



**THE  
CHURCHILL  
CHRONICLES**

**Maj. Gen. Thomas B. L. Churchill,**

**THE DIARY OF THOMAS CHURCHILL AUG  
1938 TO OCT 1939 COVERING THE VITAL  
MOBILISATION PERIOD BEFORE WW-2  
WITH A FOREWORD BY THE AUTHOR'S  
SON TOBY CHURCHILL DEC 2014**

**£11.50**



The text which follows is the transcription of two notebooks used as a mobilisation diary by my father, Thomas Bell Lindsay Churchill, between August 1938 and October 1939. The diary starts while TBLC is the instructor at the Army School of Photo Interpretation at Farnborough, located with the RAF School of Photography (SOP). He is in the rank of Captain, aged 31. On the European scene, Hitler is supporting the claims of people of ethnic German origin who live in the Sudeten region of Czechoslovakia, for more say in their affairs.

I have made this transcription because it may be that the originals should be preserved in some institution where they will be better protected than in a family home, and because I think that members of the family, if no-one else, will be interested in this snapshot of the way our predecessors lived and thought in the late thirties and during transition to war.

I have added "editorial notes" where I know of some background which younger readers may not: and where appropriate, and where I can, I have identified individuals in greater detail than the diary, again for the edification of the younger generations. These additions are in [square brackets]. Any (round brackets) are TBLC's. I have transcribed all the text,

exactly as written, following the punctuation, underlining, spelling and abbreviations including use of ampersands, numerals etc. I have not added `[sic]' after every spelling error - you will just have to take my word for it. And he did spell Mummy's name in at least two ways. I have not added details (eg of European history) which those interested may research elsewhere.

**1938**

**29 Aug (Monday)**

Because daily events in the international arena seem to be leading to a world crisis, I have decided to keep a diary, so that I may read, in years to come, of my thoughts (and of those of others with whom I come in contact) as those events occurred.

There is war in Spain, where the `insurgents ' under Franco are slowly sapping away the life-blood of the Government forces, with the open aid of Italian armed forces by land and sea. There is war in China, where Japan tries to subjugate the guerilla armies of her adversary by atrocities on land and in the air, but seems to be meeting with little success, and to be running the serious risk of revolution at home.

But dwarfing both these wars in the public interest in Europe, is the German-Czech feud which since March 1938 has become an ever-increasing source of

danger to European peace, and which in the last weeks seems to have boiled up to such a crisis, that armed intervention by Germany is by no means unlikely, and if it occurs, an European war may easily be brought about.

I was in London today, enquiring as to the possibilities of procuring some drawings by Sickert, [Augustus] John and Kennington. [On a captain's salary?] The posters announced `Hitler visits French frontier' and `Czech conclave at No 10'. The casual comment was `the morning's news is bad'. An emergency cabinet meeting has been called for tomorrow morning, and Henderson the British Ambassador in Berlin has been recalled to London to report on the situation.

### **30 Aug**

The only bulletin issued regarding the cabinet meeting states that all ministers were in complete agreement, & Neville Henderson the British Ambassador in Berlin, is returning to his post. The Czech P.M. has apparently made further concessions to the Sudeten Germans in his latest `plan' for a settlement which has not yet been made public.

The German papers continue to hurl invective at the Czechs, and strongly criticize England.

As we were changing for a tennis party at Yately, old Rich turned up in his car on his way from the south coast to London. He has been given a T.A. staff Capt's job in Reading with a new T.A. A.A. Div. which is just forming, & has handed over the Adjutancy of his Bn: a few months before his tour of duty was up. It will be nice having him so near in the future, & no doubt we shall be hearing news of his nuptials soon. [This must be Richardson, a Manchester Regiment friend, who was to marry "Aunty" Betty and subsequently produce Joanna and Spou.]

### **31 Aug**

No startling developments in the European situation. The P.M. has gone to Balmoral as Minister-in-attendance on the King.

It seems to me at present that everything points to a settlement of the Czech question being forced by Germany before the next 3 months are out. Her mobilization in all but name (said to be for manoeuvres) & the requisitioning of food, motor cars etc: together with the speeding up of the fixed defences on the French frontier, cannot but be interpreted as a reserve of strength to be kept in hand ready to back a threat if she doesn't get the terms she wants by negotiation. I think that if she doesn't, she'll either threaten to walk in to Czechoslovakia, or else march in without bothering to declare her intention.

The burning question is - will France mobilize on either of these contingencies? I think that if she does, she will call Hitler's bluff, and there will be no war. But I doubt if France will be cunning or bold enough to mobilize with no intention of fighting. I feel France will not fight - in spite of her brave words.

If France did fight, we should surely be in it too. But I don't think she will, & this was M. Liotard's view when I sounded him in Paris in July. Nevertheless I am sure that she should, for if she allows Germany to go East, it will only be postponing the date of the war (admittedly by several years); but when it does come Germany will be self supporting in raw materials and therefore vastly in a better position to wage war than now.

Admittedly no-one wants war; but in my opinion, taking the long view, war with Germany is inevitable (owing to the nature of the beast) and the longer it is deferred the strength of Germany will increase in a greater proportion than the strength of France or England; time, in fact, is on her side. So surely, now is the time to offer battle; and if we were to do so, I very much doubt if Hitler would accept the challenge.

Received a most amusing letter from Nina Hamnett. Have written back asking her to meet me next Saturday at the Fitzroy, & asking her if there is any

chance of meeting Augustus John, who is, I hear, working in London just now.

The Willes to tea, & then to Guildford for tennis with the Allisons, and Mah Jongg after supper. Janie & I won handsomely.

### 1 Sep

Sudeten Germans have not yet published their reactions. The good Lindeman [? a monk friend from Farnborough Abbey?], whom I took for a drive in the Haslemere-Headley area after tea, doubts if there will be war. He is sorry the superior will not let them have a wireless at the Abbey as he would like to have listened in to Queen Wilhemina's broadcast on her jubilee yesterday.

### 2 Sep

Henlein [The leader of the Sudeten Germans] went to Berchesgarden [sic] yesterday to confer with Hitler, and I see that among others Goerring was present. no doubt the weekend will produce developments, as is Hitler's usual custom.

### 3 Sep

There is a rumour that the Sudeten Germans are going to put up counter-proposals to the ones submitted by the Czech Govt:



Met Nina Hamnett at the Fitzroy and she lunched with me at Viani's. She told me of her adventures in Paris, where she was locked up in a police station together with all the other inmates of her hotel, for the investigation of their credentials by the Sûreté. This was all part of the precautions taken on account of the King and Queens' visit to Paris. After 12 hours incarceration she was allowed to return to her hotel. She tells me she is returning to live permanently in Paris as soon as possible, as things are much cheaper and more diverting there. She again promised me a drawing.

#### **4 Sep.**

Tennis with the Secker-Walkers at the Aldershot Club: also in the party were the Jacobs-Larcombs and a Major & Mrs Wall, the former of whom knew me in Hong Kong in 1916-17! Apparently he was in the Sappers, & was a scout-master. He now is something to do with the storing of ammunition underground. We had supper with the Walkers, & met Major & Mrs Boyd, R. Signals.

#### **5 Sep (Monday)**

It seems that any pronouncements by Germany on the Czech situation are being held up for the Nurenburg Conference, which starts this week.



The Bomber Cmd: Intelligence Course started this morning - 17 students, nearly all Majors & Colonels retired.

## 6 Sep

In Hitler's 'opening address' at the Conference he made no Reference to the Czech situation. I imagine he will produce the expected pronouncement at the end of the Conference. France has recalled officers & men from leave & called up certain reservists, and has manned the Maginot Line to full strength.

Lucy Axworthy [Wife of Maj F.G.W.Axworthy] to lunch, & to collect some clothes from us for the regimental jumble sale. To supper with Bingle and Ellen [Maund], & then to see the French film 'Carnet de Bal'.

## 7 Sep

President Benesch of Czechoslovakia has just handed his fourth plan for a settlement to the Sudetens. This apparently goes further than any of the others in its concessions to the latter. Still more French preparations, including the putting of the port of Marseilles under military law - largely due to a strike (which has been going on for several weeks) of dock-yard stevedores.

I saw a letter in the office this morning from the

Aldershot Command to O.C. R.A.F. stations dealing with arrangements for guarding the station in the event of an emergency, which shook me a little as it shows that the authorities are sufficiently apprehensive to be getting down to comparative details.

Eunice & her mother arrived unexpectedly & stayed for tea; she had been arranging a school for Carol, & told me she had decided to follow my advice (such as it was) regarding schools in Camberley.

Cols: Crossfield and Baxter, both of whom were on Burma District HQ staff, the former when I first went to Maymyo in 1928 & the latter in 1931 when we went back to Burma for the rebellion, are on the Station Intelligence Course. Queer to find myself lecturing to them!

### **8th Sept**

News is rather bad. The Deputy P.M. of the Czechs has issued a statement in which he says the concessions they have offered are the last they intend to make, & go much further than they originally intended: indeed many in their cabinet think they have already gone much too far, & have only done so due to strong pressure from "other nations".

France has increased her frontier forces and is continuing to call up more reservists.

The Cabinet has been summoned for next Monday, on which day Hitler is expected to make his announcement on the Czech situation.

### **9th Sept**

The Czech P.M. has had several meetings with the sudetens, but no tangible results are reported.

France is provisioning her Atlantic Fleet at Brest, and calling up naval reservists, as well as more army reservists.

### **10 Sept**

Hitler made a speech this morning in which he said that the march on Austria was only the beginning, & that the German nation will be ready for anything. How significant this remark will be one cannot tell at present.

The Home Fleet has concentrated at Invergordon, & the Mediterranean Fleet has left Malta for the Eastern Mediterranean. The wireless announcer points out that these moves are merely routine ones connected with normal manoeuvres which are always carried out at this time of the year; but surely no-one can take such assurances seriously?!

I wish I was with the regiment, when I could discuss

these things with soldiers; the R.A.F. seem badly informed & unable to talk the situation over intelligently.

I still don't believe there will be war, because I think Hitler must realise that Germany will be worsted in the end, & I don't believe he is so petty that he will risk this in order to `save his face'. Still, that is what people said in 1914.

We went in to Camberley this morning to shop, and I ordered a pair of shoes to be made by Stallwood's. The same man measured my foot today as in 1926 when I was a junior at Sandhurst, and he turned up the leger and showed me my name and measurements on that occasion.

Finished reading `The Seven Pillars of Wisdom' this evening.

### **11th Sept**

We went over to Bisley this afternoon, where I shot in the Ricochet Rifle Club's Autumn meeting. There were about 8 others, including, of course, Major Shepherd. My score was no good, though considering its more than 12 months since I had a rifle in my hand I didn't do too badly. I scored 83 out of a possible 105.

Bernard Keen, who is in the Marines, told me that some reserve ships had been commissioned & were

with the Home Fleet at Invergordon: & said that this was the only respect in which the present concentration differed from ones in previous years at this time, for manoeuvres.

Shepherd thought that Hitler's bluff had been called & that there would not be war; some other solution would be found in due course.

On the wireless news this evening there was a very plain statement pointing out that if Czech territory was violated France would intervene, & would promptly be joined by Great Britain; and affirming that the Government's view had been clearly put to the German Government by Neville Henderson. Nevertheless it stated that the Government awaited Hitler's statement tomorrow "with some anxiety".

I still don't think Hitler will risk a march on the Sudetenland, and war. I think he will try & choose a way out by diplomacy. Presumably by this time tomorrow we shall know.

### **12 Sept (Monday)**

At 10 to 7 p.m. about 40 brand new 3-ton lorries went past the house towards the R.A.S.C. barracks. They had civilian drivers and the canvas covers, straps etc were obviously new. This looked suspiciously like mobilization equipment, and struck a sombre if sinister note. Numbers of our neighbours came out

into the front gardens to watch them pass.

The `news' at at 7.30 stated that Hitler had started his speech at 7.15 and was still speaking. He was outlining the success of his party since it came to power, & contrasting old conditions with those now obtaining under the new regime. More news will be given at 8.15 p.m.

The Cabinet met today, & some members of it will meet again at 10 Downing St. after Hitler's speech this evening. The French Premier met Gen. Gamelin & members of the war council. & there was a meeting of the French Cabinet. The Swiss have charged all their demolition chambers on their frontiers. Goerring has had a mysterious illness & has been ordered complete rest in bed for three or four days. I wonder if this is really a reprimand to him for his blood-and-thunder speech yesterday - or may it be that he has been the victim of an attack? Both possibilities are welcome! The first, since it may mean that Hitler does not intend to resort to the violence which Goerring threatened and even implied was to come in the near future; the second since the man is dangerous, and would be better out of the way. But the statement may be nothing more than the simple truth.

8.15p.m. Hitler has been speaking of Czechoslovakia. He poured contempt on the idea that the latter country had a special mission in Europe and

then described the `intolerable' situation in which the Sudetens found themselves and pointed out how Germany could not remain unheeding of their predicament. He had got this far at 8.10p.m. & we shall hear more at 9.20 p.m. - one hour to wait!

While I was in my office this afternoon I heard a commotion outside, & went out to find a machine had crashed out-of-sight at the far end of the aerodrome, but I saw the pall of black smoke which always betrays a burst petrol tank and the resultant inferno, out of which few of the crew ever come out alive. Later I learnt that Sqn-leader Adam, who got the altitude record a few months ago, had been killed, together with another officer; and a civilian wireless operator was badly injured. We met them at the Porris' some time ago at a dinner party. We liked her so much. They had not been married very long.

9.20 p.m. Hitler's speech finished at 8.34 p.m. He made no startling or unexpected announcements. He spoke of the right of the Sudetens to self-determination, and said that if this was denied it would precipitate serious consequences. He warned "Paris & London" that Germany would defend her interests in all spheres, and he spoke of the German fortifications in the west which would be completed "before the end of the year". He closed by saying that Germany could hold her head high with pride, & that never again would she bend under a foreign will. The speech was punctuated with terrific applause.



Foreign comment on the speech is roughly that the situation has not become any worse as a result of the speech, but at the same time, no better.

So ends a memorable day. At least no ultimata ["ums" was deleted] have been delivered, nor any war-declarations made. Many people ["expected" deleted] feared a grave denouement. I shall long remember Sept 12th 1938.

### **13 Sept**

There is, generally, a feeling of anticlimax today after the excitements of yesterday. Most people think Hitler's speech fell rather flat (in spite of the colossal cheering of his audience) and I fancy that once more he has had to change his plans as the result of the attitude of Gt. Britain & France towards his aspirations.

Discussion now is whether he will get his implied demand for a plebiscite in Sudetenland.

10.10 p.m. There is bad news from Czechoslovakia. The Sudetens are playing 'old Harry' and rioting generally, & a number of deaths have resulted. The Czech Govt; has declared a state of emergency in 8 sudeten districts, & the Sudetens have issued an ultimatum that unless this decree is removed by 11 p.m. tonight, they would not be responsible for

anything that happened. The Czech Govt: has replied, & it is understood that while refusing to comply with the ultimatum, they have said they are ready to negotiate.

Henlein has issued a statement that now their minimum demands, as stated in the Carlsbad speech that he made some time ago, are no longer applicable, and that they demand a plebiscite, which must be agreed to by the 15th.

The Cabinet (or certain members of it) met again this morning & this afternoon the P.M. saw the three Chiefs of Staffs.

France has prohibited the export of iron, wool & leather, and has refused passports to men of military age for the next three days.

I think the situation has taken a real turn for the worse.

### **14th Sept**

Rioting continues in Sudetenland, but on a more comprehensive scale, & in some cases the Sudetens have armed themselves with machine-guns and hand-grenades. Henlein, in consequence of the Czech Govt: refusal to call off the `state of emergency' regulations in the Sudetenland districts, has broken off all negotiations with the Czechs, & there is a

united clamour by Germany and the Sudetens for a plebiscite.

The British Cabinet met this morning. In Paris it was announced that sand would be dumped and be available for use for putting out incendiary bombs etc as from tomorrow.

Jack and Barbara [Allison? - see 24 Sept] came to supper, the former having had 30 hours of continuous travel, having just been up to Cromarty Firth. We played Mah Jongg, and I won handsomely, Jack being the least loser and second to me. He thinks there will be war, and only prays we will mobilize the Fleet so that he can have a few days grace to see how his arrangements re; booms etc. are working before war breaks out.

7.30 p.m. news announced that Neville Chamberlain was to fly to Germany tomorrow morning to confer personally with Hitler at Berchtesgarden. This will make diplomatic history, and surely no move since the war will ever have been more dramatic or more lauded. The possibilities of this visit are limitless, & I look forward to seeing the press comment on this tomorrow morning. I can't help feeling that the grave situation now extant will be appreciably improved by this visit. Apart from the material results which might accrue, the Germans as a whole, & in particular Hitler must be flattered by such a suggestion. After so many years of the world's history, I can't help being

impressed by the fact that international affairs now boil down to two men having a tete-a-tete together - the most primitive form of bargaining - and quarreling!

## **15 Sept**

Chamberlain left by aeroplane early this morning, & after arriving at Munich, continued his journey by rail to Berchtesgarden. Hitler seems to have received him cordially & after tea they got down to business. We do not of course know the outcome of these conversations yet. The Press of the world is unanimous in praising Chamberlain's initiative.

We motored up to London after tea to stay at 87B [Granny Williams' flat in Lexham Gdns] until Monday evening.

## **16 Sept**

(Jack's birthday). Chamberlain returned before noon today & announced that he had had a friendly conversation, & hoped to have another meeting with Hitler in the near future in western Germany, since the latter wished to spare Chamberlain, the older man, another such a long journey.

The Cabinet met & received a report from Chamberlain.

