Grandma being different from my parents even then. I knew that everything was not right in the household although a more amiable atmosphere could never be desired. Everything was so comfortable and my Grandparents on the surface were the epitome of politeness to each other.

Every day my Grandfather harnessed up Grace the mare who to me was quite active and young-being a horse-but I was told she was all of twenty years old and he had acquired her when she first arrived in New Zealand aged five years. He would drive,with me seated beside him, teaching me much about the flowers along the wayside, the trees and shrubs, the different farms we passed and the crops they grew, the hedgerows and the animal life and the songs of the birds; and then there was the river, a wonderful sight, and I learned where it made its way flowing into which sea. These were the horse and buggy days and everything so pleasant on the drives I remember. Sometimes he would meet people he knew or he would stop old Grace to talk to a stranger in the district: "Swaggies" he called them and then he would pull from under the seat a bottle of amber liquid which sparkled in the sunlight and I got the feeling that liquid gold was at Grandpop's fingertips. He would also produce an enamel cup and give the stranger a drink; he would not drink himself but seemed to get every satisfaction at the sublime look of gratification that even I could see, that came on the faces of the beneficiaries. Then on we'd go and the clip clop of old Graces' hooves on the dirt roads was very pleasant to hear.

In the town, Foxton, near the river, the buggy would be halted and I had the intense satisfaction of holding Grace until Grandpa had made the visits that required this three mile or so journey from his home. Sometimes he would let me hold the reins outside the hotel where he'd retire for a

while; he "had to see someone" and would always come back in a very loquacious mood: "Jimmy, those chaps don't know what they're selling! Terrible stuff! Your old Grandpop could double their trade." Then perhaps we'd trundle on after many "how do ye do's" to many passers-by and including the local policeman standing just outside the Police Station; he was a special friend. We'd leave Grace tied to a post and Sergeant White, whom I held in great awe (to me he was a mountain of a man-but probably only ordinary), showed me the cells with the bars and also from his desk I'd get the frightening glimpse of handcuffs and there was much joviality between the two before the Sergeant bid us good-bye, and with a hearty slap on Grace's flank we set off on the round trip for home.

Grandma was always outside the front door to greet us; usually she held sewing or knitting and sometimes had pins in her teeth. Even then I thought that Grandma was so pleased to see us back but still couldn't believe that we had returned-she always seemed to have a look of continual wonder on her face. Grace was put out in the four-acre paddock and I was sent inside to get ready for tea whilst Grandpop would invariably return to the garden, which meant the barn, where probably he had adjustments to make to the complicated system of machinery which was going full blast.

Tea was always a happy affair for me; both my Grandparents saw that my every want was satisfied and I was allowed to stay up until seven-thirty. The kitchen with its stove and kerosene lamps was cosy and warm. A gramophone stood in a corner and Grandpa would play a record or two, which, to say the least, was an absolute wonder to me. I remember one record, it was a laughing record; a few words I cannot remember but all the rest was just laughter. Both Grandpop and Grandma laughed too and I laughed so uproariously that their dear old tabbie cat, I remember, looked at me rather reprovngly and then, wonder of wonders, started to laugh too! My room was next to Grandpop and he'd see me up, light the candle and see me to bed and then Grandma would come up and take the candle to her room across the landing. Then I'd hear her go downstairs and hear them say a word or two and then he'd say, "Well, I'll just go for a little stroll round the garden. You go to bed dear and I'll see you in the morning, good-night." "Good-night" she'd say and it was good-night to me and I'd be in dreamland in no time in my comfortable bed. The dreams were varied and sometimes vivid, especially one night when I thought someone was shaking my bed to and fro and I screamed and awoke in the gloom, my door opened and there stood Grandpa in his night-gown, a candle in his hand and surprisingly not only my bed but the whole house was shaking and creaking.

"It's all right, my boy, it's only a tremor." An earthquake! Then there was a terrific shake and immediately a crash down below and I jumped out of bed and followed Grandpa down still creaking stairs. It was quiet when we reached the kitchen and there was a shambles there; the

heavily laden dresser had fallen and broken crockery was strewn all over the floor. Grandma had arrived and with her arm about me assured me that it could have been much worse. It was back to bed and next morning Grace was harnessed to the buggy and Grandpop and I were on the way to town again to assess the damage. The town clock and rubble was strewn across the street and many brick chimneys were down. There were a few big cracks in the main thoroughfare but although it was agreed it had been a nerve-wracking night fortunately no-one had been hurt. There had been many tremors before the one that awakened me and then there was the big jolt that had done most of the damage.

(The scribbled pencilled notes end with "Luckily there had been no casualties and..."). Dad did tell me once that at his school he had asked to be excused from the classroom(Please sir, can I be excused sir) and on his way to the W.C's across the playground he experienced another tremor when he saw the school chimneys topple and the ground crack. Perhaps you'd know where this was Nancy.(Palmerston North?)

The following notes I've titled (from his first lines)
"A Great Adventure". Dad did tell my brother and me a little about the tragic incident in the First World War when he got a "blighty" wound but lost his good friends, and also about the German prisoner. Boris and I were both very young: I think at bedtime story age and we read Chums Annual and probably inquired about the war in that spirit and we enjoyed the bits about the Mills bomb and the prisoner's kiss of gratitude. The scene stayed with me though making a deeper impression than I could have imagined particularly the bit about the farewell letters and wishes. I think he was scribbling these notes upstairs at Inchmery Road Catford where he was busy with his many Maori motif paintings. They are very rough and perhaps he would have developed them. He also had to recall some of his experience for his war pension. However we have now visited the battlefields of that terrible war, generally the Somme (Villers-Brettoneux AIF Cemetery, Corbie, Albert, Beaumont-Hamel) to Arras, then Vimy Ridge, Armentieres and Flanders (Ypres salient) and particularly Messines Ridge. We have been in the trenches full of atmosphere and walked through the sad, beautiful cemeteries so terrible in size and simplicity. We have spoken to David Friedman of Rainham Kent who is writing a book on the Messines battle and to the curator of the museum at Messines, M. Albert Ghekiere. From various books and maps and a grand contour map of the battlefield at Messines just before the mine explosions and the attack I was able to locate Dad's position with the 2nd Auckland Battalion in the trenches which faced the Germans (Uhlans) and their trench and pill-boxes on the ridge. The Steenbeck Stream ran between them. The field of the shelling of the platoon is pictured and it is not difficult even now to find remnants of that battle.

The Great Adventure (2)

My elder brother had been wounded in Gallipoli and again at the Somme so I had to go to the great adventure and altering my age slightly was accepted and not surprisingly as the mounting casualties from the battles filled many pages of the newspapers. Training was speeded up and I found myself six months later in the heart of Salisbury Plains England and after a twenty-four hour leave in London I went across the channel to spend a dark ominous night on "One Blanket Hill" Boulogne. After that cold one-blanket night we went to Etaples, the staging camp where we learned the first reality that you could be killed by Germans. We moved to a quiet sector at Armentieres where veterans of the Somme battles were in charge of our welfare and we were allocated dugouts and bays that very evening in 1916. Our Sergeant Roberts warned us "There's always a strafe about 6am every morning here, the morning hate; our guns go and Jerry replies so this is what you do-See this fire-step? That's to stand on so you can look over and see if they come. But what you do, as soon as they start their strafe, is get under this fire step and stay there until it stops." When the usual morning firing started we did as advised and felt like staying there but on seeing the veterans still sauntering about nonchalantly we began to ignore this precaution. Then a shell landed in the next bay and I saw my first deadie, just lying there. He was a veteran of the Somme and a brother of a young fellow in my platoon who was undergoing his baptism of fire (later I had to restrain him from bayoneting my German prisoner).