The Station Intelligence Officers course all forgathered at Waterloo station, & after a talk by the Assistant Traffic Superintendant in the Board Room, were shown over Waterloo station & Clapham. The object of the visit is to visit vulnerable centres to

compare them with air photos, & have the essentials of railway-working explained by railway experts. The officials were very good to us, in spite of being very busy with conferences with the Home Office etc. on the evacuation of London in the event of hostilities. We were given an excellent lunch at Victoria station (where I used to lunch with dear old Dr. Druce) & then the course went off to visit Norwood, while I went off to meet Janie at F.P.Baker to buy shirts & socks. Then we went in search of sequins to trim her wedding dress, which she is re-hashing into an evening gown, & after tea at Derry & Toms, returned home for supper.

After supper we went to see 'Vivacious Lady' with Ginger Rogers at the Marble Arch Cinema. I noticed the orchestra played 'God Save the King' in full after the performance.

## **17 Sept**

Visited the War Office to try to get myself earmarked for an I [Intelligence] job on mobilisation, connected with air Photos. Tim Moorhead took me to A.G.5(Mob) who were pleasant but not very helpful & apparently MI 1a are the responsible people. Tim knew Maj. Page R.A. in M.I.1a. so I tackled him. He was in a great hurry to catch a train and I had to say my piece as we rushed down the corridors & stairs. He said my place was at the S.O.P. on mob: teaching

others, until my appt: was up. I came back at him by asking vaguely sarcastically if the consideration that the officers appointed to G.H.Q. etc. for photo-reading would have a mere 10 day qualification instead of my 4 year experience would not receive due weight. This shook him a little & he said he would consider the matter on Monday.

Went to Downing St. & watched the break-up of the cabinet at 1.30 p.m. Quite a large crowd on the pavement.

### **18 Sept**

The French Premier & Foreign Minister (MM Deladier & Bonnet) flew over to England had spent the rest of the day with the Cabinet. [That's what he wrote!]

We had a drink with Pat in the morning, & Myf: [to be Rosemary's godmother?] came to tea. Then we went to supper with Desiree and Edmund, who gave us Rossi before dinner, Claret with dinner, and Calvados afterwards.

### **19 Sept (Monday)**

French ministers returned to Paris.

The course was shown over the London Docks by a Port of London official. Very interesting, though I



was feeling rotten with a cold which Ma [Granny Williams] had passed on to me.

In the evening we heard that the French cabinet had approved the `Plan' that the British Cabinet [with a capital "C"] had put to Deladier & Bonnet when they were over here.

Motored down to Frimley after supper.

### **20 Sept**

The `Plan', though not yet officially published, appears to be the seceding to Germany of territories `predominantly' of German nationality & persuasion. The Czech Govt: is apparently (& justly!) very indignant & are in session throughout most of today. If they decide to fight rather than give in, goodness knows what will be the outcome. No doubt their view is that if they give in without a murmur, the Hungarian & Polish minorities will clamour for repatriation, and the disintegration of their country will be only a matter of time. If they fight, Germany may pinch the whole country, though whether France & England will intervene in these circumstances nobody knows: nor is Russia's attitude clear.

### **21st Sept**

The cold which has been with me since I was in London, has been getting steadily worse, & was so

bad today that I didn't go out with my course to visit sights [sites?] in the Alton area for Landing grounds, but asked Wheeler to take them round. Went to G.X. [Gerrards Cross] in afternoon & stayed for tea and supper, and brought Mummy [his mother] back. Shot bow-&-arrows all afternoon with Jack. [Not that ill then!]

It was announced that Chamberlain would go to Germany again tomorrow. The Czech Govt has accepted the German `terms' under pressure from England & France, & has now resigned.

### **22nd Sept**

The fourth anniversary of our wedding, & `D' Holmes, who rang Janie up to fix up a date for a supper party, actually remembered the anniversary & congratulated Janie!

Chamberlain flew to Godesburg about noon & had conversations with Hitler in the afternoon. Rumours are rampant as to what is being discussed, but no-one knows the truth. A new Czech Govt, with the C-in-C at the head, has replaced Hodza's Govt:

Met Aunt Lillie [his father's maiden sister] at the station in the evening & brought her back to stay for a couple of nights. Janie took Mummy over to Liphook in the morning.

Dined in the Regimental Mess in the evening,[The 2nd Battalion of the Manchester Regiment has by now moved to Aldershot, a mile down the road from the RAE] where 5 snotties [Midshipmen] from H.M.S. Manchester were entertained, they having accompanied a soccer team from the ship this afternoon which played the Regt: & drew 3-3. The snotties were absurdly young (17-18) and were `acting very grown-up' even to the extent of drinking far more champagne and gin than was good for them. This feature of the naval system is seriously wrong, and reflects badly on their senior officers.

### 23rd Sept

It was announced at 1 p.m. on the wireless that the conversations at Godesburg had not been resumed, so Chamberlain had sent a letter to Hitler, & was not prepared to meet him again until a reply had been received. Later a reply was received, & it was announced that Chamberlain would return to England tomorrow. The two did have a final meeting late tonight.

Took Aunt Lillie to see the completed R.M.C [Royal Military College, Sandhurst] Chapel in the morning, & then we had coffee in Camberley. I collected the brown shoes that Stallwoods have made for me. We picniced on Chobham Ridges in the afternoon. The I course finished today. Czechoslovakia has

mobilized.

## **24th Sept**

Took Aunt Lillie to the station at 10.12 a.m. Then went shopping in Camberley with Janie.

Chamberlain returned by air at just after 1 p.m. & a cabinet meeting was held shortly afterwards.

We had a tennis party at the club, with Jack & Barbara Allison & Mrs A (his mother), Jill Sullivan, Jack and Levi. To our horror Mrs A arrived unchanged & so we were 7 players to two courts; I hurriedly rang Jean Mathews, who was already playing, & then Francis Higgan, who came along & saved the situation. It became fairly evident however that Jill and Francis were enemies and until the latter left early things were just a little strained!

After supper went round to see Bill and Eunice [Williams?], who have just moved into their house at Lightwater. We found that Bill wouldn't arrive till after 10 p.m. as he was kept at the War Office. We all went to meet him later.

Saw Carol in bed, who likes her new school very much. I am very glad of this, having had so much to do with the choice of it.

Eunice was very depressed. Bill was dog tired, & said

he and his colleagues had been flat out for six weeks now, & were all fagged out. He remarked `Its so awful being in this state of weariness even before the war starts! He is in the Plans dept & is the Q man for the move - a terrific job & responsibility. I was interested to hear that his closest collaborator is Col. Hawes, for whom he shares my high admiration, I having come across him last year on the Aldershot Command Manoeuvres (in the Control Tent) at Saffron Waldon, and again on the Backward Boys Course [?] in Aldershot where he gave a number of first-class lectures on Frontier Warfare.

He told me (Bill I mean) that when they started in their job a short time ago they got all they files relating to Henry Wilsons work (& that of his Dept) from 1911 - 1914 from Maurice Hankey. They had 3 years in which to work out the move of a given small force of standard equipment to a given area; Bill's dept had to produce orders in six weeks for an unknown force of unknown scale of equipment to an unknown destination. He said "In three months, I could get out a move to anywhere in the world; unfortunately we haven't got 3 months!"

He had no opinion of the R.A.F. `Q' people, who were unable to say what they wanted moved to the other side, & in the end the W.O. had to work out their requirements for them; and he mentioned the youth of the two naval commanders through whom they liaised with the Admiralty. Although these two

sailors were their opposite numbers, they were so young and lacking in experience.

Bill said I was doing him good, & he liked my optimism; I said he was too near the centre of things, & too hard worked, to see things in a normal perspective. He emphasised our unpreparedness.

He had to pack his things & leave for London at 8.15 tomorrow (Sunday) where he thought he would have to sleep during the next week in order to be available at any moment, so we left at 11.30 approx, though Bill, reluctant as ever to break up a party, tried to persuade us to stay. Janie had a splitting headache, & went straight to bed, when we got home.

### **25th Sept**

A wet depressing day, and our servant left us yesterday so we had to get our own breakfast.

Apparently Chamberlain asked Hitler for an assurance that no German troop movements on Czechoslovakia would take place during the settlement of the plan for secession of certain Sudeten territories to Germany. It appears that Hitler's reply was that the guarantee could not be given, and that the only terms he could consider were the evacuation by the Czechs of certain Sudeten (and possibly Polish and Hungarian) areas in which the Czechs had a smaller proportion of inhabitants than 50% and the

occupation of those areas by the Germans; & the appointment of a frontier commission to delineate boundaries consisting of equal percentages of Germans, Sudeten Germans, and Czechs.

This memorandum (it is not called an ultimatum - though that's what it is) is said to have a time-limit of six days - i.e. until 1st Oct.

So far as is known this memorandum has been handed to the Czech: Govt: without any advice or observations on the part of the British and French. The British Cabinet is now in session (1 p.m.) and a full meeting of the French cabinet has been ordered for the early afternoon. Then Bonnet & Deladier fly to London to confer with the British Cabinet this evening. They will I imagine decide whether to put pressure on the Czechs: to accept, or what.

Have just heard on the wireless that the Czech reply to Germany has been received by the French cabinet, who will consider it this afternoon.

The Cabinet meeting, with MM Deladier & Bonnet present, began at 9.10 pm. and was still going on at 11 p.m. There is some doubt now whether the Czech reply has been submitted.

We played tennis with Jack & Barbara at Guildford. Theo Vaizey, his wife and her sister, and various others were also there. Jack & I playing together in a



mens four with Theo & a youth whose name I don't remember, won 6-5 after being 1-5!

### **26th Sept (Monday)**

Another Cabinet meeting this morning, at which the French Ministers were again present, and also General Gamelin, the French C-in-C designate. A statement was issued saying that the two governments were in complete accord, and that Sir Horace Wilson (of the F.O.) had left for Berlin by air with a personal note to Hitler from Chamberlain.

This note is probably a final statement of the position from the English & French standpoints - at least this is what I imagine it is, though no statement as to its contents has been made.

America has sent a long telegram to Hitler & Benesch asking them not to abandon negotiations etc.

People on the RAF station [Farnborough was then a RAF station as well as the home of the Royal Aircraft Establishment] have been recalled from leave, and various persons dispatched to mobilisation depots. I took a look at the regt: & saw Eb: and Freddie Snow. They said the only thing happening was the putting into operation of gas-precautions in case of an air raid - officers etc. had not been recalled from leave.

Other barracks looked generally peaceful, & there

was only the usual number of cars outside Command H.Q.

The air-raid shelters outside my office are nearly complete. These have 5' trenches with 2' head room revetted by wooden stakes and corrugated iron, and banked up with 2' of earth. There is a roofing to the trenches of corrugated iron, which is, I am told, to be covered with 2' of earth and then sandbags.

1045 p.m. Hitler made a speech in Berlin tonight to which the whole German nation was told to listen on the wireless. Briefly the gist of it was that they were jolly well going to get what they wanted, if necessary by force; and he made Benesch the villain of the piece.

The Observer Corps & A.A. units of the T.A. have been called up, & Coast defence units. The distribution of gas masks has been started (to the civil population) and the A.R.P. handbook is to be distributed by post tomorrow.

Wilson delivered Chamberlain's note to Hitler this afternoon, and he is returning to London tomorrow morning with Hitler's reply. There is a Cabinet meeting going on now, as well as a Privy Council meeting at Buckingham Palace. The King has cancelled his visit to Glasgow tomorrow for the launching of the Queen Elizabeth, & the Queen & children are going alone. Parliament is to meet on

28th.

Alexander [?] brought Mummy back this evening from Liphook. I think he is a wet fish.

Jack came over to fetch her, & after supper here they both went back.

Jack thinks we won't fight, even if Hitler attacks Czechoslovakia. I think there is a faint possibility of Hitler modifying his demands; but failing this, war, to me, seems inevitable. That is, that we shall fight beside France.

### 27th Sept

Chamberlain broadcast at 8 p.m. this evening; the most significant points in his speech, as I thought, were:- (1), That it seemed to him incredible that we should go to war over a small state which, however much with which we might sympathise, was far removed from us; and when all demands originally made by Hitler were granted. (2) We must make certain that a vital interest to this country is at ~~steak~~ stake, before we plunge ourselves into the bloodshed that modern warfare comprises, (3) that G.B. should keep calm, & those that could should offer themselves for service, remembering that cautionary measures taken by the Govt; did not necessarily mean that war was inevitable. (4) That while peace was preserved, there was still a chance of lasting peace.

Parliament meets tomorrow morning. The most significant news was that unless Germany receives a conciliatory reply from Czechoslovakia, Germany will mobilize at 2 p.m. tomorrow.

Janie went with Ellen [Maund] to help to assemble gas-masks at Camberley both morning and afternoon.

I started an army course, from which two people were promptly recalled, one Daunt in the RASC whom I never saw, & one Keenlyside in the RWK [Royal West Kents] whom I disliked, though I only saw him for 5 minutes. A conceited youth with bad manners, typical of a regiment which we learned to despise in Secunderabad in 1932 for their underbred attitude when taking over barracks from us.

Janie rang up Eunice and asked her to come round after supper, as she is all alone & was rather depressed last time we saw her. She came, & we drank whisky & I think we cheered her up. Bill of course is in London.

Porri [?] asked me if I could cope with 20 on an A.L.O's [Air Liaison Officer?] course on Z+5, as the War Office had rung him. I replied yes, & went over to see Brunton to fix the necessary printing etc. for such a course.

Rich, who was coming to supper, rang up from

Reading (where he is a GSO III to a new T.A. A.A. Div) to say he couldn't come owing to the "war". We were very sorry.

Eb; rang to say the Regtl: dinner, due for tomorrow night, had been cancelled. We both agreed this move was damned nonsense, & presumably attributable to old Dorling. [Col F H Dorling DSO Colonel of the Regiment. The dinner was eventually held on November 17 1938, at the Junior United Services Club] What a fool the man is. A dinner at this time would do us all a lot of good, besides being a historic affair; it would also have been the 50th Anniversary. [Of the Manchester Regiment Dining Club] I reminded Eb: that the first thing to do on mobilization being ordered was to send for a photographer & have a group of the officers taken.[As was done in 1914.] He heartily agreed.

## 28 Sept

The morning papers announced the mobilizn of the Fleet. Although I'm very glad this step has been taken, as it gives us a little start in our preparations for defence, it has undoubtedly shown us all how near to war we are, and no-one seems to doubt we are `for it' now.

While I was lecturing Essame rang up from HQ 22 Group & said could I go to his office to have a word with him re; my mobilization appointment. I went up

at once by car, giving my course some photos to occupy themselves with in my absence. Essame said that Rance [?] had seen him the night before, & that I would have to remain where I was as I was the only one competent to instruct A.L.Os and officers for I appts; in interpretation. I agreed, but asked that I might have an assistant, to learn the job and be ready to take over from me, & he at once agreed: & I also asked him to make sure that when I was released from Farnborough I would get a job on an I staff where I could utilise my special knowledge in photo-reading. He assured me that I should most certainly get such a job, & said further that undoubtedly G.H.Q. was my proper destination. He told me, under sworn secrecy, that the expeditionary force was going to France, & expressed considerable surprise. I noticed he was wearing the black & red G.S. armband, a sign of the times, since he has never worn one before, nor did his predecessor. He spoke of the desirability or otherwise of allowing citizen soldiers, such as schoolmasters & university tutors, to do the job of A.L.O. & I advised that that type be employed in this way.

Before the break I warned my course to be guarded in what they discussed & said in the Queen's Hotel, where they generally forgather for a glass of sherry in the middle of the morning, reminding them of Truffitt's barber who was run in by the security service in the first days of war in 1914.

Janie was very relieved to hear that I would at any

rate remain at Farnborough for some time on mobilisation. After lunch Janie went to the village hall to get her gas mask, & then we went to Camberley where Janie enrolled in the Womens Auxilliary Territorial Service, (at the Queen's Regt: Drill Hall,) though the two women said they could as yet give no information, but took her name & particulars & said they would let her know. She gave 'trained secretary' as her qualification, & when I asked if I got a recruiting fee for bringing Janie along, they said they were afraid they were not authorised to give me one.

We then motored in to Aldershot, where we saw troops digging trenches everywhere, on every available bit of ground, for air raid precautions. There was a particularly intricate system being dug by sappers outside their barracks & adjacent to Command H.Q. We went into the Regt's lines & saw the trenches being dug beside the Mess, & saw & had a chat with Levi, and then with Taylor, my old O.R. [Orderly Room] Cpl who is now O.R.S. [Sergeant?] Calm prevailed everywhere.

We went to the Ritz cinema & saw a thing called - I forget what it now (!) but it was moderately good, with Constance Bennett in the lead. When we came out Janie was feeling faint & had a splitting headache, so I rushed her home, knocking up a chemist on the way to buy her some aspirin. She went straight to bed, with a cup of tea & 3 aspirins dissolved in water.

As I came out of the cinema I bought an evening paper, as there were startling headlines of a meeting between Hitler, Chamberlain, Mussolini & Deladier tomorrow. When Janie was packed off to bed I read the paper, & also heard the 9.40p.m news on the wireless. Then I learned of Chamberlain's speech to the Commons, & of the dramatic invitation from Hitler for a meeting tomorrow at Munich between him and the a-m statesmen. The sense of relief that this brings is indescribable, & was evidenced in Ellen, who came round to borrow some butter(!)& by Eunice, whom I rang up to say we couldn't go round tonight as we had arranged, but would go tomorrow.

As there was to be a practice `black-out' from 9.30 - 10.30 in the whole Command, I had to darken the gaps above our curtains in the drawing room. I had a look out at 10p.m. & found the whole countryside in inky darkness, & cars on the road with only side lights on, and busses with no saloon lights either. I heard aeroplanes overhead inspecting the efficiency of the `black-out'.

Until this evening's startling news, today was a day of gloom and grim determination; now there is a bright ray (or even beam) of hope; I think it would be dangerous to place too high hopes upon tomorrow's meeting, but at any rate hope now exists where apparently there was none. I heard the Archbishop of Canterbury broadcast a call for prayer for tonight and



tomorrow.