I can remember some relaxing days at Ploegsteert in the summer of 1916 when the sector was quiet. When it was warm the lice would bite however and even after a session of de-lousing the next morning you were as lice-ridden as ever. A few singular incidents remain clear. There were two brothers in the same unit in the same bay and one of them, lifting his Lewis gun to another position accidentally shot the other. And one of my pals was on look-out when we heard the explosion of a mortar bomb: Ginger just fell at my feet as a tiny splinter had gone through his brain. There was a minute puncture, no bigger than a pin-head, on his brow when we searched for a cause.

When darkness fell we had our jobs to do and to do quietly as the enemy trenches were only twenty-five yards away in some parts. There was the listening post, alone and just a few yards forward from our own front line. You kept down with any available protection from the raking German machine guns, rifle fire and shrapnel. You heard the ricochet of bullets coming off the wire or the crack of a bullet aimed right at you. You could tell it was aimed at you by the crack; the others giving a hissing noise you ignored. There you were, a black prone figure, in winter on an oilsheet sometimes in the snow, listening. If you heard the enemy repairing his wire or noticed any movement you crawled back to the trench and passed on the word and our machine gunners would pin-point the spot and hell would break loose once again as the enemy retaliated.

Then there was sentry duty. I was alone in the blackest of nights, standing in mud and water almost to my armpits, about me a fantastic dead world. It was our intention to send gas over; one had little hope of surviving the resultant retaliation by an indignant enemy and I was then envying the rats dug in although I vouch that millions of those great rats that infested our dugouts died in resulting barrages from friend and foe alike. Anyhow that night I envied them and thought of how they got at your feet or snuggled beside you in the comparative safety of your dugout. There was one that patrolled our parapet we called Joe (Parapet Joe) and some, big as cats, would stand on their hind legs upon my shoulders reaching for the bread that was put on the top of the beams supporting our low dugout roof. The gas was sent over but the wind changed and it blew back on our own troops.

There was a chore in the support trenches (the quiet line Estaires-Fleurbaix): it was my job to collect an immense iron container full of hot soup from the cookhouse and carry it over the duckboards, shell holes and trenches, with the staccato of machine guns and flares against a leaden sky. The container was strapped to my shoulder and with my other equipment I made this hazardous journey over slippery and sometimes non-existent duckboards up to the lookouts in the front lines. The job was to arrive intact and although one night I arrived in a semi-drowned state through being immersed in mud and water in an invisible shell-hole, I managed to stay upright and arrived at the front line covered in mud but the soup was still warm and nourishing. Then back to my kneeling high dugout with the knowledge of a job done and my dugout colleagues oblivious of my wet and very muddy entrance, and no sound but the sawing of a rat who had been investigating the rafters. Surprisingly, sleep again until stand-to.

We were mending the support trenches right back to reserves where three nights shelling had damaged some of the saps. There was an almighty explosion close by and a piece of what looked like a wig with flesh adhering to it hit me right in the face and my nearest sapper fell down dead hit by I found out afterwards, a great hunk of "Plum Pudding". The Germans had found with one whizz-bang a great dump of what we called "Plum Puddings" or great round mortar shells and the lot had gone up and in pieces: some of the twenty-five men working there were never found for burial. The Plum Pudding was put in a mortar gun and had attached to it a long steel handle, something like a German minenwerfer, and could be seen going across. It burst on contact and then the handle usually flew back with swishing sounds and the force of it could decapitate one and many did. There was another mortar we had called "The Flying Pig" and it was sent by another mortar gun and you'd hear it go over and your imagination ran riot wondering how deep it was going; in the soft soil it seemed ages before the explosion-like a miniature mine-and you could imagine the German dugouts with their occupants were blown up. But on

the receiving end we dreaded the minenwerfer, the huge German mortar, not only for the unholy noise it made on bursting but for its ear piercing parabolic course through the sky at night and the many pieces of it that were searching us out. Its effect was diminished by ones ability to see it but asleep you and your dugouts were demolished if the range was right.

Training for my first raid took place back of the lines. Then we went over, battalion strength, eight thousand of us and my platoon mate who had lost a brother on the first day remember, showed no mercy on the more scared Germans who were the subjects of the attack and had been thoroughly demoralised by what was said to have been the most intensive barrage before a raid in the whole war. I got myself a prisoner, or I should say he attached himself to me, on his knees. My friend wanted to bayonet him too but I prevented him with a similar threat aimed at himself. We were now in the German support trenches and it was time to retrace our steps to our own lines., our mission having been accomplished. We had to speedily return through a barrage directed by a now thoroughly infuriated enemy. I beat my prisoner to the seeming safety of our own front line trench and he as scared as me, fell right on top of me in a dilapidated and shell-stricken trench. I got him in what remained of a dugout and then I discovered that a shell splinter had gone right through my shoulder. There was hardly any bleeding, just a trickle of drying up blood where it had entered and departed. The spew of shells and the lumps of dirt continued for some time and it was then my prisoner proffered me his pocket book in which I conjectured were the photos of his wife and family.

The barrage lifted and I, more conscious of my duty, beckoned the German to follow me. At the entrance to supports(trenches were front line, supports and reserves and linked..ed)was a first-aid station where all the surviving members of the raiding party were doled out with a nifty tot of rum and the wounded prisoners were also to be given a nip. I had mine and offered one to my prisoner, but he, poor fellow, pointed to his cheek and opened his mouth and pointed to the rum and then to me, so I had it. The Sergeant Major, a little further on in the sap was checking on the returnees and white faced and shaking he muttered "Good work, boy". I must have been much more relaxed than he and I put it down to the rum. Heading back to the dressing station my prisoner and I were joined by some of my platoon and we all were somewhat elated in coming through intact after another raid. One wanted to put a Mills Bomb, minus the pin, in my prisoner's pocket; this I restrained him from doing so I really saved my prisoner's life twice that morning. That the German had understood what had been going on I didn't realise until the moment I handed him over to medical care. Before I could get away he flung both arms around me and kissed me so I gather he must have realised his debt to me. I was blushing when I left but was glad that he was a certainty to go home to his loved ones he had shown me in his collection of photographs from his pocket book that morning.

We had a rest behind the lines when we tasted champagne at six francs a bottle. I won the welterweight boxing championship of the brigade and a prize of 250 francs and entertained all my platoon mates with champagne. Then there was more training in a big ground at Etaples (Eat Apples, we called the town). Large relief models of battlefield objectives were drawn up in a field and after studying them we were reviewed by General Haig—how we hated those turn outs—and then General Plumer; I remember him a funny little man in staff dress and white moustachios: a comical appearance—its really humorous when you think of it now. This was all in preparation for a few days in the trenches at Messines.