## **29th Sept**

Chamberlain left early this morning for Munich and practically the whole Cabinet turned out to see him off. We heard on the news of his arrival, & his meetings with the others at Munich, but no statement was issued as to the results. It seems highly unlikely now that this matter will not be settled by arbitration, and as I see it, Hitler's main desire - to go EAST & get the raw materials of the Balkan states, has been effectively stopped. It is well worth giving in to his demands for Sudeten territory if by so doing an European war can be averted, and his own face saved. But a careful watch must be kept that he goes no further. There is in my mind no doubt that he will still keep this Eastern idea in mind. If he ever looks like putting it into effect, I think we must immediately stop him, and any war, however big, is not too great a price to pay for it, since if he succeeds, he will be self-supporting, & thus unbeatable. The German is far too dangerous and ambitious a creature ever to be allowed to attain such a position.

Immense relief in every one today - especially the womenfolk. We went round to Eunice's after supper & had a drink. She was at last cheerful & was convinced that the danger of war was passed. We went up to see Carol & say goodnight to her. Bill was away still, at an 'unknown destination' and even his

letters to Eunice had to be sent to the War Office and thence redirected. From all this I fancy I know where he is!

### **30th Sept**

I got orders this morning to have my peace time gas-mask container changed for a war one. This I had done, feeling all the time that the operation was farcical in view of the tremendously improved situation.

Janie played tennis at Guildford with Barbara in the afternoon, while I saw my course into the air for a short flight each. Walker of the Cheshires was very nervous as he had not flown before, but I am thankful to say that the pilot treated him very gently (I saw to it that he flew in a Magister and not an Audax & thus got a seat facing forward) and he thoroughly enjoyed himself.

It appears that at 1.45 a.m. this morning the conferences at Munich ended in agreement, & the plan there formulated was transmitted to Prague for acceptance. By 1 p.m. today Czechoslovakia had accepted the terms, & Chamberlain returned to London by air arriving just before 6 p.m.

The plan appears to be that areas with a 50% or larger majority are ceded to Germany forthwith; Czech guards soldiers police etc are to evacuate, & the Huns

march in; other specified areas are to have a plebiscite, policed by an international force of which the British army will form a part.

The Czechoslovakia government submitted to the terms with the utmost reluctance, & not without reason. It all seems a diplomatic triumph for Hitler - but as I have said above, I don't think it is quite such a victory as it at first appears, and I am sure he will think many times before he risks a real advance eastwards.

We broached a bottle of Bristol Milk that Eunice gave us yesterday, to celebrate the peace. It was superb.

### **1st Oct**

I looked in at the office in the morning, and had a yarn with Noakes & Bingle, & all three of us agreed that though we were very grateful for the peace that the negotiations have brought us, we can't pretend there is any honour attached to it, & that the victory that Hitler has gained augurs badly for the future of Europe. I can't think how people can be so credulous as to take his word that he has no further territorial ambitions in Europe, when he guaranteed the Czech frontiers after the Anschluss. If he can break his word once, surely to God he'll do it again.

Got my hair cut at Trufitts, & then went on to the 96th Mess. Janie went in to Aldershot to have her hair

done in the evening, & we motored up to London & went to 'Banana Ridge' with Robertson Hare & Alfred Drayton. It was exceedingly funny. We had supper afterwards at the Criterion, & saw Leslie Banks in a party. We stayed the night at 87B.

Barbara had been packed off to Ferryside when the scare of war was at it's height, & she was just back. Teddy was back too, & he told me his big picture for which he got a £40 commission, was a great success & he thought it was the best thing he had done. Unfortunately he had had to pack it up & send it straight off to America, so none of us have been able to see it.

## **2nd Oct**

Motored down to Frimley for lunch, to find John Taylor had asked us to tea at Moore Park Farnham. We went, & found an enormous house with the most lovely & luxurious interior. Every stick of furniture was period, & the scheme of decoration was such as to take one's breath away. She was very nice, & he just the same sound good chap that I had thought him when I met him the first time; but so much wealth, & so many wealthy friends, made one feel, in spite of his sincerity and friendliness, rather out of place. A Mr & Mrs Joel were there for tea, & a Col: & Mrs Lawrence (late of the Coldstreams) came in for cocktails later.

He has promised me some duck shooting later on, & wants me to play him at squash. I have little doubt he has his own court.

We went on to supper with Jack & Barbara, & played Mah Jongg afterwards. Once again I swept the board by two colossal Mah Jonggs in the first two games. It was all good luck - no judgement about it - but I didn't point this out.

### **3rd Oct (Monday)**

It was rather wearisome to find my dull & mediocre class waiting for me in the lecture-room. They are a typical cross-section of the Army today - worthy enough but trivial in their ideas & conversation & not a spark of intelligence between them.

Had supper (bangers) with Eb: & Dee Holmes. Hug[o] Dent, Wallis, & Betty were there too. A pleasant evening, with too much whisky.

### **4th Oct**

Called for Maj: Anderson (RAMC - who injected me for diptheria in Secunderabad in 1930) & took him to the Art School, where we both struggled with Molière's bust. He was far better than I was, but McCannel gave us both some very good hints & tips.

### **5th Oct**

Janie & I went to a rather inferior cinema in the evening.

### **6th Oct**

To the Art School again with Maj. Anderson, where I did another head of Molière, this time with much more success. Anderson painted his previous study in oils, & did it well. I stuck to charcoal. Was up until late in the evening doing regimental history, for the three lectures I am giving to the young officers' course in the Regt. next week.

### **7th Oct**

Essame asked me to see him in the afternoon re: a successor for me in my present job which I am due to vacate in Feb: next. I put up Walter's name as first choice, Anderson of the Gordons 2nd, Willoughby of the Middlesex 3rd and Gray of the Queen's 4th. We agreed that whoever is chosen should report on the 1st Jan.

In the evening did studies of a draped model at the Art School.

### **8th Oct**

Looked in at the Regtl: mess, where Lev: asked my advice on Christmas cards this year, & we more-or-

less agreed to have two figures of 1851 period, of which we have a painting in the ante-room.

Then we went shopping in Camberley, which was crowded with cars as usual.

At two pm Anderson & I went to our first life class. He found some difficulty in `getting' the poses & the proportions, but I got on slightly better, largely from my experience last term in doing draped models. Used conté crayon (sanguine), and charcoal for one pose. McCannel seemed pleasantly surprised with my work, while not indulging in any extravagancies, and advised me to stick to undraped figures and antiques, dropping the Friday evening draped classes for the present.

I had to take Anderson to the Military Hospital on the way home, as there was an emergency call for him at the Art School on behalf of a youth in the Tank Corps who had dislocated his jaw.

Went up to see McPhail before supper & drank sherry & discussed his holiday and the present crisis. What a pleasant thing it is to discuss this & that with one who has an eminently sane outlook + intelligence, & is well-read - far better than I.

## **9th Oct**

Had supper with the Axworthys, & heard all about

their trip to the Loire. Lucy decided to join Janie in going to the Womens Emergency Service classes which start tomorrow at the Prince Consort's Library. George Frampton and Tony Fitch and Hugo Dent came in after supper.

### **10th Oct (Monday)**

Went in to barracks & gave the first of the three talks on Regimental History which Eb: has asked me to give to the Young Officers' Course (consisting of Nigel Evans, Holmyard, Newton and Gardner). They seem nice lads. Janie came back very exhausted from her W.E.S. lecture, having been drilled (rather unnecessarily in my opinion) by a Coldstream Guards Sergeant. They were previously lectured by ??? G2 at Command on the organisation of the Army.

### **11th Oct**

Continued the Regtl: history lectures in the morning, & went to the Art School from 6-7pm & did a drawing of a plaster cast showing the muscle formations.

Then we went to supper with Bill & Eunice. It was good to see him again. He admitted having gone to France, but would only say he had been to Paris. (I bet he went to St Nazaire & other ports as well!) He said the French welcomed the British staff with great cordiality - giving the impression "Thank God you've



come - now we shall be alright". He was very impressed with the French 'Q' staff and their arrangements; but he said he got the feeling when he first entered their offices that whatever happened they weren't going to fight. They were prepared to make all arrangements etc: but somehow he felt they had already made up their minds not to go in.

He made many friends - & has an invitation to go over to shoot with one of his opposite numbers - but they worked very hard till late at night & had no time for parties etc. though the French were all set to stand them. The French were apparently very impressed with the business-like attitude & methods of our mission. Although interpreters were available, Bill found them so little help when he wanted them for some technical terms etc: that he found it more satisfactory to carry on in his own French, calling in 'sign-talk' to help when necessary.

The British mission gave a dinner to those of the French staff who had been most intimately connected with them in their work, on their last night in France. Apparently it went with a bang, & Bill had preserved his copy of the menu duly signed by each person attending.

Bill was pessimistic about the outlook. He said he felt in his bones that we should have fought, as he thinks that [while?] we may be a little more prepared by the next time, the other side, (principally Germany of

course) will be infinitely more prepared even than they are at present. When I said that though that might be so, yet it didn't alter the fact that at present we weren't ready, he replied that even so he couldn't believe that we would have lost the war in the long run, though now he thought next time we might.

However, I still don't agree with him. I think time is still on our side; I think Germany's strength is fairly near its peak, while ours is a long way off. We have a lot to catch up; he will increase his strength only a little. The mutual positions will consequently be much nearer each other by 1940 than they are now. In the interval Germany can hardly completely organise and draw unlimited economic benefit from the Sudetenland which she has only just acquired.

I asked Bill to dine with me in Mess on the 20th.

Wrote to Dr. Mounsey re: Janie going to the Marguerite Louise [Louise Margaret] hospital about her tonsils, as she has been getting very tired lately, & hasn't much reserve of strength.

### **12th Oct**

Gave my Regtl: History lecture, & then rushed off to London, where we lunched at Stewarts on Hors d'oeuvres. Janie went off to shop & I went to see Picasso's 'Guernica' at the New Burlington Galleries. Then I went on to the Goupit Gallery & saw the

exhibition of young english artists, & had a chat with Mrs Marchand who keeps the gallery. She introduced me to Rex Nan Kivell who was in her gallery and who owns the Redfern Gallery in Cork St., as I had asked her if she had any Modigliani drawings. Nan Kivell said he had one in his exhibition then showing, so I went round, but found it was a fairly important one in sanguine and black oil costing £40. I asked NK to look out for some slighter drawings for me, & he took my address & said he would let me know. Found Peter Cochrane in the Gallery & learned that he worked there permanently. We had an hour's chat on artists, & I fixed to let me [him?] know next time I am in London & to go round to his flat in Dolphin Square & see his collection.

We motored down to Frimley for supper.

### **13 Oct**

Gave the Y.O's course their exam: in Regtl. History in the morning.

Jack Allison dined with me in Mess, while Barbara & Janie had supper together at home. Jack got tipsy by the end of dinner which surprised me a lot, & rather spoilt the evening.

### **14th Oct**

Janie went to the second of her lectures with Lucie,

while I took the car in to Aldershot to be greased & to have the hand-break mended.

We were to have had tea & supper with Jack & Barbara, but the latter rang up to say that Jack felt very ill & had retired to bed. How very odd.

Oswin came round after lunch & stayed to tea. He had been down for an interview in connexion with his forthcoming exam: for a regular commission from the S.R.(Supplementary Reserve)

### **15th Oct**

Went for a long walk, I trying to set a scheme for the RMC passing out tactics exam which Kenneth has asked me to set for the third and last time, & Janie collecting stones for her rock garden.

Art school in afternoon (Life Class) & then we went over to see the family for supper. Dad didn't like the look of the international situation much, & told me that if there was a bust-up between Germany & ourselves, the Japs would promptly join in & take Hong Kong from us; this they could do with the greatest of ease, as we have only a few cruisers in the China seas while they have their entire Navy. Also they are now landing troops in China at Bias bay & other places, from which they could operate on land against H.K.

I'm not quite so sure they could filch it so easily, as I believe we have a fair proportion of A.A. guns on the Island, & though coast defence guns are few, a landing in the face of opposition is a damn difficult operation of war. He said that the Navy at one time recently decided to evacuate without a fight, but now they have reversed that decision & decided to fight, though without hope of keeping the island. I fancy he has got a lot of this from Bill Bowater, who was staying with them recently.

### **16th Oct**

Took McPhail to the RMC chapel for the service. We didn't watch the parade as it was a bit chilly & last time we did, Janie was nearly frozen. The sermon was childish, & it always makes me wild to hear opportunities such as the padre at Sandhurst has, simply hurled away. Why oh why can't the C-G [Chaplain-General] see to it that of all places, the RMC gets the pick of the Chaplains' Dept? I thought what a good showing Launcelot would make in such a post. Went on to sherry with the Mathews, who had a cousin & her husband, in the Warwicks, staying with them.

Had tea with the Hawkesleys, & met Pat who was staying there. The Admiral, with whom I discussed the HK situation, agreed that we couldn't possibly hold the island, though he pointed out that America could help us with her Fleet. I had not thought of



We returned to England on 15th March. On 16th March Hitler marched into Czechoslovakia and annexed it, bringing it under the German Reich. Suddenly out of a clear blue sky comes this bolt which plunged the whole of Europe back into an atmosphere of crisis similar to that of Sept 1938.

The burning question now is whether Hitler intends to invade Roumania, in order to pinch the raw materials there available. Personally I am convinced this is his ultimate intention. It seems that if he does, we & France, & possibly Russia and some of the smaller south eastern states will probably endeavour to stop him. This pretty certainly must mean war.

It is noticeable that there is much less of an air of gloom about now than in Sept last.

### **30th March**

Serving again as a regimental officer seemed very strange after 4 years of extra-regimental employment; and I was rather nervous when I took over command of `A' Company from Archie Tod that my ignorance on machine-gun matters would make me rather an useless company commander.

As I had been detailed for a TEWT [Tactical Exercise Without Troops] on 28th and 30th as the machine-gun adviser to one of the syndicates, I spoke to the C.O. and he kindly said he'd run through the latest

teaching with me on Sunday morning. He explained things very lucidly and I felt more cheerful about the TEWT.

The ground chosen was about the villages of East & West Ilsley, on the Berkshire downs near Newbury - wonderful machine-gun country. Both days were windy and it was bitterly cold on Shrill Down - our RV. We spent the first day of the exercise deciding upon our dispositions in a defensive position, and today, the second day of the TEWT we heard them criticized by Gartlan, the Brigadier of the 5th Bde, by Maj-Gen Wilson, commander of the 2nd Div: and by General Dill, the C-in-C. Aldershot. I was very impressed by the decisiveness of Gen. Wilson's remarks, and I put him down as one who automatically inspires confidence. I am glad we are in his Division. Gen. Dill was very interesting in his remarks, and I thought him a wise commander, with a pleasing personality. I think we are lucky to be under these soldiers just now.

It gave me a great thrill to see Gen: Dill - the C-in-C designate in the event of a war - sitting on a shooting stick only three yards from me, & I thought of the burden of responsibility that must be on his shoulders at this time. All his remarks were a reference to the German teaching of tactics. I thought this significant.

### **3rd April (Monday)**



Pat Elson was here for the weekend. As I was commanding the Church Parade, she came with Janie & was thrilled to be among the soldiers. She was impatient of the civilians she has to live with, and was deploring the fact that as she is secretary to the Chairman of the Southern railway, she holds a "reserved occupation" & is therefore unable to undertake any work of a National Service character.

### **10th April (Monday)**

The major international events have been the signing of the Anglo-Polish treaty of mutual assistance, and then, on last Friday 7th (Good Friday) the Italian invasion of Albania. It has been a grim week-end. The weather was gloriously warm and sunny. The Regiment was on leave for the Easter break, and few officers remained behind. I went in to barracks each morning, & then on to the mess where George Axworthy, Tommy Woolsey, the C.O. and one or two of the latest joined subalterns usually met about 1pm. All this weekend I have felt that war is imminent, though others either say they don't know what to think, or else that things will blow over. I am desperately afraid they won't.

Tonight we heard on the wireless that the Mediterranean Fleet was concentrating, & Parliament had been summoned to meet on Thursday.

Gordon and Lorna Ham, and George Axworthy came in for drinks this evening. Jack looked in on his way from piping at McPhail's, to the Benson's. We had supper with the latter yesterday, meeting Elizabeth for the first time. They live at Godalming, & Jack Fouracre, on leave from the Depot, was also staying there.

### 12th April

Dad's birthday. I posted him some Balkan Sobrani's from Farnham yesterday, as we passed through that town on route for Thursley where we took McPhail and his friend pipe-major James Sutherland for a run in the car. We visited the charming old church, & saw the recently discovered Saxon windows: also the graves of John Freeman the poet (with a beautiful tomb-stone) and the poor sailor who was murdered near Hindhead.

Today was another gloriously sunny day. Half way through the morning I was told by George Axworthy that I was to bear-lead the cinema operators, camera-men and B.B.C. recording van at the demonstration on the ranges for the King and Queen tomorrow. Their visit has been kept secret until today - presumably because of the I.R.A. activities which have been such a feature in recent months. The decision of the King to visit the soldiers may be another sign of the times.

George Frampton, who is also doing the same job, and I were on the ranges at 2pm for a rehearsal of the demonstration, but we had to wait in the boiling sun till 3.15pm before Gen. Wilson, Brig Garlan, and a large staff collection arrived. The anti-tank rifle, anti-tank gun, the bren and machine-guns all carry out demonstrations of fire power at various types of targets. The Regiment is firing a pl. [platoon] match against the Cheshires - at falling plates. Today the latter were far better than we were.

McPhail & James Sutherland came in for a farewell drink before the latter departs once more for Edinburgh. We have seen a lot of him this last week since he has been staying with the doctor. A most charming Highland gentleman, with a wonderful charm of manner and an inexhaustible fund of amusing anecdotes of his military career (when he was in the Seaforths). He is, I think, 74, and looks about 55. He still blows the Great Highland, and was of course one of the great figures in Piping in his younger days. McPhail was, and still is, his devoted pupil.

Everyone is anxiously awaiting Chamberlain's speech in the Commons tomorrow. Meanwhile the papers print rumours of continued concentrations of Italian troops in SE Italy and on the Libyan-Egyptian frontier. The continued presence of Italian and German troops in Spain is another disturbing factor in the international situation.

## 13th April

The demonstration went off very well, and fortunately the press photographers behaved well. Only Gaumont British's man - a rat-faced creature - gave any trouble, but we managed to fix him all right. We got a wonderful view of the King and Queen, being within 10 yards of them for over an hour. It was rather windy on the ranges, and I'm afraid the Queen can't have enjoyed it much.

We beat the Cheshires in the M-G match, which was a pleasant surprise after yesterday's result, but typical of our men, who have an uncanny knack of "being all right on the night". We asked the B.B.C. recording van's personnel [added later`including Richard Dimpleby'] to have tea in mess with us afterwards, and they told us some most amusing anecdotes of Broadcasting house.

The premier made his speech at about 4pm, and announced a guarantee to Greece and Roumania. That was what most people were expecting, but personally I'm sorry nothing has yet been done about a ministry of supply or about conscription.

There was a guest night tonight to which Bill Eddowes, Edward Musson and Reggie Parminter were invited. I'm sorry old John Heelis couldn't come, to complete the old C.O's party, but he has been

having an operation. Archie Tod's brother Colin, (who is an "old pupil" of mine at the S.O.P.) also came, & I sat next to him at dinner.

### **14th April**

I took a day's leave, & we motored up to London, where Janie did some shopping, and I visited a number of art galleries, including a magnificent exhibition of Monet's at Tooths'. I have never seen so many of them together before. I also collected the drawing by Sickert ("Morax") from the Beaux Arts gallery which I bought last February, and am extremely pleased with it.

Jack & Barbara came to supper and Mah Jong. He also thinks there will be war, and puts the date at about the middle of February. He is very confident of the result.

### **15th April**

We went to a sherry party with the Thorpes, in Camberley, but we arrived rather late and didn't stay long.

Roosevelt's message to Hitler & Mussolini was announced on the 'News' this evening. The best thing about it was, I thought, the concentration of the American Pacific fleet in the Pacific, though the message may be a rather cunning way of mobilizing

public opinion against the Dictators in the event of war, and incidentally of discounting the agitations of the 'Isolationists' in America.

### **16th April**

I went along to the Mess about noon and listened to the band which played in front of the ante-room. In the afternoon we went over to Gerrards Cross and had tea and supper with the family.

In the course of conversation Mummy mentioned that Reggie had said he was a little worried about a certain man, with a German name, whom he had met recently, and who seemed to be trying to discover something about petrol storage and aero-fuel. I went up to see Reggie and got the details, & when I got home I sent off a letter to D.C. with a brief resume of the case. It will be interesting to see if there is anything in it.

I didn't mention in this diary the death of Donald Lennox-Boyd on 12th April. He died suddenly in Stuttgart, and there have been rumours in London, denied subsequently, that the death he met was not a natural one. Perhaps I shall hear the truth one day; meantime I have my own opinions about the tragedy, as I knew Donald well.

### **17th April (Monday)**

It was nice seeing 35 reservists in barracks, up for their 12 days training. I recognised a number of faces.

On the 6pm news it was announced that Hitler would defer his reply to Roosevelt's message until May 2, when he will deliver it before a meeting of the Reichstag, and put forward certain counter-proposals. He evidently intends to try and drive a bargain. Let us hope we don't give way to unreasonable demands -this time we are in a better position than we were last September.

### **19th April**

Dined with Jack & Barbara at Guildford, and met Captain Herbert (Jack's friend Jasper, of whom we have heard so much, & who turns out to be a brother of A.P. Herbert) and a commander whose name I have forgotten. We played whisky poker after dinner. The three of them had been playing in a R.N. golfing tournament.

### **20th April**

Had a picnic with MacPhail in some pinewoods near Pirbright, & then motored on through delightful country by country lanes until we came to Womersley where we called on John MacDonald (of Glenbrittle). He was a great highland farmer, and the foremost authority on the highland pony and cattle. He and his wife gave us a great welcome, as MacPhail is a

favourite of John's, & persuaded us to stay to supper. Their pretty daughter came in in time for supper - she works in Guildford. Old John MacDonald got talking of his farming days in Skye, and telling of his energy in those days, let fall the lovely sentence "No day was too long - no night too dark or too wild". He had charming manners, & was so sweet to Janey. We dropped MacPhail at about 11.30pm & had some whisky and a cup of "Rosie" before going home.

### **21st April**

The papers are full of pictures of the german pocket battleships Deutschland and Graf Spee which passed through the straits of Dover yesterday with other units on the way to Spanish waters. No-one seems to know just what the point of this cruise is. I only hope that the closest watch is kept of the movements of this squadron, as much may depend on a certain knowledge of their whereabouts in the near future.

Had supper with Kenneth and Elizabeth Black, and heard all about their holiday in the South of France. Gordon & Lorna Ham were there for drinks before supper.

### **22nd April**

Had a reply from D.C. thanking me for my letter re: the gentleman with the German name, and asking that he be informed if I hear any more. I imagine that he



has taken some steps to check up on him already - but he says nothing to this effect in his letter. It has occurred to me before that that Dept: is not particularly anxious to get information from outside.

Rich arrived after lunch to spend the week-end. He is still doing Staff Capt: to an A.A. Div. T.A. in Reading. We had a drink in the Mess before supper , and bought red roses to wear tomorrow.

### **23rd April**

St George's day. We three had drinks in the Ladies Room of the Mess, & met Bill & Eunice, Molly Murphy, The Frinks, Levi, George etc. Bill had just returned from another visit to France, but said there was much hard work and little time for leisure in Paris. He said he was extremely busy now at the War Office.

After lunch we went out in the car, & after stopping at sandhurst to let Rich see the finished RMC chapel, we went on to Marlow, Maidenhead and Binfield, where I saw Binfield Priory, where Jack & I joined Coates' so-called cramming establishment sixteen years ago. We had supper at Berg's cafe in Camberley (at Rich's invitation) and after innumerable games at 1d-in-the-slot machines, got home about 10pm.

### **24th April (Monday)**

Rich left after breakfast. I was on the ranges all the morning, & brought Archie Tod back to lunch in the 8 cwt. truck.

McPhail rang up to say his eyes were giving trouble again and he had been forbidden to read or write, so would we go up after supper and keep him company. We found him in fairly good spirits but wearing dark glasses and a bit concerned at the eye specialists diagnosis of a more serious complaint than conjunctivitis - iritis, evidently brought on by the arthritis that he suffered from so badly this winter. We had a long talk of 'this and that', and he gave me a copy of Johnson's Journey to the Hebrides and Boswell's Journal, both bound in the same volume, to read, as I had mentioned Johnson's visit to Flora MacDonald when we had last met.

### **25th April**

The Budget was introduced in the House of Commons by Sir John Simon today, & rather to my surprise there is to be no increase of the Income Tax. Janie has said all along that the income tax would not be increased. The tax on the horsepower of cars is increased from 15/= to 25/=[ie from 75p to £1.25 per horsepower per year - a Metro would be about 8hp, a Sierra 12-15 hp] and increases are announced on Tobacco and sugar. We shall have to get a smaller car next January, if we still enjoy peace at that date(which I very much doubt). We went to bed early

, to make up for some of the sleep we have missed recently.

### **26th April**

Conscription was announced in the House by Neville Chamberlain. It has been talked about for the last month, & now we have it, for the first time in peacetime in our history. I think it's an excellent thing, and it will be interesting to see what effect it will have on international events. France Roumania & Poland are of course delighted. Germany belittles its effect in her newspapers.

I played golf with Levi this afternoon on the Berkshire Golf Clubs course near Ascot. The mess has recently joined this club, and the courses (there are two) are really excellent. I had the satisfaction of beating him 7 up and 6, though I can't take much credit for the result as he was playing very badly. However, I was playing much better than I was last year, I think due to the new clubs which I have just bought.

### **29th April**

Went up to the Old Comrades' dinner at Flemings restaurant in Oxford St. & took C.S.M. Welch in the car with me. I quite enjoyed the evening, & seeing so many familiar faces again. I took Quinn (the R.S.M.), Welch and L/cpl Robinson of my coy; home, the

latter having 3/2d in his pocket & proposing to stay in London for the night.

### **2nd May (Tuesday)**

Hitler made his awaited speech, but made no contribution to the general situation, & merely accused the British of "encircling" Germany. The position remains unchanged.

### **3rd May**

Played Golf with Tommy & Archie Tod, in which they both beat me easily.

### **4th May**

Kenneth & Elizabeth Black came to supper, & we took them to the Flickers, but the film, although much vaunted by the critics, was poor & sentimental.

### **5th May**

Played a Regtl. Golf match, in which the C.O. and Tony Fitch tied for 1st place, & I was hopelessly bad.

Then to a Cpls. dance, which I quite enjoyed, though Janey found it a bit tedious. This is hardly to be wondered at since the officers spend most of their time at the bar with the corporals of their coys, & the wives have a very dull time. The men don't ask the

officers wives to dance nearly so much as they do in a Bn. abroad, which is a pity.

## **6 May**

Sherry with the Willes at Odiham. Found Mrs Willes & Patricia in good form, and the former loaded Janie with vegetables from her garden when we left.

In the evening (9pm - 3am) there was a practice black-out & trial of the Command Passive Air Defence Scheme, for which I had to go in to barracks. We were in gas masks for 1 1/2 hours. Things seemed to work quite well. The umpires distributed thunderflashes & made casualties, which had to be carried off on stretchers to the R.A.P. etc.

## **9 May (Tuesday)**

Had a cocktail party here which went well, & we worked off all the people to whom we owed hospitality. As always happens with us, the people to whom we felt we most owed something (the C.O. + wife) couldn't come.

## **10 May**

Jack & Barbara to supper and Mah Jongg.

## **13 May**

To supper & dance at the Club with George & Lucy where we met their American girl friends Francis (for the 2nd time, having met her when she was over last year) and Alice, the former's cousin, & a complete hoot. Francis is engaged to an Australian engineer whom she met on a boat in the East recently during her round-the-world trip.

### **14 May**

Moved with the Coy to Imber (near Warminster) for the annual Bn. camp to fire Part 3 of the M.G. course. We did a movement exercise on the way down, which I found very instructive, & more difficult than I had imagined.

### **15 - 17 May**

At Imber. It poured with rain the entire time. We did quite a lot of firing on the ranges, but it was not pleasant owing to the wind, the rain and the 'flap' created by old Eb: who as Training Officer takes his duties unnecessarily seriously and 'flies off the handle' so easily. There was always a screaming wind through the tentflaps in the ante & dining rooms, and there were no tent-boards for the officers' tents with the result that our clothes, shoes etc. remained permanently sodden.

### **18 May**

Left Camp in a cloudburst by car for Aldershot, taking Eve Hickie & Archie Tod with me, prior to joining the 2nd. Div battlefield tour tomorrow. Never was I more glad to leave a camp.

Arrived home to a cold & empty house, Janie having gone to stay with Ma during the Imber & France period.

### **19 May**

The 'Tour' assembled at Aldershot station at 8am - over 40 officers - and were dished out with tickets for the journey. On reaching Waterloo two busses took us across to Victoria where, having an hour to spare, Archie & I rushed off to the Restaurant & had breakfast.

We crossed the channel in a splendid ship, where we made great friends with the chief bar steward. The sea was completely calm. after lunch on board we assembled on deck in the sunshine to see the coast of France grow nearer & nearer. The train, in which we travelled 2nd class, took us to Valenciennes (we had to change once). I noticed a portion of the Fortified Line which has been built on the Franco-Belgian Frontier near a wayside station called Nieppe - it consisted of concrete 3-cornered pill-boxes with steel vents (presumably M-G windows) covered over with earth and grass. The posts were some 400 yds apart & presumably so constructed as to be mutually

supporting.

We stayed at the Grand Hotel at Valenciennes, bang opposite the station. After supper we had a lecture by Major K.C. Davidson (B.M. 5th Inf Bde) on the events leading up to Le Cateau, & then I went into the town to buy a film for my camera.

### **20th May**

We set off at 8.45am in two motor busses for the Le Cateau battlefield. We stopped first overlooking Solesmes & had the positions during the retreat described to us, & then again just north of Le Cateau & saw the battlefield as it appeared to the advancing German left column. Then on through Le Cateau to the Suffolk Memorial where we had the right flank of the position explained, including the position of the Suffolks and that of our own battalion. This was exceedingly interesting to me, having heard & read so much about the battle from the point of view of the battalion & those who took part & survived.

We saw the 'International Cemetery' where I photographed some of the graves of our fellows, including those of Broadrift and Trueman. Then Col. Davidson (G.I.2 Div) explained the position of the batteries in support of the right flank, particularly stressing their closeness to the front line. He had put out bits of paper in the fields, & on posts, to mark their positions, but to one, which he couldnt thus



mark, he sent one of the French chauffeurs. This good man went to the wrong spot, & had to be chased in a car & placed in the right position. "Can't you see" said Davidson to him in French, " that we want you to stand here to mark the position of a British battery". "No one but a fool would put a battery here" replied the Frenchman, who was old enough to have done his military service.

We had lunch beside the Roman Road, & then went on to see the centre and left of the British position, hearing accounts by those who were present at the battle, and always being treated to a masterly resume of the situation, with its lessons, by Jumbo Wilson, the Divisional Commander.

In the evening there was a lecture on the Cambrai 1917 Tank attack, & after supper we visited various cafes & imbibed large quantities of cointreau.

## **21st May**

This was a hot sunny day, the fair land of France looking its most attractive self, & with the fields in their present state of cultivation it required a real mental effort to try to picture the battlefields as they were in 1917.

We did the tank attack on Flesquieres fairly thoroughly, & had lunch in the field at the southern point of the chateau wall S.E. of Flesquieres, the very

point over which there has been so much controversy concerning the knocking-out of 16 tanks. This was a controversy into which I was brought some 2 1/2 years ago when Hobo was commanding the tank Bde at Farnborough, & appealed to me for contemporary air photographic evidence to try to solve the mystery. I knew the ground so well from air photographs that the actual seeing of it was an extremely interesting experience for me. I had brought a lot of photos with me, which excited considerable interest, from the General downwards.

After lunch we followed the course of Boyes-Bradford's attack, went up to Fontaine & Bourlon Wood, & did the Guards' attack & the German counter-attack.

A really interesting & instructive day - I learnt a great deal, & not least, from the General himself, the lesson of the absolute importance of leadership among juniors (2nd Lieuts & Lieuts) & their duty to show leadership & gallantry when the direction of the battle passes from Brigadiers & C.O.s to the pl. cmdrs.

### **22nd May (Monday)**

The breaking of the Hindenburg Line by the N.Z. Div. Jumbo was G.I. to this Div. in the attack, & he explained the whole thing from the start (the attack on Welch Ridge) to the crossing of the St Quentin

Canal.

We came across one or two heavily concreted pillboxes, sunk into the fields, which were too heavy for the farmer to remove, & consequently they remain, like mute & sinister memorials, to the war period. The old German trench system could be traced in isolated places by a chalk outcrop in ploughed fields, these outcrops marking the position of the deeper dugouts; but these, and a fairly plentiful supply of shell-caps, bombs, revolvers, & handgrenades, turned up by farmers & laid at the edges of the fields, were practically all that remain now to remind one of the war. Bourlon Wood was thickly growing, but the trees were all young ones - another reminder.

Jumbo told us how his Div. staff & that of the Div. on the left both came up the evening before the attack, & both made a bee line for the only available shelter in the neighbourhood, a small two-roomed shed. One Div. got into one room, & the other into the adjacent one. The two Div. Cmdrs eyed each other like a couple of angry dogs, while the B.Ms R.A. made an immense amount of noise and flap working out their problems.

The tour has been amazingly instructive, more so than I thought possible; I knew, & looked forward keenly, to its historical interest, but I never dreamed that it could be such good `professional' value.

Perhaps the most impressive episode of all was on the first night at Valenciennes, when, in Gen. Wilson's opening remarks, he said:- "Gentlemen, I am very glad to have this opportunity of conducting this Battlefield tour. I want all of you to pay particular attention to the ground - because it differs so much from that over which we normally train at Aldershot: and what you are going to see is typical of all the country on the N.E. of France; and it will probably be the last opportunity any of you will have of seeing it under peace conditions". That remark went home.

I bought some things for Janie in the evening - a bag & some scent - & then went on after dinner to a cafe where we drank & had an occasional dance.

### **23rd May**

Returned to England, where Janie met me at Victoria & we taxied back to 87B.

### **25th May**

Lunched with Jack Allison at the Junior (excellent cigar & port afterwards) & then he took me to the Admiralty & showed me round. He got the Board Room opened for me, & I saw the old wind-gauge over the mantelpiece & all the lovely carving, attributed to Grindling Gibbons.

### **27 May**

Tea with the Hawksleys - saw Pat who was staying there for the weekend.

### **28 May**

Tennis with Miss McGliesh. Francis Higgan was there, & her boyfriend in the Royal Fusiliers - I met him there last year, & like him. He is now doing a garrison staff officer's job at Colchester.

### **30 May (Tuesday)**

The Hickies came to drinks.

### **31 May**

to London for a fitting at Conway Williams for a new suit of S.D. [Service dress] & did some shopping at Harrods & Dunns.

### **1 June**

Tennis with the Mussons. Mrs Whitmore was there too. Laura was as priceless as ever, but looking - I thought - a tiny bit older & rather more nervy than before, Edward's moustache was much whiter, but he was much the same.

We heard tonight on the wireless that the submarine

Thetis, with more than 100 men on board, had failed to surface after diving trials.