It was early June 1917. I was in the reserve trenches which were almost on the same height as Messines which lay on a ridge across a low wide valley. A small stream ran through the valley (the Steenbeek) and no man's land. The German defenders (Uhlans) were entrenched along the ridge between us and the town and there were pill boxes about 440 yds from us. When required we would have to move down the slope, cross the stream, get through the wire (our artillery having made gaps we hoped) and advance towards the ridge.

We were to go over with the third wave in platoon order—that is, not spread out, but as if we were marching on route in fours. I was to be officer's observer; he was a nice chap (lieutenant Armitage?) and apparently thought I was reasonably intelligent. Anyway the waiting was the most harrowing ordeal, I can vouch for that.

During the night there was a short summer storm and a heavy fall of rain. Later the artillery began shelling the ridge and machine guns were firing from both sides with a few flares against a clearing moonlit sky and then stand to. There were some glimmerings of dawn very early on June 7th. We'd had little sleep and were all lousy; we had been for days. It was possible from a part of the line, to hear some nightingales singing for a moment before a lone plane flew low over our support trenches and over the eighty thousand men in position ready to make the assault. Then a mysterious quiet and more flares appeared in the sky above the German lines when our ridge seemed to sway as in an earthquake, and the ridge of Messines ahead rose as an enormous black mass of smoke and earth illuminated by a red and orange glow. The mines prepared for two years by our engineers had exploded under the enemy forces and with that all of our artillery opened fire and our objective was a cloud of fire and smoke as we clambered over our now dry revetements and in platoon order moved down the slope across the forward trenches towards the stream and tangled wire. We had not advanced two hundred yards when we ran into a barrage of 5.9 shells which exploded right and left of us. The German artillery had not been completely silenced and had been expecting the attack. Shrapnel burst overhead and a shell fell close behind me.

My position had been a little forward of the platoon and when I turned and faced them they were all spread out in agonised positions. One mate near me said "Remember me to my girl, Cookie"; another requested I look up his Mum and another handed me his rifle and screamed "shoot me" then died before I could help him. With the smoke and smell of burning flesh and the churned up ground already reddened with blood, the groans and screams of the dying, and the continual shelling I could not believe I was alive. For a moment sounds drifted away and my Lieutenant pointed towards a trench and told me to get into it. The red hot shell splinters of which I had been liberally sprinkled along with the sickening smell gave me the impression of mustard gas or liquid fire but the smell was of death and I weakened and fell to the ground. My friend, a sergeant I had known from early days in the platoon, told me to tear my shirt and apply tourniquets to my legs; I had been severely hit through both ankles and the right knee. He then went on and I crawled to the trench and fell seven feet to the dry duckboards. Men were traversing the sap and flung me into a bay where there was no traffic. The sounds of screaming and exploding shells continued and I gazed up at the column of brightening sky and felt very much alone. Suddenly a great dark shape of the front of a tank reared up into my limited view only a few yards from me and nosed in with most of the trench.

I was dazed, somewhat numbed but my skin was burning from the splinters. I was not completely sure as to what had happened. I was to learn after that the 5.9 that got my platoon had killed sixteen and wounded twenty-three of my mates. As I lay in the trench I could not believe all I had seen and became anxious to rejoin my platoon. I blacked out a couple of times through loss of blood but remember a plane flying low along the line of the trench. It came right above me and got caught in the barrage and the pilot fell out as his machine seemed to shudder and disintegrate. A shell must have gone right through it and then carried on to burst on the ground.

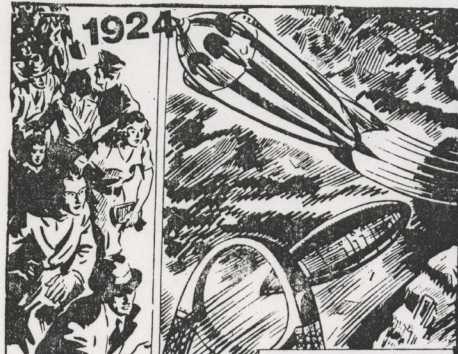
Four German prisoners of war, under surveillance, arrived to carry me to the dressing station. By then our troops had occupied Messines but casualties had been heavy. Initially the enemy had lost around ten thousand men from the artillery barrage and the explosion from nineteen of the twenty-five loaded mines. Our troops in disciplined order were not spread out and were also held up as they tried to avoid shell holes and the massive craters of the ridge so they presented a target as they advanced to occupy their objective. I believe we lost 17000 men; why? one asks now. There was in those days a rather vague (but implicit) code of behaviour before even (wondrously) a lance corporal and the acceptance or subservience as we understand it became most accentuated to the higher grades of seniority. How many good and sincere souls were sacrificed at the altar of authority: "theirs not to reason why--".

The German stretcher bearers hoisted me over Gas Trench and soon we passed our little group; I recognised it from one of my mates half buried in the earth with his tunic and equipment forced up and revealing his money belt loaded with badges-that I had admired! Poor old Peter Nelson. There were others in one piece but unrecognisable now as their faces were blackened by sudden death and the blood draining away. As I passed that dead group-mine-I picked up a great clod of dry earth as we traversed a shell hole and hurled it at the German bearer ahead of me and cried out "You bastards!". I did not hit him fortunately because soon after I felt ashamed. I had lost a lot of blood and only had obfuscatory views of what went on.

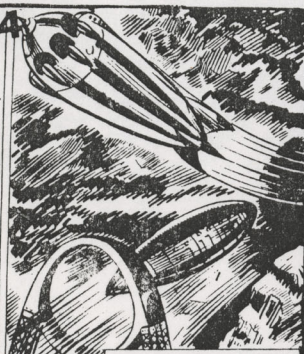
There was the sun, and the smell of blood heated by the sun and again the smell of death and then there were voices and the living smell of the dressing station where there were thousands of wounded and I revived somewhat. My stretcher was deposited next to a man who was trying to tear blood-soaked bandages from his head. I held his hand-on direction from an overworked orderly. I have a vivid recollection of a German, a fine looking man, smoking a cigarette with his right arm from where the elbow should have been in bloodstained shreds. He smiled at me and I know now that he was glad to be out of it, minus an arm.

I have vague recollections of being dressed by many doctors in this chateau; dressings done only to ensure safe transport to hospital, and of being hoisted into a field ambulance and I'll swear it was raining. I was placed on the lower tier on the left and was driven away to where I knew not. That was June 17th 1917 and that vow was incorrect as it was a record hot day and no rain fell.

I had many operations in the 2nd Australian Base Hospital at Boulogne. When the nurse cut my blood-drenched clothing away from me she found a blood-stained 5 franc note, all that remained of my boxing prize. I thought about my friends and was ready to "go" again but the wounds were blighty ones and I finished up the war at Tidworth camp in England. I had hoped to get in the Observer Corps-anything to get above the mud-but the Armistice came and all I could do was drink on the ground; and drink and drink to forget for a while this crazy world.



IN SPITE OF PROFESSOR STANNARD'S ADVICE TO KEEP THE MENACE FACING THE WORLD SECRET, THE MOMENTOUS NEWS LEAKS OUT AND FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN DEVELOPS INTO PANIC IN SOME QUARTERS.