## **2nd June**

9th Bn (TA) of whom Ala is adjt, are camping down here at Mytchett, & we are providing instructors, the officers being Tommy Woolsey & myself. We dined them tonight in our mess. A rather typical & not very enjoyable evening.

## **3rd June**

All hope of saving the 99 lives of the Thetis was today abandoned.

## **5th June(Monday)**

Eb. Holmes has told the 9th Bn that if they liked to send any people over to see our mess silver, I would be there to explain it. At the guest night on 2nd June Stern, who commands the 2nd Line of the 9th, asked me to do this one afternoon, & we fixed on this afternoon at 3 pm. To make sure they hadn't forgotten, I tacked him this morning at Mytchett, & he said it was still on, but that he was afraid he couldn't tell me the numbers, as the PMC [President of the Mess Committee] had them. I didn't care how many or how few came. I went back to the Mess, & had a session with Sgt Street, & arranged for various pieces to be put out, & all 3 sets of colours to be

uncased etc. The silvermen had a lot of cleaning to do.

At 10 to 3 this pm Street arrived to say that the PMC 9th Bn had just rung to say no'one was coming! As I was then holding my Coy. sports, I was very relieved because it meant that I could remain down there & continue to help judge etc. but I was livid with the 9th for their rudeness, & all the trouble they had caused to our Mess staff.

The sports went off quite well, & Janie gave away the prizes in the evening.

We went on to Drinks with Gordon and Flora Ham at Bagshot.

## **6 June**

I told Ala in mess this morning about the bog the 9th had made over the silver, & he said he would cause the fur to fly. He came to supper with us in the evening, with Tommy Woolsey. It was rather a tipsey evening, as Ala had done rather well in the mess before coming along. We finished up singing songs on the uke in the Ladies room.

## **7th June**

Levi took us to the Tattoo, & we gave a supper party before it to which Levi brought the rest of his party -

Bill & Eunice & Molly. An excellent evening. Bill offered me a job in his dept. at the W.O. if I didn't get a nomination for the Staff Coll. This was very decent of him, & means I can face the future with complacency, whatever the SC result. I would like to serve with Bill, particularly in plans - a most interesting job.

### **8th June**

Mounted the Guard (8 guards) for the 9th Bn & judged their Guard Mounting Competition. They were very grateful - & there were numerous appologies over the silver shimozzle which was apparently Howarth (the PMC's) fault & not Sterne's. Then we motored over to Wonersh to collect the MacDonalds (Glenbrittle) & brought them to drinks with us, & then on to supper with McPhail, where we found McCrea. We took the Glenbrittles back afetr supper.

### **9th June**

Dined in 9th Bn. Mess. Slunk away early to finish the Bridging Exercise I have to write for the Brigadier 5th Bde - & got it done at 4am! Janie is kindly typing it for me.

Barbara came for the night, to go to an RMC dance.

### **10 June**



Barbara went off about 1030am, & I continued with my scheme, which I left for Janie to type & hand in for me. Then motored to Oxford for the O.D. [presumably Old Dragonians - Dragon School] Dinner, & met Jack there.

Besides the masters - Hum, Joe, Cheese, Tortoise (very decrepid on 2 sticks) Fuzz Carr-White, Brown & Tubby Haigh, met Hamer Stansfell, Webb & Mott(RN) Francis Wyllie, Joan Stenning, Lorimer Rees etc etc. Hamer tells me it was his Regt(4/2 Punjabis) who suffered that awful episode when a sepoy ran amok & killed 5 officers. He said he hadn't a friend left in the Regt. He himself was away with the Chitral Scouts at the time. Slept at Oxford, & was very comfortable in a hotel in Bardwell Road.

### **11 June**

Breakfasted in the school House, & then motored on to Larkhill, to supervise the firing of Part IV of the M.G. course. Slept in a tent, but on the ground - no camp bed, as we were given to understand that we would be bivouacking.

### **12 June**

A Coy arrived at lunch time, & fired in the afternoon & evening. Owing to a downpour their bivouacks were soaked, and so we went back to Aldershot after

firing at 1 am.

## **15 June**

The Staff College nominations are in the paper this morning, & they have given me one. Dad rang up at 7.30 am to tell me, as they get their paper long before we do. I feel this is a big milestone in my service. Stood drinks in the Mess on the strength of it. K.S. sent me a letter, which arrived by 1st post, & Tim & Maisie sent a telegram, as did old Ala.

Ma came to stay for a night. We had a bottle of Bubbly for lunch, which we had preserved from last Christmas!

## **16 June**

Went round to Bill & Eunice after supper, with the whisky bottle under my arm. Had a great reunion & celebration. We discussed, not very hopefully, the chances of my getting to Camberley before war breaks out. We went up to say goodnight to Carol & Charlsie, & Carol (much to Bill's disgust) came over coy & girlish & refused to say the little piece to me that Bill had primed her with. She is a sweetie-pie.

About 120 reservists arrived today. They, unlike the others we have had who only came for a fortnight's training, are to remain with us for anything up to 3 months, until the militia start to arrive.

## **17 June**

Tennis with the Andersons at Fleet. An odd party, in which the tennis was taken very lightheartedly. Several players arrived without racquets, & gaily borrowed from anyone they could when it was their turn to play.

## **18th June**

The anniversary of Waterloo, & incidentally the day last year that I heard that I had not been nominated to Camberley. I was very disappointed then, and it gives me a warm feeling to think that this year they have shoved me in.

The family came over to lunch, & we all went up to McPhail for tea. where Glenbrittle also was. McPhail showed Mummy round his place, & she collected various plants for her garden. They stayed with us for supper, & motored home about 10pm.

## **19th June (Monday)**

To Larkhill to assist on the D.S. [Directing Staff] for the firing of Part IV of C and B Coys.

## **21 June**

Motored back from Larkhill in the early hours of this

morning.

## **22 June**

Father Lindeman came to tea, but did not bring Fr. Zerr (whom we had also hoped to see) as he had an unexpected visitor. L. was in excellent humour, & spent a long time looking at my Heralds Exhibition Catalogue.

## **25 June**

Jack Allison & his sister came over to the club where we played 5 sets of quite good tennis. Then we went over to dinner with him, & later went up to see Barbara and her newly born infant (about a week old) in a nursing home in Guildford. She & the child (John) were both looking splendid.

Jack says he feels we shall have war before the year is out. He showed me the current `number' of King-Halls News letter,[a commentary on international affairs, available by subscription -one of my tutors at school used to get it, in the early '60s] which says the same thing, giving the probable dates as between 1st July and 31st August. He quotes a German informer as stating that those near to Hitler say " Er will los schlagen" - He's going to let fly.

I must say that I feel convinced that it will come this year, & judging by what the Mil. Attache in Berlin

said in his lecture to the Command last March - that the German army will have a "peak period" in August 1939, I fancy that is the most likely time.

I now think that there will be no drawing-back by France or Gt Britain, & that if Germany goes for Danzig (and/or anything else) it will mean certain European war. The only possibility is that Hitler himself, if he finds we are mobilizing, may funk it at the 11th hour. I wonder.

### **26 June (Monday)**

The Bn rifle meeting was held today on Ash ranges. I rather enjoyed it. I was 8th in the Champion Shot competition, and 2nd to Quinn in the officer's shoot.

### **27th June**

We went to Wimbledon, & had a splendid day; we saw Alice Marble win a singles, & the American pair Riggs & Cook defeat Shaafi and Philby. We were `gonged` [stopped by the police for speeding] on the way over, near Kingston, but they were only `courtesy cops' so there will be no unpleasant sequel.

### **28th June**

The Final day of the Bn Sports on the Command Central Ground. A wet day which rather damped the proceedings, & I am sorry to have to record that A

Coy was easily last. Janie came about 4pm, & we met Billy Keitly, who was staying with the Axworthys for a few days. When the sports were over I congratulated Tommy Woolsey (D Coy) on winning the "last sports before the war".

We went round after supper for coffee with Miss Towers - some distant relation of Granny's - & saw Aunt Lillie who was staying with her. She has a trim little house in Yately. Her brother in law, Col. Ricketts, & his son, also came in for a chat.

### **29th June**

Tennis with Mrs Ellison at her delightful (ideal - in my opinion) house at Yately, & then on to dinner with Brigadier & Mrs Gartlan. They were very nice & we played a good gambling game - a combination of Poker & Newmarket after dinner. We won 8 1/2d! [about 3p.)

### **30th June**

Janie had lunch with the Secker-Walker's, to meet his sister with whom she was at school. I fetched her, & he showed me his efficient ARP shelter in the garden.

Then to drinks with Eb; in the evening, a sort of farewell party as he has just heard he is getting command of the 1st Bn & sails for Singapore about

the 14th July.

### **1st July**

No engagements today - quite a relief. I am reading 'The letters of T E Lawrence, which I find exceedingly interesting.

### **2nd July**

Tennis with Jean Mathews at Camberley. Lt Woods, one of the four survivors of the Thetis disaster, was also playing, with his brother. Fortunately Mrs M. warned us that he was coming, & to keep off the subject, so it never cropped up. The enquiry opens tomorrow, in London. They were discussing pipe smoking at one period of the afternoon, and he mentioned that he used to have two very favourite pipes, but he "lost them both about three weeks ago".

Neville Chamberlain broadcast after supper, a quiet & sober talk on national service.

### **3rd July (Monday)**

Read in the 'Times' that Tony Weldon has been killed in a motor accident on 30th June. Poor old Chris Hill will be very upset.

We went to Wimbledon again in the afternoon, & saw Mrs Fabyan beat Mrs Little (Miss Round that was) &

we saw Valerie Scott beaten by Mme Mathieu. Also saw Miss Stammers & Miss Wheeler, & Riggs.

#### **4th July**

Chinny [Green] is back! This is terrific news. He blew in to my office in the morning, & we had another chat in the Mess at lunch time. He is back for 2 1/2 months with the option of taking on for 3 years if he wants to. He tells me his job is Camp Commandant II Corps on mobilisation.

We went in to Aldershot this afternoon to order a new car, a Morris 8 HP & they said they would give us £80 on our present 12. This is £10 more than I thought we should get. We are changing as a measure of economy, one of our frequent financial crises having hit us again. We shall have to pay less per month on the deferred payments, and the running costs will be much lower.

#### **5th July**

The papers all report very fully the evidence in the Thetis enquiry. Capt. Oram gave his on 3rd, & Lieut Woods has been giving his all yesterday & today. I have an added interest in the affair, having met Woods so recently.

There appears to have been some slight advance in the negotiations with Russia, but there are still



various outstanding points on which agreement has yet to be reached - notably regarding Holland, Switzerland and Luxembourg. It would seem that Russia's price is very high, & no doubt Germany is offering counter-proposals to her. Situation in Tientsin still precarious, the blockade having been tightened.

Took Lindeman over to Liphook to a catholic fete held in the garden of a friend of his. He thoroughly enjoyed the outing, spending large sums of money at the various stalls. As there were numerous gambling devices & games of chance, and an ankle competition for the women, it would seem that Mother Church is prepared to relax its discipline when it is a question of acquiring money. I thought the RC parish priests were of a very low order, as low, if not lower, than the poorer examples of our own. This surprised me, no doubt because I am inclined to judge them by the standard of the inmates of the Abbey at Farnborough, which are doubtless of a vastly superior type, mentally & (it seems) physically.

Went to see McPhail after supper & had a couple of drams. He was just back from Ireland having been over to attend a TB conference. He managed to fit in one piping evening - Aeolian pipes I understand.

He said he and a friend were discussing the difficulties of making a decision the Cabinet must face, as they sat in the Kingstown yacht club

overlooking Dublin Bay. The friend thought that no doubt a cabinet meeting was very little different from a meeting of the School Rugger XV - or a College games meeting -or the GMC. No doubt there are many members who haven't the slightest idea what it is all about - & probably one or two have to lean forward, hand cupped to ear, & ask "I say, do tell me, what did we decide just now - I've really forgotten what happened".

### **6th July**

Collected the new car from the Haslemere Motor Co in Aldershot. Its number is DOT 171. I was very sorry to say goodbye to CHO 25. It was still running very well, & has done us proud. We had a splendid holiday in France in her last year. However, we ought to save some money in running costs, & I hope we shall soon get used to the reduced space and power in our new car.

Janie was to have played tennis with a Mrs Benoy, but it was put off owing to rain (rather to J's relief, as she is apparantly a somewhat domineering female; & instead we went to the flickers & saw "Alerte en Mediteranée" - the French film at the Alexandria in Aldershot, which was quite good and exciting.

### **7th July**

Took McPhail over in the car to the Royal

Agricultural Society's centenary show in Windsor Great Park, having a picnic lunch that Janie had put up for us, on the way. Met 'Glenbrittle' & his daughter there, & strolled round looking at numerous exhibits & entries. It is a huge show - GlenB says the biggest of its kind ever held in the world. Saw a fine parade of carriages of past centuries, including some very gorgeous coaches owned by royalty & various noblemen, with lackeys and coachmen & postillions in livery colours & gold. I saw & spoke to ex SSM Waters, who was the riding master at Sandhurst when I was there; he now is in the Royal Stables, & looked very prosperous.

I was frightfully tired when I got back, & had a splitting headache, so went to bed early.

### **8 July.**

Had a tennis party at the club with Gordon & Flora Ham and Katherine & Barbara Jemmett[?]. It looked as it was going to pour with rain, & we were in two minds whether to cancel it, but we managed to get quite a lot of tennis in, though we had to bolt off the court in a shower of rain twice. The Hams came back to supper, & Gordon & I decided to enter for the Club tournament this summer.

### **9th July**

Bill, Eunice and Chinny came to drinks at 12 o'clock,

& Chippy stayed to lunch. Bill asked me if I would consider coming to his Dept. at the W.O. for 3-4 months, to help in the pressure of work, as a temporary measure, pointing out that they hoped to get a permanent appointment sanctioned, but Finance were holding it up. I couldn't hold it for more than 5 months as I go to Camberley in Jan. He said that if war broke out I would probably be kept on in the job doing movement control, & I accepted as I think it would be good experience & interesting work, & the job: appointment ought to be worth having. He said that by offering the job to me he might be saving my life!

I took Chippy to tea at the King-Clarks', & then picked him up (with Janie) at 7pm to have supper with Bill & Eunice. Bill seems to think that if there is war, Germany would attack in great strength across the Limburg Appendix & S.Holland. I said that strategically this was from the German point of view most unsound, & that she would be more likely to go North & pinch the Polish corridor, & East & overrun Roumania, & having done that, consolidate, & develop the oil wells. She could then, some years later, when she was economically strong, attack westwards in a final bid to overthrow the "Western Democracies". I asked Bill what we should do if Germany didn't attack westwards, & he said he thought we would attack over the Maginot line.

### **10 July (Monday)**

I went out on a recce. in the morning to find some ground for coy. training, as my coy. begins on Monday next. Chinny blew in to my office & said he'd like to come too. I'm sure his real reason was that he was pining to drive my 8 cwt. truck. I went out to Farley Hill where I made up in my head the outline of a coy. attack scheme, & Chinny got his way and drove the truck.

Went to drinks with Walter in the R.A.F. mess after tea, & discussed final arrangements for his wedding on 22nd at which I am to be Best Man. He told me of A.J.Elliotts' death "about a week ago". I wish someone had let me know about it.

### **11 July**

I did another recce. in the morning, & then went to tea with the Hams, Gordon & I playing golf, & Janie tennis with Mrs Ham & her sister & Mrs Cornal[?] after tea. I managed to beat Gordon 2 up and 1.

### **12 July**

Went in to barracks early and `did' Breakfasts as I am captain of the week.

We went to tea with Mrs Thorp at Camberley & met Aunt Lillie who is staying with her, & then I played tennis with Gordon against Archie Tod and Oliver.

Gordon & I are thinking of going in for the Club Tournament (Handicaps) & we were rather pleased at taking the first set off our opponents, who rather fancy themselves.

### **13 July**

Went up to Frimley Sanatorium (Brompton Hosp) to met McPhail and two friends of his, & then went on with them to Burrow Hill where we drank whisky and chatted.

## **14 July**

To London in the afternoon to buy a wedding present for Walter. After a hectic search we finally decided on a wrought iron fender or fireguard at John Lewis's & arranged for it to be sent off. We had a bit of supper at a pub on the Great West road on the way home, both of us being so exhausted we felt we couldn't wait till we got home.

## **15 July**

Played tennis with the Drylands at their mother's house (Mrs Cowie) at Fleet. James was as intense as ever and I think he will be an incredibly earnest student at the Staff Coll. next term. Met a girl there whom I haven't seen since Maymyo days - the "Wetsome" of the "Winsome & Wetsome" combination.

## **16 July**

Played tennis with Lucy at the Club, the Campbells (from the Staff Coll.) also being there. He had done a course under me over a year ago. Had drinks with Lucy afterwards, where we found George, & later Wing Comdr West - his wife came in. We adjudged it time to leave when this occurred.

## **17 July (Monday)**

My weeks Coy: training started. I did a withdrawal scheme from Tunnel hill back to Hawley Common. It poured with rain & we got 2 trucks severely bogged: to extricate one we had to call on a carrier of the Grenadier guards which happened to be cruising in the vicinity. It pulled the truck out in fine style.

I have Capt. A. Wazir, of the Iraq army, and one Theophilus, of the Malay States volunteers, attd. to me at present, & they were both out with me.

### **18 July**

Shot our revolver course on Ash Ranges. Afterwards the officers had a match, Wazir defeating us all & walking off with the stake money.

Had a drinks party in the house after tea - Rex King Clarke & his bride, Jack Fouracre, Chinny, young Denham Reid (SR - brother of the one in the Regt.) - Kirkness (SR), John Keitley, & Dobson R. of O.

Went up to see McPhail after supper & had a long talk, in which we discussed the value of writing down ones thoughts & actions at times like these, as they would prove interesting later, if, say, there was a war. He wished he had done so in 1913-14.

### **19 July**

Did a defence scheme on the Harford Bridge Flats.