AND DICK'S DEPARTURE IS SPEEDED. THE MOST MODERN SPACE SHIP MAN CAN DEVISE ZOOMS UP IN AN EFFORT TO REACH JUPITER.



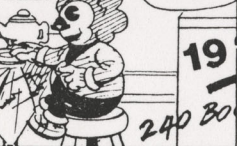
THE PROFESSOR AND MARY ANXIOUSLY KEEP WATCH ON THE TELEVISOR AND ARE OVERJOYED WHEN THEY SEE HIS SAFE ARRIVAL ON THAT GIGANTIC PLANET, JUPITER. THE HOPE OF THE EARTH IS CENTRED ON DICK'S EVENTUAL CONTACT WITH THE MARVELLOUS MECHANICAL AND SCIENTIFIC HELP OF THE JUPITEANS.



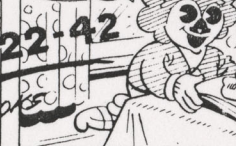
NEVER ANYTHING IN THE NEWSPAPER THESE DAYS, KOKEY!



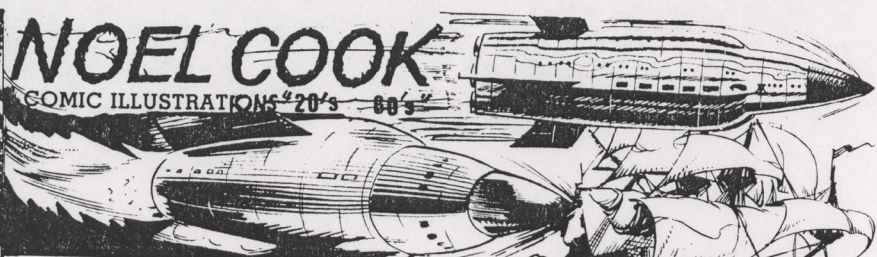
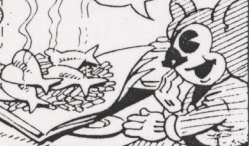
MY MAGIC BUTTON WILL PUT SOMETHING GOOD IN THAT PAPER FOR YOU!



JEEPERS! LOVELY FISH AND CHIPS! SOMETHING LIKE A BREAKFAST!



YES, CORKY, WE'LL NEVER GO SHORT OF GOOD THINGS WHILE I HAVE MY MAGIC BUTTON!



NOEL COOK

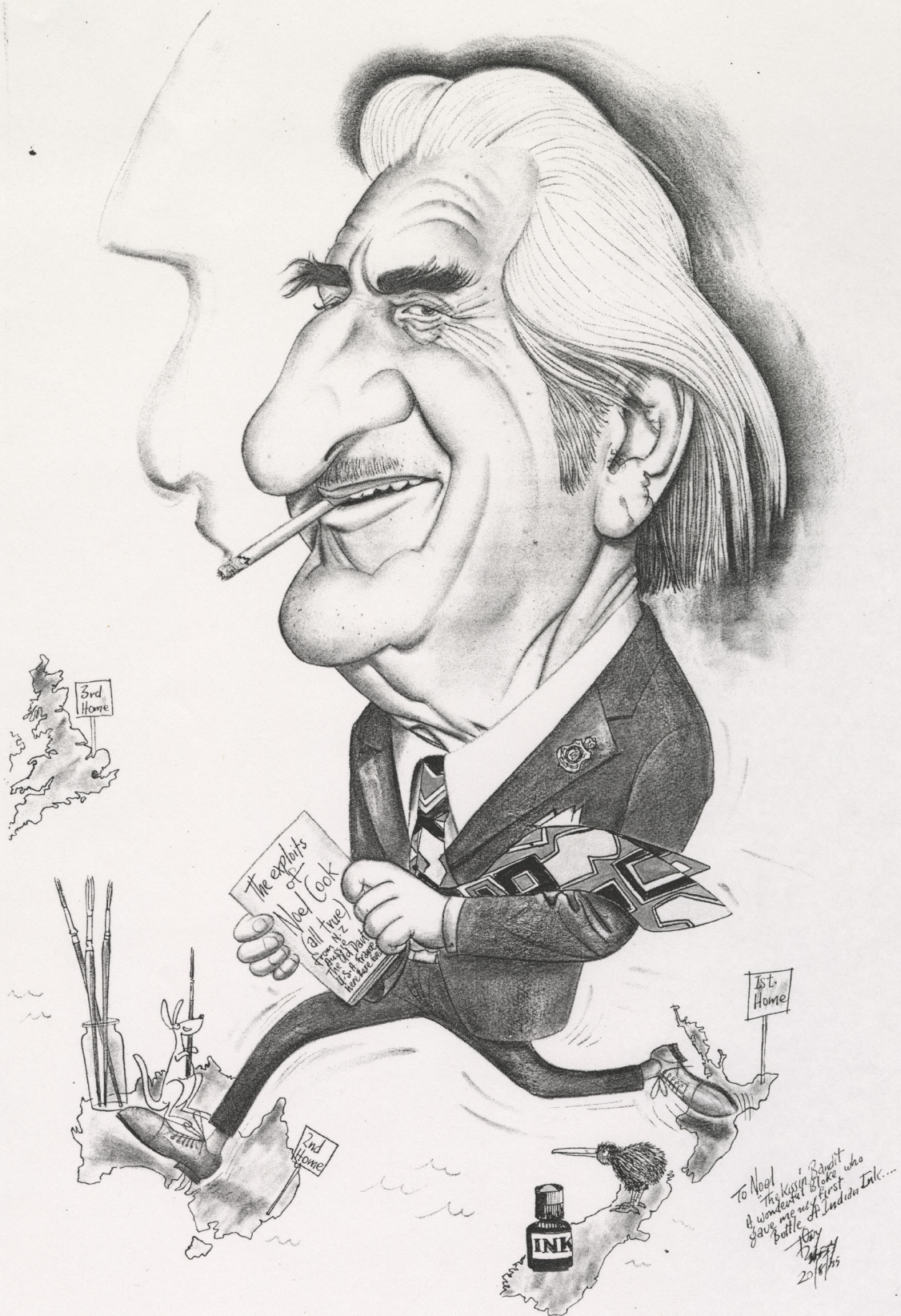
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1922-42

240 Books





The following N.Z.W.C.A. Hospital Reports cover the period from January 22nd to February 6th inclusive.

No 1 GENERAL HOSPITAL HEADQUARTERS, BROCKENHURST.
HEADQUARTERS SECTION.
Visited by J. P. Dryden and Miss G. Freddie Orbel.