The Regt was at home in the Mess to the "Old Boys" & large numbers of them turned up. We had a cricket match against the Warwicks in the afternoon, & literally had to play between showers. We beat them 50 - 48!

## **20 July**

Did the Farley Hill attack scheme, & to my astonishment, found the CO waiting for me at the R.V. But it went off all right.

## **21 July**

The scheme set by the CO to test my Coy, started at 9am today. We had to be prepared to be out for 24hrs & to be self supporting in food & everything else. It started with a quick move to the Foxhills & then another equally quick move to the Harford Bridge Flats. There we settled down for a bit, until taking up a night position near Bramshill. I got away at 12.30am (22nd) in order to go to Walter's wedding in Lincolnshire, & the Coy came in after breakfast in the field.

## **22nd July**

After 2 1/2 hrs disturbed sleep because my tummy was out of order, we got up at 4am & left the house at 5.30 for Lincolnshire - 180 miles. We took it in turns to drive 50 miles at a time, & arrived at about

12.30. The wedding went off all right (Walter & I were in full dress), but by the end of the reception I was so tired that I had to cry off the dance in the evening & go to bed.

### **23rd July**

Left Spilsby about noon, having made our farewells. There was a nasty scare just before we left when a frightful female announced her intention of coming as our passenger as far as Welwyn. With Walter's sister Dorothy's help, we managed to park her on someone else, & we did not at all relish the idea of her company for 3/4 of the journey. We got home about 11.30pm after various stops for food on the way, & finally for supper at the family's at Gerrards Cross. They are just off to Worthing to stay with Millie Cargill, & Jack goes to shoot his bow & arrow in Oslo (of all places).

### **24 July (Monday)**

"Co-operated" with the R. Scots in a defensive digging scheme on Barossa Common, getting back to barracks at 5pm. It was then broken to me that we were to cooperate with the R. Norfolks on a scheme tomorrow involving a start at 1pm & remaining out all night. After frantic preparations for food for the scheme, I got home about 6.30pm.

### **25 July**

The R. Norfolk scheme took place over lovely country in the Petersfield area, & went quite well. They are nice people to work with. They had a 'live' enemy & we lost 3 secs [sections - about 8 men in each] captured owing to lack of inf. protection in a withdrawal, but it was as much our fault for neglecting to patrol our own front. This was probably due to our weak manpower, leaving us no spare men to do the patrols.

### **26 July**

The scheme ended about 6.30am, & we had breakfast in the field & then returned to barracks. There was a conference at 2.30 in their camp at Bordon, & I motored my two subalterns over for it (Newton & Williams). They poor children, slept all the way there & all the way back, but fortunately managed to keep awake at the actual conference!

### **27 July**

Had the day in barracks - a great relief after so much training. Saw Kenneth Torrance in the Mess before lunch. Went to London after lunch as Janie wanted to buy some clothes. I 'did' a number of galleries.

### **28 July**

I paid the Coy out, & lunched in barracks as I had

handed my car in in the morning to be serviced before our holiday. The new parson at Frimley Green & his bride came to drinks in the evening.

## **29 July**

My leave begins. I went in to barracks in mufti to hand over the accounts of the company to Archie Tod, as he only got back from leave last night & there was therefore no opportunity of handing over yesterday.

I went in to the Prince Consort's Library in the afternoon to get a couple of books out, & had a long chat with Reynolds the librarian. He was rather worried about the proposal of his elder son, who is in the King's, to be seconded to the R.A.F. for four years. He said his wife was determined to stop the lad, & he asked my advice, as he said he didn't want to spoil his chances. I advised against the idea, rather, I think, to Reynolds' relief. A younger son is just out of Sandhurst, & is att'd. to the Norfolks, pending joining his brother's regiment. I remember seeing him out on training with the Norfolks the other day, though I didn't know he was Reynolds' son; but I remember noticing a cap-badge that wasn't a Norfolk one, & wondering why he was attached.

Quinn the QM came to tell me this morning when I was in the office that my recent letter to the effect that unless some steps were taken to safeguard & protect

condenser-cans on trucks, our guns would be unserviceable in war, has borne fruit. A special fitting has been sanctioned for trucks so as to secure the tins & prevent them being jolted and dented when the truck traverses rough ground. Besides being good news, this is heartening, as it shows some notice is taken of these suggestions.

### **30 July**

We set off for Bedford to stay with the James', but going through London to drop Buzbie [possibly the most gorgeous black cocker spaniel who has ever existed - Mummy was always going to have another one when we came back to England after Fontainebleau] at 87B. There we heard the good news of Peter's & Marguerite's engagement. They are to be married on Sept 29. I hope I shall be available, & not manoeuvring in the wilds of Yorkshire. London was surrounded by a balloon barrage, which is in connexion with a 3-day exercise they are having. We had lunch at 87B (Margaret Harley was staying with Ma) & then went on to Bedford, arriving at 4.15pm.

The Colonel was in fine fettle. Mrs James the same as ever, & Katherine was staying there too.

The old boy gave me a copy of a short Regtl History which used to be issued to every man, & was published about 1899. We had many a crack about

regtl history matters, & I got him to show me his medals again. He has only one drawer of 63rd, & one of 96th medals, the rest all being of any and every regiment. He has some pretty good ones - such as the Trafalgar medal.

### **31 July (Monday)**

Katherine took us for a drive before lunch, which included the RAF station at Cardington, where we saw 30 balloons in the air over the aerodrome.

After lunch we went to Whipsnade Zoo which was very interesting. The animals seemed in excellent condition, & we saw & heard the lions feeding.

The old boy gave me a small coloured picture of the 63rd M.I.(one mounted officer) done at the time of the 1910 pageant - & also an account of the presentation of Colours by Lord Roberts in India in 1886. He read me extracts from his typed diary of 1914 - particularly that portion relating to Le Cateau. This book (in brown paper covers, of which he says he sent a copy to the Depot) ought on no account to be lost sight of. It is a contemporary document of more than ordinary interest to the Regt. Mrs J. told Janie that he is 76 years of age. His leg (knee) is very gammy just now, & gives him some severe twinges of pain.

### **1 Aug**

We (Janie & I) walked in the town, the Colonel accompanying us part of the way, "paying the books" en route. We had coffee in the Cadena cafe & looked at the shops. The town very much reminds me of Oxford.

After lunch we went to Fotheringay castle, taking a friend of the James' with us, and her daughter. We explored the foundations of the castle, & had them explained to us by Mrs James. It was here that Mary Queen of Scots was imprisoned & finally executed. We also saw the old church, which has a beautiful wooden pulpit, on which can still be seen the original paint - nice bright reds and greens. We picnicked in the field by the river, beside the old bridge, which Elizabeth ordered to be built as she objected to the muddy ford. We motored through Oundle both coming & going, & I was struck with the fine school buildings. Mrs James told us that the fees are distinctly expensive - or if not the fees themselves, the extras.

After supper we sat in the drawing room, & drew the old boy on to speak of 1914. He mentioned what a fine fellow Nisbett was - "so clean and straight"-and said what a shock it was to him when he was killed at Le Cateau (he was of course the adjutant). He also mentioned that Wymer was wounded taking a photograph in the middle of the battle, & was then taken prisoner.

## **2nd Aug**

Left Bedford after breakfast & motored to London where we lunched with Ma, & then went on to Frimley for the night.

## **3rd Aug**

Left Frimley at 10.30 for Wales, & went through Farringdon - Cirencester - Gloucester - Ross - Brecon - Abergavenny - Carmarthen to Ferryside, having a picnic lunch, & stopping for tea in Brecon. A very pretty journey which we both much enjoyed. We arrived at Ferryside at 7pm to find Aunt Janie in fine form. I was introduced to Charlie and Tilly (the signalman & his wife) who are old friends of the family. We slept in the family canopied bed, in which generations of Williamses have been born!

## **4th Aug**

Significant anniversary! [Declaration of war, 1914-yes, one "n".] However we are not at war yet. Internationally things look a little brighter perhaps. Although the Russian treaty has not yet materialised, joint Anglo-French-Russian staff Talks have been inaugurated. The Jap-British negotiations are still pursuing their halting course, while Tientsin is still blockaded. The American action of recently abrogating their trade treaty with Japan has I fancy



strengthened our hand a bit, & in today's paper I see talk of our doing the same thing. Meanwhile we are moving "as a temporary measure" some reinforcements from India to Malaya, which is perhaps significant. The King is to review the reserve Fleet, which since Aug 1st has been fully manned, on Aug 7th. Large airforce and balloon barrage and AA exercises are to take place next week lasting 3 days.

The feeling generally seems to be now that war will not come this year, but at the same time there is a reassuring feeling that if it does, we are pretty strong, & could make it pretty hot for the aggressors. Poland is still the crucial point, & the Nazis continue to run arms into Dantzig, & to parade their strength. Violent anti British campaigns continue in the German Press, also anti-Polish diatribes.

This morning we did a little shopping for Aunt Janie, & met more of the village people, & then walked out along the seafront past Cocle Rock to St Ishmael's, & back along the coast road. We looked in the church, which is very ancient, & well looked after. Buzbie was tied up to the churchyard gate while we went in, and set up the most frightful yowling and screaming, ending up by nearly throttling himself with his lead.

Ma & Barbara arrived in their car at 3.30pm & at 4 we went out to tea with Mrs Sidney Price & her daughter at Glanmorlais, Aunt Janie coming with us. It is an attractive house, with some very nice bits of

furniture in it. We motored home via Kidwelly, where we did some shopping, & I noticed the castle (which T E Lawrence noted & spoke of highly) and Aunt J pointed out the house where Greenwood, the accused in the famous murder trial some years ago (weedkiller) lived.

After supper Janie & Barbara & I went for a walk along the sea front to Cockle Rock, & Buzbee retrieved sticks from the sea. We then took Barbara to Broadlay in the car, as she is sleeping there with Esther (an old cook of the family).

### **5th Aug**

Motored to Carmarthen with Janie, Ma & Barbara & bought various things in the market for Aunt Janie. Then went on to "Williams the Curio" where we saw some very nice furniture, but prices were rather high.

Went to the Tennis Club in the afternoon & met numerous people -the Nevilles, the Estridges, Mrs Bob Lewis, the Barkers and Major Roderick, who was wearing a Coldstream blazer, & whose son, according to Barbara, has just gone into the Guards. Then Janie & Barbara & I motored over to Kidwelly in the hope of seeing over the castle, but it was closed at 7 so we had to content ourselves with a walk round the outside of the walls. We went into a pub for a drink, but found it so filthy, & the beer so bad, that we soon came out. Kidwelly is a miserable little

town. After supper we went to see Charlie Jones in his signal box.

## **6th Aug**

A nice sunny morning, so we went up to Cackle rock & bathed, & found Estridge & Barker & their daughters also bathing. The water was exceedingly cold, but the beach was nice & warm & I took some photos with the 'declencheur automatique' that we had bought in Cannes on our honeymoon.

We had been asked at 'The Tennis' yesterday by Betty Neville to go & have a drink with them after church, so we came back from the beach about 11.30 and did a rapid change, & went up to the Nevilles, where we found the Colonel & Mrs, Betty & Eva, the Estridges and the Rodericks. We drank sherry & had a very pleasant hour's gossip.

After lunch we took a picnic tea, & all of us including Aunt Janie went up to Conwil, about 7 miles from Carmarthen. It got a bit chilly after tea, so we drove on back to Conwil to look for the famous Mr Charles ("The Reverend") but found that he was away at Pendyne on his holiday. Our picnic was slightly marred owing to our having left our big Thermos of tea at home!

We called on the Professor & Mrs Stephens after supper, & drank whisky with them. He told me a lot

about Kidwelly castle, & also about Horton, the buried village below St Ishmaels, which he is keen on exploring. He has done quite a lot of digging in various barrows in the neighbourhood. They have a very nice house, & some lovely furniture, including a fine 'Act of Parliament' clock.

### **7th Aug (Monday)**

I went to Kidwelly and saw over the castle, while Janie Ma & Barbara took the ferry to Llanstephan. I found the castle exceedingly interesting - a fine example of a concentric castle, the inner ward being of 12th C. and the outer curtain 14th C. There were numerous excellently preserved guardrobes, similar to those I saw at Bodiam castle some years ago. I went on to look at the church, but found the interior very dull. The exterior is rather fine, the spire being very graceful.

I dozed after lunch, while the others did various visits to the local folk. Ma & Barbara left after tea, intending to stay the night near Gloucester, and to motor the rest of the way tomorrow morning as Barbara has to be back at work tomorrow afternoon.

We motored Aunt Janie out to the sand-dunes beyond St Ishmael's, & after a walk on the sands, came back via Llansaint ('The cockle village') and Broadlay.

In last Saturday's "Times" (Aug 5th) there was an

article by their Berlin correspondent on Germany's preparedness for war, which gave the following facts:-

Standing Army;	39 Divs, 5 light divs & 4 tank divs, 3 mounted divs & one cav bde, distributed between 5 Army Group Commands. Total 850,000 men
1906,7,10,11&13 classes, called up in April & still with the colours	400,000 men
Same classes, called up in June	400,000 men
Men of later classes still with colours	50,000 men
Total	1,700,000 men

The article states " Well qualified observers believe that the Reich is now approaching the peak of its defensive preparations, which will be reached towards the end of this month". The figures at the end of the month should reach 2,000,000 or even more.

### 8th August

Having bidden farewell to Aunt Janie, we went to take leave of Tilly Jones, who gave us a great bunch of flowers & some plants for the garden, & then we called on Willy Jones who also sent us off laden with flowers. We finally got away about 10.30am in

glorious sunshine.

We had a picnic lunch which Aunt Janie had prepared for us, and we ate it beside the road; then when we got to Abergavenny we stopped to look into an antique dealer's shop that we had noticed on the way down. He had some lovely things, Bureau bookcases, bureaux, tables corner cupboards etc, - all at very moderate prices. His name is Leo Fine & his address Frogmore St Abergavenny. We must deal with him some time when we have any money to spare.

Our next port of call was White Castle, between Abergavenny & Monmouth, which I had read about in Vol. IV of 'Ancient Monuments' published by the Office of Works. It was a great job to find as it wasn't marked on our 1/4" map, & we only had a very sketchy map in the 'A.M.' to go by; also, the roads were not signposted. However after 1/2 an hour's searching we found it, & were delighted when we did. It stands high up on the edge of a spur, commanding a magnificent view from its towers - 'the best in the county' we were told by the guide.

It is a fine example of a ring castle, dating from the 12th C. but Hubert de Burgh re-fortified it in the 13th C. and added a gatehouse, drum[?] towers and an outer ward. In the words of the above mentioned volume, 'It was then a grimly efficient structure, completely lacking in ornamental detail or grace of design'. It was perhaps this feature that attracted me

most. The jiggling arrow slits were a characteristic feature of the castle, and were of 13th C. workmanship. The moat was very deep, & wet, & swans were sailing upon it. The grass in the wards was beautifully kept, & altogether it was a most delightful site to visit.

By this time we had wasted - or perhaps that is the wrong word - we had spent so much time at Abergavenny and at the castle that it was past 4 o'clock. So we began to realise that we should not be back till fairly late in the evening. This was confirmed when we took a wrong turning in Monmouth (where Janie bought some provisions) which necessitated our going to Gloucester via Ross instead of by the direct road. But we got home at 10.30pm, very tired & hungry, & depressed at having ended such a delightful holiday.

I rang up the Mess to find out what was happening in the Regiment tomorrow, & was relieved to hear that the CO's scheme for the Bn had been postponed for two days; so that I shall not have to go in to barracks before 9am tomorrow.

### **9th Aug**

I learnt when I got to barracks that I had been elected PMC [President of the Mess Committee] for the quarter ending in September. This appeared to delight hugely Tommy Woolsey who has been working for

this for some time, he being the retiring PMC. Although this means a certain amount of extra work I do not really regret it as there are many things which should be done in the Mess, & which have been allowed to slip during the past months.

The family rang up to say they were back from Worthing, where they had been staying with Millie Cargill, but that they had had bad weather.

### **10 Aug**

The CO's scheme started at 8.30am today, Levi commanding the Bn, and I being 2nd in command. My coy was finding [ie providing] the infantry outposts & F.D.L.s, [Forward Defence Lines?] and D coy the enemy, so that actually we only had two coys on the ground (B & C) each of 2 live pls and one pl. consisting only of a HQ.

We started off in a defensive position near Crowthorne, did a withdrawal to the Hartford Bridge Flats line (an old chestnut), & then a further retirement to Odiham Firs. I was pretty busy all day as 2 i/c, going back to reconnoitre new positions, my receipt of orders from the soi-disant Div. Cmdr, represented by Barty, being watched by the new comdr: of the 2nd Div; - Gen Lloyd. Then[?] I was asked how soon I could get my guns in, & said 3/4 hour - but I realised pretty soon that unless the coys really got a move on, this was too short a time. Rex



King Clarke, who came back as B coy's 2nd in command, appreciated this, & got his guns in in time. This was due to his own, & Eve Hickey's foresight, and general keenness. But Gordon Ham, of C coy, was a very different proposition, with the result that C coy was not ready for 1 1/4 hours - 1/2 an hour late. I'm afraid Gordon is rather bone-headed, & he reminds me very much of Piggy Palk.

It had rained a great deal during the day, & we were all pretty soaked by the evening. I organised the Bn HQ so that myself, the Adjt,(George Axworthy), the I.O. & Sig O. took turns, 2 hrs on and 4 hrs off during the night, with the result that I got an excellent sleep in my bivouac tent which I pitched on some straw so as to have a `mattress' under my bedding roll. The enemy attacked at 2.15 am & there were C.D.F.s from the F.D.L.s at that hour & again at 3.15 am. We stood to from 4 to 6 am, had breakfast at 6.15, & the exercise finished at 8 am.