Addis, J. L., 46948. Ear, up.
Aikenhead, E., 25/77. Influenza.
Attwell, A. H., 6/3612. Head.
Amodis, L., 12065. Medical.
Acton, W. E., 24/334.
Ball, C. H., 25340. Pleurisy.
Barron, F. G., Sgt.-Major, 10/20. Medical.
Baxter, W. D., 12/1552. Head.
Bowen, P. P., 10/3495. Face.
Boylett, W., 8/4095. Medical.
Bright, E. A., 25488. Medical.
Bruhns, F. J. D., 19800. Medical.
Brunt, J., 30027. Medical.
Burns, H. C., 4/380. Leg.
Burns, C. W., 5/652. Bronchitis.
Candler, L. W., 10/3211. Medical.
Churton, M. A., 14206. Bronchitis.
Colville, P. L., 14868. Bronchitis.
Conn, R., 18623. Bronchitis.
Crocker, C. J., 32759. Medical.
Davis, H. G., 15347. Medical.
Dawson, J., 13/41. Throat.
Dyer, E., 13429. Medical.
Durn, W., 46948. Medical.
Dyer, C. A., Cpl., 24/745. Medical.
Ewart, E. J., 126262. Leg.
Freeman, J. S., 25/427. Up.
Ferguson, R. N., 11/1691. Bronchitis.
Gate, D. I., Cpl., 25/759.
Gillett, W. R., 9/1845. Medical.
Goodwin, J., Cpl., 2/1429.
Green, J., 18990. Up.
Greer, H. A., 11996. Medical.
Guy, F. H., 28873. Medical.
Haltham, 21929. Medical.
Hare, J., 24/1068. Influenza.
Harries, J., Sgt. Bronchitis.
Heath, H., 3/411. Influenza.
Hura, R., 16/339. Medical.
Jane, R. L., 27703. Bronchitis.
Jennings, G., 25/396. Ear, up.
Jones, A. B., 7/172. Nose.
Jones, J., 20730. Medical.
Jenner, G. H., 4/761. Medical.
Kirk, W. R., L/Cpl., 24484. Medical.
Laycock, I., 4/890. Influenza.
Leigh, J. C., 4/1290.
Littlejohn, F., 10/3001.
MacNab, C. D., 26871. Bronchitis.
Macpherson, F., 29279. Eye.
Meadon, P., 51108. Bronchitis.
Moffatt, D., 11501. Pneumonia.
Murdock, J. E., 13/2862. Ear.
Miller, S., 8/4174. Rheumatism.
Mewton, A. W., Sgt., 21160. Medical.
Moore, H., 12054. Medical.
Norgmay, T., 15016. Pleurisy.
Oberg, J. A., 25295. Ears.
O'Keefe, J., 35709. Sciatica.
O'Malley, J., 12523. Bronchitis.
O'Sullivan, P. G., 24216. Medical.
Page, G. F., 12/825. Medical.
Phillips, H., 16229. Medical.

HOSPITAL REPORTS.

Pierce, N. C., 4/1129. Lost arm.
Potham, E., 18702. Medical.
Pear, 21931. Medical.
Richards, H., 21930. Rheumatism.
Richardson, J., 11538. Bronchitis.
Rule, J. A., 10055. Head wound.
Shand, W., L/Cpl., 6/2470. Eyes.
Sharkey, F., 21447. Medical.
Smithies, G., 3/2466. Eyes.
Sparrow, A. G., 2/2549. Rheumatism.
Swindall, F. C., 10/3400. Ears.
Toogood, J. W., 22889. Medical.
Tait, G., 10062. Medical.
Turner, Sgt., 26/1730.
Uden, S., 12516. Eyes.
Watson, 20907. Medical.
White, E. J., 18727. Medical.
William, G., 12523. Bronchitis.
Williams, D., 83434. Medical.

The following have just arrived from France:—

Balks, A. J., 23436.
Macrae, A. H., 4/1664. Amputated leg.
Matheson, W., 27544. G.S.W., knee.
Cooling, G. W. A., 24142. G.S.W. hip.
Gow, I. B., Sgt., 10/2427. G.S.W., neck.
De Joux, C. F., 8/2635. G.S.W., thigh.
O'Neil, J., L/Cpl., 7/2409. G.S.W., thigh.
Baker, J. B., 26/1768. G.S.W., arm.
Whiteman, G., 15059. G.S.W., thigh.
Gordo, C., 11027.
Bourke, L. M., 14925. G.S.W., finger.
Ball, W., Cpl., 6/586. Appendicitis.
Jenkins, T. S., 7/992. Kicked knee.
Patten, A., 18698. Trench feet.
Adams, C., 11598. Amputated left leg.
Taylor, L. F. C., 11/2492. G.S.W., face.
Crawford, V., 26/537. Swollen glands.
Fogg, N., 11638. G.S.W., right leg.
Knocks, J. W., 10/2551. Fracture, hand.
Acher, T. C., 21637. Fracture, right leg.
Johns, J. R., 2/2326. Fracture, right leg.
Corbin, F. H., 12353. Internal chill.
Richards, G.S.W., right knee and arm.
McWhirten, G. W., 10/2698. Shell wound, hand.
McLennan, C., 19164. G.S.W., arm.
Alexander, Bomb., 2/812. Poisoned finger, part ampt.
Biggs, A. G., 18751. G.S.W., shoulder.
Fletcher, 21371. G.S.W., thigh.
Woods, J. J., 22901. Trench feet.
Howarth, J. K. F., 12/3687. G.S.W., chest.
Samuel, J. J., 10/3995. G.S.W., forearm.
Foley, J. T., 11/2095. G.S.W., chest, thigh and abdomen.
Fute, T. H., 13433. G.S.W., chest.
Collins, F., 8/3217. Trench feet.
Ward, A. A., 15052. G.S.W., head.
Jaffray, J. S., Cpl., 13/3231. G.S.W., head.
McGilliendy, M., 21064. Ampt. right arm.
Pointer, W. A., L/Cpl., 10/4173. Trench feet.
Richards, M., 17825. Septic toe.
Benjamin, E. F., 17/15. G.S.W., right arm.
Ben, O. B., 23/2109. Trench feet.
Humphrey, J. G., 15729. Concussion.
Bowden, W. H., 11615. G.S.W., arm.
Dudley, H. M., L/Cpl., 22487. Injury to knee.

The following are getting along well:—Adams, H., 26/1560; Aiken, W., 11/1288; Arlidge, A., 9/2146; Bartholomew, C., 25/1680; Berger, W., 15669; Bishop, W. J., 12/2213; Bidgood, E., 25188; Bowker, H., 15628; Brown, J. A., 10/2873; Bryant, Sgt., 8/1904; Buddle, B. D., 1445a; Brown, S. W., 8/3511; Campion, A. C., 6/3272; Cameron, D., 1824; Carpenter, J. H., 2/1508; Cargill, T., L/Cpl., 23/158; Corman, G. W., 13/2747; Crann, P., 12765; Cullimore, F. W., 2/1609; Davison, F. R., 25/1771; Dawson, A. J., 13/2426; Deegan, R., 25322; De La Tour, E. L., 4/2070; Donaldson, E., 12360; Douchett, A. G., Cpl., 25/1704; Dyer, R. W., 10/1045; Davis, S., 4/895; Eades, F. W., 3/1252; Eastgate, C. L., L/Cpl., 15838; Eatonshore, J. W., 4/2493; Edwards, W. R., 24/1977; Fenton, J. C., L/Cpl., 24/137; Findlay, F., Cpl., 9/276; Garrett, W. J., 18821; Garmson, L. G., 15358; Gilbert, A., 2/1975; Griffith, W. S. C., 15358; Gumson, W. J., 13/3792; Guerin, C. D., 12778; Greenall, F., 19006; Gordon, J. C., 23/2191; Harper, C., Sgt., 2/169; Harper, A. W., 15535; Harris, H. J.,