## **11 Aug**

The CO held his conference at 11.30 am, the most interesting point so far as I was concerned being that he said 70 minutes was about the time to allow for guns to get into position providing coys were within 3 miles of the new posn - that is, 70 mins from the receipt of orders, recce; being done by 2nd i/c previously. He also said it was only necessary for guns to fire on C.D.F.s if they went up from the

vicinity which the guns were covering.

Janie played tennis with Mrs Jacobs-Larcomb (girlish four) in the afternoon, so I went off on my own devices, intending to go to a flicker, but as nothing worth seeing was on, I gravitated to a little bookseller in Station Road Aldershot, which I found to be most interesting, & the owner an extremely knowledgeable dealer who was very interesting to talk to. I bought 2 vols. of Macauley's Essays, & earmarked Boswell's Life of Johnson in 5 vols (in calf) for 10/- which I must buy next month.[Which I still have.]

## **12 Aug**

Thoughts of Innerhadden! [a grouse moor?]  
I had the most hectic morning checking & issuing kit to the reservists of my coy (33 of them) who go today, new orders having arrived yesterday concerning the kit they are to take away with them 'in case war breaks out before 14th Oct' (in the words of the official letter on the subject).

After lunch we went over to Chalfont to see the family, & found them both all the better for their holiday, in spite of the bad weather that they had. Jack too was back from Oslo where he has been shooting arrows for the British Archery Team, in which G.B. was 2nd to France.

## **13 Aug**

Went in to the Mess before lunch, where I found Charles Tuehy - in excellent form as usual. Then played tennis with Col & Mrs Jacobs Larcomb, & Col & Mrs Wyatt, the latter being one of my `consultants' when I was at Farnborough - he being engaged in research into camouflage at the RAE. We had excellent tennis at the club, & then went back to drinks, first at the Wyatts' house, & then at the Jacobs-Larcombs!

### **14 Aug**

Met the CO & Levi at 8.30 am at BOR [Battalion Orderly Room] & went out in Barty's car to reconnoitre the country in the Maidenhead-Twyford area for the scheme which the Bn is to do on Thursday. Levi set it, & is the Director, & I am the chief Umpire. We finished about 2.30pm having had lunch at a pub.

In the evening Janie & I went to a film at the Alexandra in Aldershot - `Quai des Brunes' - another of the French Films which they show from time to time. It was exceedingly well acted, but was very sad.

### **15 Aug**

I sent a confidential note to BOR today asking for one Pte Hunt of `C' Coy to be transferred to my Coy as I wanted to appoint him my coy storeman in place of

Hudson, who is lazy unmethodical and I suspect unreliable. I sent a copy of the letter to 'C' Coy so they should know of my intention. I fancy that coy will not hand him over at all willingly as the man is reputed to be a good games player. This is very unfortunate, as its not for his games prowess that I want him.

Played cricket in the afternoon in a coy game which I organised to discover what merit we have, as we are to play B coy in the cricket shield on Monday next. I made 6, & caught one fellow, & had another caught off my bowling.

Then we went to drinks with Lucy & George & stayed to have supper with them at the 'Queen' in Aldershot. Lucy told us they called their house the 'George and Dragon'!

### **16 Aug**

Gordon Ham, commanding C Coy, is doing all he can to prevent me from getting Hunt, & has evidently been to BOR to urge his case. This morning he met me & said he hoped I wouldn't think he was being an obstructionist!

We played tennis with the Mussons at Wivelrod[Witchwood?], & had a very pleasant afternoon. She seemed more cheerful than when we last saw them. It was a very hot day.

## **17 Aug**

The Bn scheme started at 9am, & went on until 11pm. On the whole it was quite successful, and my coy, who were working under Archie Tod, did not do at all badly, though he himself was not very brilliant. It is a delightfully carefree feeling to be an umpire as compared with an OC Coy on these schemes.

## **18 Aug**

We started training our second batch of reservists who arrived on the 16th & will be with us for 2 1/2 months.

I got a letter from the adjutant saying that the CO directed that the matter of the transfer of Pte Hunt be settled between the two Coys concerned. A more fatuous letter was never sent out from orderly room. What is a CO for, if not to mediate & decide on questions between coys?

I was in the PMC's office until 5pm squaring up the accounts, & then inspecting the mess premises, which badly need cleaning.

## **19 Aug**

The CO held his conference on last Thursday's scheme at 11am. No points of major interest emerged. The CO then swore at coy comdrs for a bad

Armourer's report in his Quarterly inspection of rifles, and on the principle 'c'est le bar-flanc qui trinque' I paraded the coy and swore at them, instituting rifle inspections every afternoon at 3pm.

After lunch we inspected our marrows which really have done wonders this year. The carrots, beans & potatoes have also been most successful, & Janie puts down the marked improvement on former years to the very wet spring & summer we have had.

After tea we went to Hawley Lake, which has become the Club swimming place taking the place of Mytchett Lake. It is very pleasant, with huts in which to change, & a wide lawn with deck chairs, & numerous boats on the lake. The water is, however, rather shallow.

I finished reading John Bailey's 'A shorter Boswell' this evening. It is an excellent book, the extracts well selected, & the volume small & well printed. Having recently read the 'Journal of a tour to the Hebrides' & now this shorter 'Life' I am all set to embark upon the full 'Life'.

We went up to McPhail's 'house' after supper, & found him very sunburnt & well after his holiday in South Uist. We didn't have much talk though, because an accordion-playing friend of his was there & the latter performed a good deal on his instrument. I noticed a bright star in the sky this evening, which

Janie thought was Mars. Absit Omen!

### **20 Aug.**

I took church parade at 10.30, & had a rotten sermon - though the text was 'Be ye of good cheer' - one of which much might have been made considering these troubled times.

We went up to London for tea & supper with Ma, chiefly to discuss Peter's wedding plans. Ma has found him a flat at 81 Lexham Gdns, which we had a look at. She is very pleased they will be so near. Tony & his friend Robin Haines were there for tea, but disappeared immediately afterwards.

We went round to see 'D' Holmes at 7pm, in the flat in Pennant Mews which she has taken until September, when she expects to sail to join Eb; in Singapore.

There is news that the Japs are going to blockade Hongkong on the landward side now.

### **21 Aug (Monday)**

My coy. played B Coy (Tommy Woolsey) at cricket in the Cricket League this afternoon. After a most unpropitious start, we managed to score 68, largely due to a good stand by a reservist (Pearce) and Lcpl Alcock at the 8th wicket. Then they went in, & we

skittled them out for 38. I made 4, & caught 2 people. We now have to play B coy in the final, as it is a knock out competition & we drew a bye in the first round. I am fearfully keen to win this league, as the coy. badly needs some successes in games to brace up their keenness and esprit de corps. They have been allowed to get very slack. When we first started coy training I found the NCOs were very idle, so after our first scheme I brought up at coy office a sgt and 2 cpls and several Lcpls and privates for slackness on training, & it worked wonders. The spirit in the coy is, I think, improving.

There is news today of the unexpected return to London from their holidays of Halifax & Chamberlain, so it would appear that things are beginning to boil up a bit. Dantzig is now said to be fully armed with ~~Natzis~~ Nazis, and Germany every day has something to say in her press about the early incorporation of that city in the Reich.

Janie went to the fourth of her ARP lectures at the Frimley School this evening, & returned with an 'Air Raid Warden' sign, in green and silver, that is supposed to be fixed to the gate. She is in Mr Catterall's sector, which is Station Rd and Frimley High St.

I rang up McPhail & asked him if he would come down & drink a dram, & he came bringing a young Presbyterian minister with him, who hailed from and



spoke in a strong Belfast accent.

## **22nd Aug.**

In today's 'Times' was announced the fact that Ribbentrop was to fly to Moscow to sign a non-aggression pact between Germany and Russia which has apparently been negotiated recently but completely unbeknownst to France & ourselves. This has come as a great surprise & shock to the nation, & it is on everyone's lips today. It is astonishing news when one realises that we actually have chiefs of our three services (of whom Davidson, our late GI at 2nd Div, who was on our battlefield tour, is a member of the staff) in Moscow carrying on Staff Talks as to the cooperation Russia is to give to us & France in the event of war. I only hope we haven't told them our plans on mobilisation; though it would be difficult to carry on staff talks without outlining them.

There are also apparently huge troop movements in Germany to the NE and the foreign correspondents of the 'Times' all say that the fate of Europe will probably be settled this week. They say that in Germany it is thought in 'High Circles' that the German army will be able to smash the Polish army quickly before France & England, with their slow diplomatic methods, do anything; and that by the time the latter have come to any decision, all Germany's claims on Poland & Dantzig will have been settled by conquest, & it will be too late for us

to do anything.

The small meeting of ministers that the PM was to have held today has now become a full cabinet meeting; & the French cabinet is also meeting today. Parliament has been called to meet on Thursday. So here we are in the midst of a third crisis in 12 months.

I fixed up on the 'phone this morning a visit for my coy; to the Morris Commercial Works in Birmingham for Friday next. We will go up by road in our trucks, doing a 'movement exercise' on the way, have a hot lunch just outside Birmingham, & return in the evening. I was a little uncertain whether Barty would agree to it, but I tackled him in BOR & he said he thought it was an excellent idea. It ought to be rather a good outing.

I went in again at 3pm for the rifle inspection, & then after tea Janie & I motored out to the Foxhills where we went for a walk up to the monument erected to Queen Victoria, & commemorating her review of the troops there;[I cycled out to it the other day!] & we returned via Long Cross and Lightwater.

### **23 Aug**

I went into the question of choosing the route for our journey to Birmingham on Friday, & decided to make a reconnaissance of it with CSM Welch tomorrow morning. I also decided to pay out on Thursday

(tomorrow), & when I went to ask George Axworthy if this was all right, he replied that it was, but that he couldn't tell me till tomorrow whether I could be away from barracks all day on the recce!

In the afternoon we played the annual Officers v Sergeants cricket match, in which we beat them comfortably by scoring over 110 to their 67. We won the toss, & put them in. Young Geoffrey Williams bowled very well, & the CO did quite good work also. They put me on for three overs towards the end, & a fellow was caught off my first over. I got O'Brien, our new QM who has come from the 1st Bn to relieve Quinn, to take a photo of the teams after the tea interval, as it may be an historic match - "the last before the war".

Jack & Barbara came to supper. It was grand to see them again, & they were both in roaring form, just back from their holiday in the Isle of Wight. Their new son John is apparently doing very well, though Barbara says he is rather noisy at night.

We put the wireless on at 9pm to hear the 'second news', on which it said;

- a. that Neville Henderson, our ambassador in Berlin, had flown to Salzburg to present Herr Hitler with a resume of the Cabinet's decisions last night, and that he had had a very short hearing; & that the German announcement afterwards

was to the effect that the British attitude made not the slightest difference to Germany's claims & intentions.

- b. That all householders in GB have to take immediate steps to arrange for the darkening of their windows etc at a moment's notice.
- c. That Canada, Australia and New Zealand had all declared themselves solidly behind the British Government, but that S Africa would have to decide its course of action in the light of later events etc. In fact, it seems S Africa may rat on us if they think it might suit themselves better. Comment on this is superfluous.

Parliament is to meet tomorrow at 2.45pm, & from then onwards I fancy we shall get some pretty drastic orders.

Once again, but this time almost certainly, we seem on the brink of war.

### **24th Aug**

I got in to barracks about 10 to 9 am. After dealing with two cases of men up for neglecting to obey an order given by an NCO (award - 3 days CB) I had to "get down" to organising our PAD [Passive Air Defence] parties, as at 12 midday there was to be a Bn practice to ensure that the various parties - traffic

control - decontamination - demolition etc reported at the right places and knew their duties. We drew their kit - nothing like at full scale - one cape in token for six etc etc - from the QM's store. Then I saw George Axworthy about cancelling our visit to Birmingham tomorrow (my road reconnaissance with CSM Welch being 'off' for today). He said he thought on the whole we had better put it off.

Then CQMS Harrison came to see me & said the CO had sent for him & asked him if he would like to go to the RA as a bty sgt major i/c of militia searchlights. He was anxious to know if he would ever be promoted in the Bn, as if not he thought it would be wise to go. I went up & saw Barty & put in a strong word for him, & Barty agreed to put his name up 4 or 5 places in the roll for consideration for CSM, & 3rd on the list for WO Class II. Then I went along to Harrison's house, as it was 1pm & he had gone home, & told him. He has to put in his answer by tomorrow morning.

I had arranged with 'B' coy to play our final of the cricket shield this afternoon, & after paying out (we paid out today instead of on Friday (tomorrow) having got permission in view of our Birmingham trip, & although that had to be cancelled I thought we still better pay out today as there would be many things to do tomorrow without that additional concern) we started our match at 3.15pm. A coy won the toss & batted, & made 88 - quite a respectable

score. I only made 3. Archie Tod, who had been recalled from leave yesterday, and Geoffrey Williams were also playing for us, though B coy only had Rex King Clarke playing for them. They went in & we got them out for 68; so it was a famous victory, & my coy has at last won something. The men really were pleased, & I will try & fix a supper for them tomorrow night. Barty came & watched for a bit, which I thought very decent of him.

While on the cricket field the coy ord Cpl came out to me with a letter from BOR to say that all windows were to be prepared for darkening tonight.

I went back to the Mess & had tea & waited for Janie to call for me, as she was playing tennis at the Club in a four she had arranged some time ago - Lucy - Mrs S Walker & Frances Higgan. The former two had rung her up this morning wanting to know if the tennis was still on, & they both seemed rather 'got down' by the international situation. Janie said she was determined to have her tennis.

When she, and Lucy called for me, George Axworthy had come in to the Mess, & on the way down the corridor to the Ladies room he said 'For God's sake try and cheer Lucy up - she's in an awful state'. I found that she was, & the three of us did our best, but she was very brought down. She told us that this morning she had had a wire from her American girlfriends Francis and Alice saying they were

thinking of her, that New York was solidly behind the British, and that she was to keep her chin up. I think this was one of the kindest and sweetest things I had heard for a very long time.

It was after 8.45 when we left the Mess, so we bought some fish & chips in Frimley Green, & had supper, & then did some experiments to screen lights in the house. Janie rang Ma up to tell her that she & Barbara could arrive any time & stay here, & Ma was delighted & said she had written to ask if she might. I have been saying for some months that much the best thing would be for them to come down here & stay with Janie in this house, which is as safe as anywhere almost, & comfortable & fairly economical.

I rang up the family, & spoke to Jack, who seemed in good form & said the family were well. They had heard from Buster, who was in hope of getting his seniority back as a result of a very good chit which his captain had put in, on him. He is still in the Hussar, based on Harwich. Jack said he was coming to spend the weekend with the King Clarkes in Aldershot, so we shall I hope see him.

Janie rang Eunice up to ask how they were, but could get no reply.

The news this evening was rather gloomy but said nothing very new. Chamberlain spoke in parliament,

& Halifax broadcast a talk at 9.30 pm. There seems no doubt that the Russians doublecrossed us good & proper, & it seems to me rather a show-up for our secret service.

## **25th Aug**

Went in to barracks at 7.45am to put my coy through the gas chamber in order to test their gas-masks. I went in too, & found mine so efficacious that I wondered if the concentration of gas was sufficient. But I found that it was when I let some in to my mask on purpose, for I wept, & my eyes smarted for two hours, & even now(1045pm) my eyes have'nt quite recovered. The coy, which chiefly consists of recruits & reservists, continued with their MG instruction, & we had to wear gas masks from 10-11am to get the men used to working in them. I went up to the Mess office & did some work there. I also took CQMS Harrison up to BOR for an interview with Barty, & he finally decided to turn down the Bty sgt major appointment. I hear Kirk has been detailed to go instead. Barty told me that Harrison would get the next W.O.III appointment that fell vacant, & that he expected one almost at once. So I have managed to do Harrison a bit of good in the last 24 hours, & I hope he won't let me down.

I took Janie to the Club for tennis at 2.15pm & then went back to the Mess & got on with making lists of furniture & silver to be sent off on mobilisation: also



went into the question of Coy messing boxes & utensils, & found we had neither the former nor latter. So went in to Aldershot to see a carpenter about making some, the regtl pioneers being so busy putting up bomb proof shelters round vital buildings in barracks that they haven't time to make the boxes. I took Chinny to Aldershot with me, & on the way back he suggested using the recruits wooden kit boxes, suitably partitioned. I think this is the best & most economical idea, & will look into it further tomorrow morning.

We collected Janie from the Club at 6.30pm & went back to the Ladies room where we found George & Lucy, the latter completely recovered from her fit of the 'crisis blues', which is a good sign. We had several drinks there, & then came home.

I noticed early this morning that sentries with fixed bayonets had been posted on the Frimley water supply tanks, that a policeman was permanently on duty on the railway bridge in Frimley green, & this evening I found sentries posted round the Farnborough aerodrome.

Mobilisation schemes were issued today to us all.

The Coy cricket team had their supper in the NAAFI at 7pm, & though I had made all arrangements for it only this morning, I was so busy this afternoon and evening that I completely forgot to go to it.

I am still in uniform now (11pm) & have got to go and change and put on blue patrol to turn out the guard (if there is one) and inspect the stable picquet as I am Captain of the Week.

I heard Deladier broadcast from Paris on the News tonight. The only interesting news was that Neville Henderson had had an interview with Hitler today & was flying to London to confer with the PM tomorrow.

## 26th Aug

The anniversary of the battle of Le Cateau! Janie came in with me to office at 9am & then went off to have her hair done. There was a coy comds conference at 10am at BOR to consider means of 'hardening' the men next week, and a programme of marching, PT and musketry was decided upon, to start on Tuesday next. Then I went in to Aldershot with the Mess Sgt & bought large quantities of 'bakerlite' ware & spoons & forks for the Officers mess camp kit. I had earlier this morning procured seven kit boxes from the recruit Coy, in which to carry the camp kit, one box being for each coy, & three for Bn HQ. Each box is to cater for 4 officers.

Henderson arrived by air from Berlin & the cabinet met this afternoon, he being present. No authoritative news has leaked out as to the nature of the message which he brings from Hitler, but it is thought to contain proposals for a settlement of the Polish question without resort to war.