8/2336; Hadfield, J. L., Sgt., 4/2176; Harraway, J. L., 23489; Horne, M. W. A., Cpl., 23/1680; Holden, G., 26/1674; Hepburn, C., 11280; Hood, J., 9/1313; Howell, H., 23178; Hawkes, J. K., 12400; Hoskin, W. C., 23025; Hunter, J. B., Bands, 25/196; Hunter, B. S., 12/3048; Harvey, H., 10/1838; Johnson, M. W., 2/2163; Kimber, G., 6/4080; King, E. A., 1081; King, R. A., 22996; Kidd, J., 3/1161; Lysaght, D. V., L/Cpl., 13438; Lane, H. I., 8/2965a; Leigh, H., 2/3887; Lewis, G. A., 14/80; Lewis, W. H., 2/677; Lewis, F., 12526; Lock, S. G. S., Sgt., 12/3287; Leeming, A. T., 25/1774; Leese, H. C., Sgt., 21/13; Lockheart, A. R., 8/3320; Lines, W. A., 23/1329; Millac, F., 3/1430; Morgan, A. K., 3/149a; Moulden, N. S., 12/2741; Munroe, A., 23853; Marshall, N., 25/504; McDowell, J. H., 23824; McGregor, W., 10/1890; McLachlan, G., 23/890; Macdonald, A., 7/2654; McKenzie, A. C., 4/1531; McKearney, J., 26654; McKennie, W. L., 8/3695; Neighbour, E. H., 29931; O'Brien, J., 1922; O'Connor, J., 8/1813; Phillips, W., 7/2124; Phillips, H., 16226; Prouse, R. E., 24/1088; Peterson, R. F., 15768; Putland, R. H., 26/890; Rae, A., 8/3045; Reynolds, F., 15239; Raine, R. T., 10892; Roger, A. S., 12/3798; Roughton, F. H., 6/4136; Russell, A. E., 10/3993; Russell, J. R. E., 24/561; Simms, V. R., 24/197; Skittrup, A. T., 6/4646; Smythe, A. E., 23448; Sinclair, J., 26/1703; Stevens, J. A., 6/44149; Smith, J. E., 26/1717; Savage, C., 12/4084; Thoresen, D. W., 26/1428; Todd, A. H., 2318; Warren, H., 4/255; Walker, C., 2/1876; Weir, J. B., 14172; Wairea, P., 16/927; Whiteford, B., 12/4291; Werenui, 16/393; Wells, A. G., 26/1031; White, C. T., 22895; White, A., 10119; Wilson, C. J., 3/1162; Wade, W. E., 26947; Waite, N., 9/1366; Hill, N. A., 10/4116; Kelly, W., 7/2538; Bennett, J., 11206; McMillan, A., 8/1519; Smith, A., 6/725; Bush, E., 25/66; Sisley, F., 26/140; Cullimore, F. W., 2/1609; Nicholls, R. H., 10/1377; Chalmers, P., 22/936; McKenzie, H. R., 24/1733; Richie, L. A., 15974; Phillips, J., 25/801; Howes, H. J., 10/2975; Lloyd, D. J., 23199; Climo, C. W. L., 14586; Porter, R. N., Cpl., 25/1642; Humphrey, J. G., 15729; Pilcher, F. B., Sgt., 2/2702; Dillon, H. E., 15853; Reynolds, W., 24/263; Thomson, J. H., Sgt., 25/1025; Stanton, E. T. S., 2/1376; Hart, L. B., 14819; Quintan, A., Sgt., 10/1623; Balks, A. J., 25436; O'Connor, G., 25576; Powell, W. G., L/Cpl., 12/2085; Willocks, J. L., 23495; Needham, O., 26/877; Jopp, W. A. T., 9/1693; Loch, H. J., 10/3635; Snell, E. G., 23/913; Bremner, R. S., 23476; Baker, J. B., 26/1768; McGumm, A. D., 8/3968; Ballantyne, D., 8/3473; Morgan, W., 10/4779; Bryant, W., 12/2658; Leary, E., 4/779; Bowen, S. S., 10/3495; Woolley, C. A., Cpl., 23962; Jamieson, C. G., 25/1168; Coward, C., Cpl., 22694; Mackenzie, M., 9/1454; Cran, W. G., 24/390; Eliot, W., 15885; Swinson, F. L., 10/3739; Lindsay, J. L/Cpl., 8/3673; Coleman, F. A., 25/99; Hoskin, B. O. V., 6/3354; Wheeler, C. B. V., 12/2511; Hornbrook, W. G., 14428; Campbell, R., 9/683; Lindisay, H., Sgt., 25/1173; Scott, D., 30055; Brooker, H., Cpl., 6/1742; Hobson, F. J., 24018; Robertson, J., 11947; Harrap, C., 26/1190; Giddiss, F., 6/2147; Thorne, W. A., 12298; Hutcheon, W., 24171; Cussen, G. L., 6/3671; Smith, J. F., 2/1467; Linton, W., 8/3139; Murphy, J., 22539; Wells, C. T., 10114; Le Gallias, 6/3230; Patterson, J., 13/123; Schirler, S., 24/2283; Robertson, W. A., 23/8961; Murphy, T., 4/1451; McNeeley, P. G., 466877; Whitehead, R. J. A., 2/2929; Doyle, S. F., 25/1714.

BALMER LAWN SECTION.

Visited by C. D. Grant.

Kidd, A. J., 13/2830. Progressing after operation.
Robertson, G., 8/3387. Improving slowly.
Robinson, F. J., 25/352. Much the same.

Admitted from France:—

Ashcroft, E. A., 24/337. Medical Case.
Ogilvy, R. A., 11096. Medical Case.
Bubb, P. H., 20293. G.S.W. in chest.
Munn, P. H., 10/3656. G.S.W. in right leg.

The following men are going on well:—

Baker, J. W., 8/2924; Barrow, W. J., 10537; Batten, F. L., 26292; Blackman, F. W., 26/334; Booth, A. E., 9/985; Bridson, D. J., 8/3190; Brough, H. J., 2/2940; Brown, H., 6/3264; Bussy, E. J., L/Cpl., 27061; Burton, R., 23/1335; Butterworth, J., 13/511; Clarke, A. E., 26/726; Clemow, P. C., 11/537; Clifton, F., 14585; Cowan, S. F., 9/2060; Currie, R., 8/4019; Delaney, G., 18987; Denton, G. C., Bdr., 2/741; Douglas, D., 6/15 2; Eades, W. H., 7/1841; Edwards, H., 2/196; Engall, G. H. S., L/Cpl., 11/252; Fairbrother, A. W., 11264; Fraser, G. S. R., 8/3580; Freeman, S. J., 2/1776; Friend, R. Y., 8/3904; Froggatt, B., 12169; Geeson, W. B., 10034; Gibson, W. D., 13/2321; Gibson, R., 23/146; Goodwin, J., 23825; Gorton, T. J., 8/106; Gourley, J. H., 14/974; Guthrie, J. N., 13/2441; Hendry

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ARMISTICE DAY, 1918—TRIBUTE TO THE GLORIOUS DEAD.—“THEIR SONS GO MARCHING ON.”

NOEL COOKBIOGRAPHY

Not Grandpa in his notes (distaff side) from Yorkshire

Noel Cook, born in Foxton in 1896, has been taken for a Latin. Sometimes it has been useful - at other times he has had to go as far as to take an oath that his mother was of English parentage. She was born in Melbourne and his father, William Thompson Te Rauparaha Cook, was of English and Maori extraction. His grandfather, Thomas Uppadine Cook, is recognised as founder and 'father' of Foxton, Manawatu. Noel's father, a compositor-journalist, originally in Foxton and later in Masterton, established the Taumarunui Press. He disposed of this during the Great War when he acquired the 'Rodney & Oatamatea Times' in Warkworth, which is still published by his descendants. In his youth, Noel has a plentiful supply of paper with which to indulge his drawing proclivities.

He was articled to a Taumarunui firm of architects and engineers and later worked as a clerk for the local borough council. He was next appointed Assistant Town Clerk in Tauranga from where, having boosted his age considerably, he enlisted and went overseas with the 15th Reinforcements. He won the welter weight boxing championship of his brigade before being severely wounded in the thigh and through both legs at the Battle of the Messines in 1917.

On his return to New Zealand, through the Rehabilitation Department, he was able to obtain a cadetship on the New Zealand Herald and Weekly News as an artist. Two years later he shipped to Australia and freelanced as a 'black & white' artist with the then such notable papers as Smith's Weekly, the Sydney Bulletin and a host of others.

Circa 1923, he originated a strip cartoon for the Sunday Times (then owned by Hugh D. McIntosh, later knighted) called PETER AND ALL THE OTHER ROVING FOLK. This attracted the attention of the Sydney Sunday Sun, who gave him a half-page in full colour called PETER, who was depicted having fantastic adventures on Mars, Saturn, Jupiter, Venus and other planets and asteroids.

This series attracted much favourable attention and through the auspices of Pat Sullivan, an Australian artist resident in New York and creator of Felix the Cat, Noel was offered a handsome salary (for those days, fantastic) by the Bell Syndicate to draw PETER in New York. Happy and prosperous in Sydney, he declined the offer. Not long afterwards in New York, commenced a whole spate of strip cartoonery: Buck Rogers, Speed Gordon, Superman, Captain Marvel, etc. At that time Noel also indulged in the higher aesthetics of water colour and oil painting. He produced 150 cartoon books for various publishers and then accepted an appointment with the new Australian Women's Weekly and the Sydney Sunday & Daily Telegraph owned by Sir Frank Packer.

During World War II he served with the Camouflage Unit on the New Guinea theatre.

Also
editor
Children's
Newspaper

Going to London after the war, he freelanced in Fleet Street for different publications and then became an Art Editor with Amalgamated Press where he originated strip cartoons and also freelanced for many magazines, illustrations, joke blocks, westerns and covers in full colour.

On retirement, he was commissioned by the BBC to do posters for serious and comic programmes. This allowed him time to paint. He held a first show of twenty-four paintings on the mezzanine floor of New Zealand House in Haymarket, London. After a second successful exhibition at the Mannheim Gallery in the King's Road, Chelsea, he was asked to exhibit at the Royal Commonwealth Society in Northumberland Avenue near Charing Cross, this group show was opened by the Queen Mother. His next exhibition was at the Upper Street Gallery, Islington, London. Then followed a group showing at the Royal Overseas League, held in the Qantas Gallery, Piccadilly. Subsequently he was given a one-man exhibition under the auspices of Qantas Airways at their Piccadilly Gallery. This was in 1970.

He left London in 1973 and, after a short stay in Toronto, he spent six months in San Francisco and returned to Sydney where he had an exhibition at the New Zealand Tourist Bureau, Pitt Street, Sydney. He then exhibited at the Thorburn Gallery 86 paintings of a 'polynesian theme' which sold well and, finally, an exhibition at the Ormsby Workshop Gallery in Woolloomooloo, Sydney. He returned to London in 1976 for a short stay to visit his son Peter domiciled there and returned to Australia and finally to New Zealand in late 1977- and still working on new paintings.

NOEL COOK

INTRODUCTION

This exhibition of Noel Cook's graphic work has been organised to coincide with the May school holidays in the International Year of the Child.

While few young children today will know of Noel Cook's space fiction strips, many will no doubt recognise in them the roots of the modern space comic. They will also see how the strip artist composes his pages, the scale he works in, the materials he employs (gouache, ink, and occasionally oils) and the way he makes corrections and adjustments.

Noel Cook is now eighty-two. He grew up as the balloon age was coming to an end. In science fiction America still lagged behind Europe and in particular, England. The stories of the French writer Jules Verne and the English writers, H. G. Wells and Arthur Conan Doyle were major formative influences on the young Noel. He was also an avid reader of such British magazines as 'The Strand', 'Pall Mall' and 'Windsor' which published the best popular science fiction of the day.

The atomic age was looming. By 1912 the nuclear physicist, Ernest Rutherford, another New Zealander, had proposed a radical model of the atom which, supported by experimental evidence, suddenly made interplanetary travel seem feasible. His imagination fired, Noel subsequently concocted such fantasies as Galactic Miracle, Cosmic Calamity, Planet of Power, Lost in Space, Space Cadet and, most important of all, the 'Peter' strips.

'Peter' was notable for being the earliest of space comics. Unfortunately the originals of these earlier strips have been lost - on two separate occasions house fires have ravaged Noel's archives of original art work. The Peter strips are instead represented in this exhibition by colour printing proofs - as are several other strips for which the original art work is no longer extant. Some really large works are also represented in published form, e.g. Cavalcade of Communications which was originally painted in oils eighteen feet long by ten feet high. The original of this is now displayed inside the harbour-side pylon of the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

While Noel's powers of innovation, imagination and drawing skill are, arguably, best realised in his science fiction strips, his work ranges over a variety of subjects. The selection of this exhibition has been made with this in mind.

Noel has always been a great lover of children, including the very young for whom he created his strips of the Koala Family. These alone were printed in more than two hundred books. He has also produced educational strips, represented here by the George Stevenson and Henry Hudson series of the early sixties. Noel's earliest graphic work is represented by a romantic pen and ink drawing based on The Three Musketeers executed, incidentally, at a studio in Wellesley Street, near the Auckland City Art Gallery. It was in this studio that Noel met three

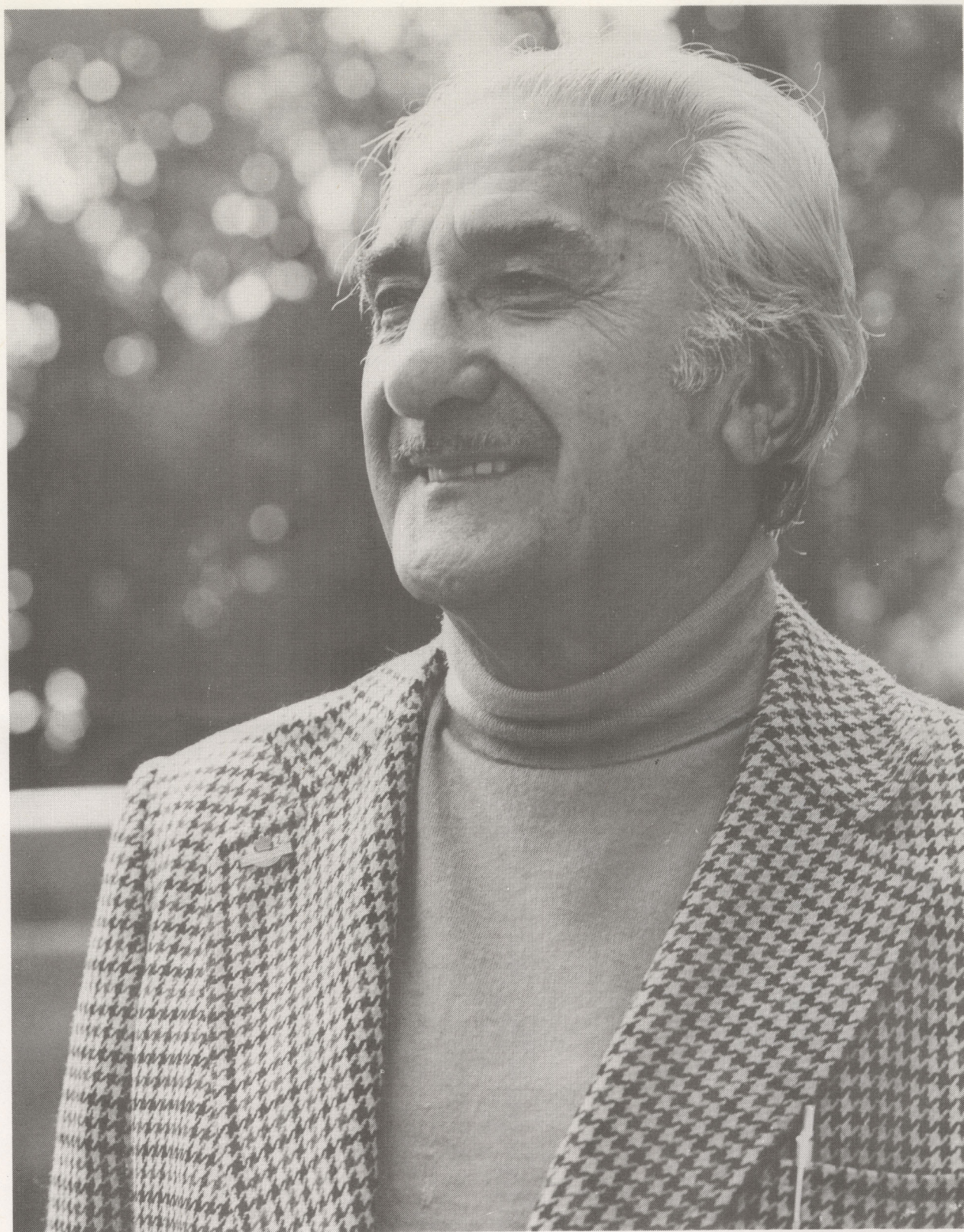
other pioneers of the cartoon strip who were to become life-time friends - Robert Johnston, George Finey and Unk White.

Another early drawing in a similar style to The Three Musketeers study but by contrast unromantic is Marching On ANZAC day 1920, which recalls dead 'diggers' on the march.

Noel has always free-lanced, working from home, often late into the night under pressure of deadlines. Speed was essential - working well he could complete fifty pages per month.

It is significant that Noel did not accept the lucrative job offered him by the big American Bell Syndicate, after the success of his 'Peter' strip; also that a whole spate of science fiction comics - Buck Rogers, Flash Gordon, Superman, and Captain Marvel - appeared in America soon after Noel declined the offer, in favour of remaining in Australia where he was already happy and prosperous.

While Noel has exhibited his watercolour and oil paintings of 'higher aesthetics' as he describes them, in numerous exhibitions in Australia and England, his strip work has not previously been shown before in a gallery context.



ref. N.W Cook
New Zealand Archives

Cook 4a
26 College Rd
BROMLEY

KENT
BR13PE

23/5/94

Peter H Diddle
University of Leeds

Dear Mr Diddle,

Further to your letter
of 26 February I enclose another example
of later work. The strip (copy) enclosed
could have been from a black & white comic
referring to D-Day. It was probably drawn
for Fleetway publications when my father
was on Fleet St (Children's newspaper etc &c).

I will let you know if I
come across anything else.

Sincerely
Peter N. Cook



(ref.
N.W. COOK
Fleetway House)



Cook 46

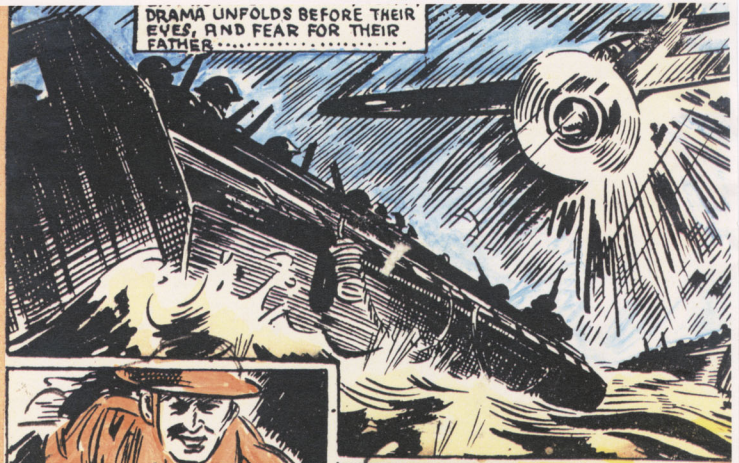


WHILE ALLIED LIGHT AND HEAVY BOMBERS AND FIGHTERS DISRUPT COMMUNICATIONS AND AIRFIELD IN THE INTERIOR...



BETTY AND BILLY SEE EVERY PHASE OF THAT GREAT "D" DAY OPERATION AND SOON IT WAS ASSURED OF SUCCESS AS THOUSANDS AND THOUSANDS OF TROOPS ARE LANDED...

.. AND QUICKLY GO INTO ATTACK, TRAINED TO THE MINUTE



THEY SEE A CLOSE UP OF A DETERMINED TOMMY-GUNNER



... AND THE ON THE FACI SIGNALLER TING THAT E THING IS GOIN



... THE HE ALLIED TA ROLL OVE THE PLAN OF NORM ... NOTH CAN STO THEM N



PHIL REACHED THE NOW FIERCELY BURNING GERMAN PLANE AND PROCURES A LIFEBUOY. HE'D SOON HAVE TO LEAVE THE PLANE. THE FIRE WAS SPREADING—



IN RESPONSE TO GRACE'S THOROUGH -A DESTROYER, LAUNCHED A BOAT / RESCUED PHIL. GERMAN FIGHTERS WERE ACTIVE AND MANY MORE FLEW