Old Rich turned up just as we were finishing lunch. He could only stay ten minutes, as he had been out arranging billets for his AA personnel in the Alton-Aldershot area, & was returning to his HQ at Reading. It was grand seeing him again, & finding him looking so well, and in such excellent form. He said chaos prevailed at his HQ and that it was most reassuring to find Command HQ in Aldershot so

serene & efficient. He felt that we had Hitler on toast, that this Russian agreement must have been a 'last ditch' which they wouldn't have taken if they could possibly have avoided it, & he felt sure that if we went through with our normal plans either Hitler would cave in, or if they resorted to war, they would crack up owing to the 'Home Front'.

His optimism did me good, for though I am not in the least depressed, I'm not quite so sanguine as to the results if we do go to war. I don't believe in underestimating your oponent - I think it is better to give him credit for greater rather than weaker strength; and I find it hard to come to any just appreciation of the capacity of the Polish army to withstand a German onslaught.

I went and lay down on my bed after Rich had gone, as I was rather tired, & was asleep when Jack arrived, on his way from London to stay with the King Clarkes in Farnborough.

Janie & I went for a short walk before supper, as I have to be on the telephone in case I'm wanted, & so couldn't afford to be away for more than half an hour. McPhail rang up to ask us up there for a drink, but owing to the telephone difficulty I had to refuse.

I went in to Barracks about 8.30 to see how things were going.

**27th Aug.**

A secret letter came in showing our lists of personnel we have to send away on mobilization, & I find that in addition to a number of NCOs & men, I loose my CSM and CQMS. I suppose this is really necessary, but it seems a bit unwise - it would appear better to put reservist NCOs & WOs into those jobs & at least arrive in the theatre of war with the important coy WOs & NCOs that one has trained & knows.

The band played in front of the mess & various officers brought their wives & girl friends along. Janie didn't come as we are now servantless - 'our' Lily having left yesterday to have a Baby, & Janie had to cook the lunch.

The officers played 'the rest' at cricket at 2.30pm, & we were soundly defeated by 190 - 50 runs. I took 2 wickets, & made 2 - having been run out by young Clutterbuck. The poor lad was most apologetic afterwards.

Chinny got orders to take up his mob: appointment this evening, & he is off to Bulford tomorrow morning, as Camp Commandant 2nd Corps.

The men are digging shelters for the married families, & painting out the distinguishing marks on our vehicles.

We had a drink in the Ladies room after the cricket&

met Col: & Mrs Rance. He is an instructor at the Staff College, and told me that he didn't think my entry would go to the college if war breaks out, as they are to run short Mob: TA courses. So I presume I will go with the Regiment.

### **28th Aug. (Monday)**

I had to take a corporal up before the CO for overstaying his leave by 24 hours when recalled by telegram. But the reason was chiefly because he had changed his address whilst on leave & the telegram had to be forwarded. Although this didn't altogether account for the delay the CO let him get away with it.

I got the pioneers on to making the partitions in the mess boxes & by the evening they were all finished, so now the officers will have something to mess off, in the event of war.

The CO came round to ask me what I thought about taking some sports gear with us if mobilized. I said I thought it best if the Bn took it centrally in its transport, as there would be more room for it, & we were not likely to want it except when we were out of the line, & then we should be concentrated as a Bn. But I said I was willing to find room for it if it was a case of Coys: either taking it or leaving it.

I took complete extracts from the Mob: Scheme for everything that affects the Coy; & had four copies

typed out so that if we mobilize I'll be able to give a copy to the CSM, QMS & subalterns. I also arranged with the Pioneer sgt for the repair of the boxes in which are stored the silver & furniture etc. belonging to the mess, so that we are ready to start packing the moment we get the word.

Digging still continues in various corners of the barracks, & all coys are finding large working parties.

I went back after lunch for the rifle inspection, & then I fitted together my new web equipment with the help of CSM Welch. I also reported to BOR the fact that my coy had not a copy of the Mob: Regs. - ours having apparently been lost some 18 months ago! He is indenting for another copy.

Oswin rang up & asked if he could come along, & he stayed for supper. He is a 2/Lt in the SR 4th Bn Tanks, & after supper we got the news in ~~German~~ English radiated by Germany. It was rather thin, & chiefly consisted of stories of the Polish military inefficiency, shortage of food and brutality to Germans.

Henderson flew back to Berlin this afternoon after the Cabinet meeting. Parliament has been summoned for tomorrow afternoon. British non-naval ships have been told to stop using the Mediterranean.

**29th Aug.**

A year ago today I started this diary with the words "Because daily events in the international arena seem to be heading to a world crisis ....."!

The battalion had a large number of working parties digging ARP shelters at 2 Div HQ, in Grant and Somerset Square, & by the officers' garages. An amendment came in to the Mob. scheme, and various new instructions arrived concerning the painting of our vehicles, the affixing of identification plates etc etc.

I wrote to the Insurance Co: about a war cover for the Mess property, and having discovered that Caton Woodville's picture of the taking of the guns at Francilly Selency was not insured, wrote to them to include it in the schedule.

I signed my will, & got Newton & Clutterbuck to witness it, & wrote to my own insurance Co: asking whether or not I was covered for war risk, & if not, how much was the premium.

This last few days has been a bit of a strain on everybody, & I don't know how many people have said to me that they wished something definite would happen, one way or the other. I noticed that both Barty & George Axworthy looked rather 'spent' in the anteroom this afternoon. But apart from this slight strain, everyone is perfectly cheerful, & confident



that if it comes to war, we are in a position to defend ourselves very satisfactorily. As regards the expeditionary force, everyone is asking where it will be sent to fight. Most people think in France, on the Maginot Line somewhere.

This afternoon I rode one of the army motorbikes, the first of two resolutions I made recently - to make myself thoroughly conversant with the gears etc of an army bike, & with a Bren gun, before mobilizn. as I thought I might have reason to use either or both in war. I found no difficulty with the bike.

The news at 6pm said that Henderson was still in Berlin, having given his note to Hitler at 1025pm last night, & no reply has yet been received. Chamberlain spoke in the House this afternoon, & said the position was substantially unchanged, but stressed the country's preparedness, categorically citing our air & seaward defences etc, and reaffirmed our determination to stand by our pledges to Poland.

McPhail came in for a drink in the evening, bringing with him one Butters whom I had just met before at the James VI Debating Society. He was a nice person, of sober judgements & easy to converse with. He was certain we by now had the better of Hitler, & he confidently prophesied 1 No war, and 2 that Hitler would have a serious nervous breakdown.

I had to go in to barracks at 10pm for a test black out,

& got back just after 11pm.

### **30th Aug.**

Hitler's reply was received late last night, & after midnight conferences & a cabinet meeting today our reply was despatched.

Today has been one of more cheerful forecasts, most people seeming to think that Hitler was climbing down, & would be prepared to accept some settlement of the Dantzig & corridor questions to be mutually agreed by conference. Noone is of any mind to give in to him.

I have found the day rather irksome in that we have not known what was in any of the messages passing between the two nations, & so, didn't know where we stood or what was likely to happen. After such warlike preparations, today seemed very 'flat'. If one really knew things were better, one could celebrate a little. As it is one is not justified in doing so, & there is still this irksome restriction of having to be at the end of a telephone all the time.

The men are still engaged on digging shelters for the married families, and in barracks. While it is most annoying to have to do this sort of thing at the last moment (the pioneers have all been doing a rush-job putting up protection against bomb-blasts around vital buildings in barracks) and one feels things

should & could have been organised better before, yet this work is good as a 'hardening' process for the men.

Two parties from each coy fired Part IIb of the Machine Gun Course on Hangmoor Hill ranges this afternoon, & marched back to barracks - a distance of approx 7 miles. They were filmed by Gaumont British while on the ranges.

McPhail & Butters came in again tonight, both of them still very optimistic.

There was a photo in the 'Times' today of the Southern Counties Archery Championships at Windsor, in which Jack could be seen in the background, he being one of the competitors.

I have just heard the 11pm news, which says little of major importance, but mentions that France has accelerated her war preparations including the taking over of the railways for military transport, and in other European Nations the same preparations continue.

### 31st Aug.

My men are still all digging. They are putting in corrugated iron horseshoe-shaped shelters, about 20 feet long and 8 feet wide, which are sunk into the ground and then earthed over, with sandbag end-walls.

I had to deal with a difficult case of one L/cpl Street of my coy, whose wife, already the mother of four, (the eldest being under four years of age) is confined. She lives at Oldham, & I gave Street leave to go & see her & try to fix up someone to look after the children, but he was recalled from leave after only two days owing to the crisis. Today the wife got the police to telephone a message asking if it was possible for him to come. I spoke to Barty, & put up a letter, & BOR sent it on to Bde, who, I am glad to say replied that he could have 5 days leave, holding himself ready for instant recall. He went off this afternoon.

I ordered a pair of marching boots from Stallwoods in Camberley, & then we went to drinks with the Chandlers. He was in the Hampshires, & was transferred to us in 1935, & is now at the Staff College. They have all been recalled from leave.

On the 9pm it was announced that the Govt. had decided:-

1. To complete the mobilization of the Navy.
2. To call up officers & men of the Army Reserve & Supplementary Reserve.
3. Evacuate children & invalids from the main danger areas such as London & Manchester tomorrow.
4. Prevent Hoarding.
5. Restrict civil flying.

It is emphasised that war is not inevitable, & these are only precautionary measures. No reply has been received from Hitler to last night's message.

This looks more like business. I'm thankful they've taken these steps. It may bring Hitler & Co: to their senses, but if it doesn't, it merely puts us in a better state to meet eventualities.

This calling up of the RARO [Regular Army Reserve of Officers] means Jack will be off to the Depot, in Uniform again. Once more all three of us [Jack, Tom & Buster] are wearing the King's uniform.

Janie had her first job to do tonight as an Air Raid Warden. A fairly near neighbour called to say his mother-in-Law had come to stay without her gas-mask, & could he acquire one for her locally. Janie put him on to the warden who looks after his sector,

as Janie's sector is up in Frimley itself, & he lives out of her area.

Then Mr Cotterell rang her up to say they are having a meeting of wardens at Mrs Lamme's house at 10pm tonight, & could she go, so she has gone off to attend it.

McPhail rang up, & in the course of some talk, said that things must be getting serious if (appropos of Jack) they were calling up the bow-men. This was a good crack I thought.

### **1st Sept.**

In accordance with instructions received from the Adjutant yeaterday, I took 24 of my reservists up to Hangmoor Hill ranges to fire Part II of the MG Course, to give them some practice in handling the gun. The remainder of my reservists had fired the other day with B Coy. We were told to march back from the ranges having lunch on the way.

When I had finished my firing I got a note from Archie Tod, who was answering for me in barracks, to say that BOR had cancelled the march back & that I was to return in trucks as soon as firing was finished. I also heard that men were to double up in barrack rooms as Reservists were arriving.

We got back at 12 midday, to be told that rumour had

it that Germany had incorporated Dantzig in the Reich, & had bombed 6 Polish towns including Cracow & Warsaw, at 6am this morning. Barracks & the Mess were crawling with officers reporting for duty with Base & L of C HQs - to which we are parent unit.

I went up to the mess office and was looking into the packing arrangements when the CO came in. I asked him if I could start packing the silver straight away & he said I could.

I rushed home to lunch - then helped Janie to put down the spare room carpet, as Ma & Barbara might arrive tonight. I went back to barracks at 2pm, & inspected barrack rooms with CSM Welch, where the men are pretty crowded, & sleeping on palliasses on the ground between the beds. All the vehicles are parked on the barrack square, the garages having been evacuated before lunch to make room for units that form on mobilization. I looked out of a window in a top barrack room & saw them all, with men hurrying hither & thither, & painting them with camouflage designs: this has been left late as we have been hoping to get from Ordnance the 'Petrifying liquid' which should be mixed with the paint: but it hasn't come, & now we can wait no longer & have had to mix water with the paint - result (as anticipated) - rain washes it off. As it was raining as the men worked, the trucks looked pretty streaky. It is said the RAF has pinched all the mixture.

Next I had a look at the coy vehicles on the square, & as I was walking back from them to the office - about 5 past 3pm or so, I met Archie who told me that he had heard that the King had signed the mobilization order. I went in to the office where there wasn't much doing, so I went to visit Eve Hickey in B Coy, & then had a word with George Frampton who was testing a new fire hose apparatus which can be towed as a trailer (George is the PAD officer). About 4.30pm I sent the CSM & CQMS off to tea, & was about to get into my car to go home myself, when I thought I'd better just look in at the BOR, where I found all the coy comdrs assembled except myself & George Frampton. It transpired that the CO had sent for all coy comdrs, plus the Depot Coy Comdr (Jack Fouracre) but the messenger had warned Archie instead of me as OC A Coy! However I was in good time. The CO & Adjt then arrived, & we trooped in. A little time was wasted sending for benches for us to sit on. Then the CO said 'I need hardly tell you that we are mobilizing'. He went on to say that the Div Comdr wanted us to evacuate tomorrow & go into billets, except for key men such as PAD squads, CQMS, storemen etc. He wanted numbers in as soon as possible of men who would go into billets. There were present at the conference Eve Hickey, George Frampton (who was late), Tommy Woolsey, Levi, Jack Fouracre, Archie Tod, Tony Fitch, George Axworthy, Barty & myself, being respectively OC B, C, D, HQ, Depot Coy, PRI, Asst Adjt, Adjt, & CO,



& OC A.

I got the numbers out, & consulted Eve, as I have done, frequently, in the last few weeks. He comes over to me or I go to him. Then as this was Z [Mobilization] day we had to get on with the items on the mob Programme. I won't detail them all, but I had to remember the Mess jobs, & I had to frequently visit the mess office. Moss was getting on with the silver packing excellently. He is a jolly good little worker. I had a tray of tea sent down to me (Pat Dewar kindly went up to the mess & ordered it for me as well as one for Eve Hickey) & I rushed home at 8.5 pm for supper to find Ma & Barbara & Skippy [the cat] had arrived. This was fine news, & they were helping Janie darken the windows. Janie had an ARP meeting at 9pm, so I dropped her at Mrs Lamme's & then went on to barracks to continue the programme. I got back to the house at 11.25pm, & got into bed, where I am now writing this diary. Its now 5 to 12 midnight & I'm going to sleep.

## **2nd Sept**

I am writing this at 5 past 11pm on 4th Sept. We have all been very busy during these last three days, & I have been too tired to write my diary in the evenings.

On 2nd sept I went in to barracks at 10 to 7am & went on with the Mobilization programme. All went pretty smoothly, but I lost my CSM & CQMS (Welch &

Harrison) he being sent to a Prisoners of war camp as RQMS & Harrison to the Depot. As their trucks, to take them to the station, were on the point of departure, George Ax: rushed round to me in a bit of a 'spin' & said 'Where are the Colours?' I said they were in the Mess, waiting for the 'Conducting Party' to take them, that they were due to go & were ready to go yesterday, but as no CP had been sent, they were still there awaiting their bearers. He said they'd have to go with this party, so we both rushed up to the Mess, took them down, and also the stands of the British Musqueteers and Queen's German Colours, and bundled them on to a truck, together with the D/M's [Drum Major's?] staff (of which the Lion had fallen off the Crown some time ago & had never been repaired & which 2/Lt Newton took in his pocket), the D/M's sash, & 2 Colour belts. Alas! There was no time for ceremony.

I sent one Owen Hughes, a major in the HKVDC [Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps ?], on leave in England, and at this moment of all moments, attd to us for training(!) off to Lloyds Bk Cheam nr Sutton Surrey to fix up a time for the reception of the Mess Silver. I had tried to ring them up, but could not get through as the 'phones are in a pretty parlous state all over England. He had very kindly volunteered to do anything he could to help. He said his father was in HK when Dad was there, & he knew of Daddy. He fixed things up v. efficiently. I asked him to ask the Bk manager if they could accomodate 5 boxes of sgts

mess silver, as Tod (PRI) told me he was stranded as to its disposal, no arrangements having been made, although Quinn late RSM, late QM, (now sailing today for 1st Bn) [in Singapore] swore that arrangements had been made. Fortunately Cheam could take it.

I managed to rush home for lunch, then for supper at 9pm & had to go back again after supper.

### **3rd Sept.**

This is now Z+2 day. Owen Hughes was despatched with 5 trucks of my coy to Cheam with 10 boxes of our silver, & five boxes of sgts' silver. He deposited them & returned, having been caught in a 'false alarm' air raid at Cheam.

War was declared at 11am between this country and Germany. I heard that we were at war from someone - I think Archie Tod but I'm not sure - about 11.30. Chamberlain had spoken on the wireless at 11.15am, but of course I had not heard him.

More and more strange officers keep arriving for their L of c units that form in our barracks & wander in & out of the mess, & want food & drink. I am making them pay cash down, but the catering is a very real problem. They are of course billeted, as we haven't room for them.

I had lost yesterday Lancelot Newton, & Geoffrey Williams & young Clutterbuck to the Depot, so I am now trying to mobilize with no officers & no CSM or CQMS, & only 2 Sgts to act for them, & noone above Cpl left in the coy.

To add to our difficulties we were told to billet our coys out of Aldershot this evening - my coy billet being at Ambarrow Court Sandhurst. I got them out there by 6.30pm & arranged for food etc to be sent out. The Balloon (Pat Dewar SR of B coy being lent to me to be i/c the billet).[?]

Incredible rumours get about barracks all the time - only to be disproved when someone finds time to rush up to the Mess & hear a news bulletin.

#### **4th Sept.**

Z+3 day. I got Perks as A/CSM, & 7 Sgts either promoted or transferred to me, so that eases the NCO problem. I spent a long time getting my coy rolls straight & determining my casualties, as Perks, being new to the coy, & knowing none of the men, is slow & rather inaccurate. Trucks were loaded with war loads. The men remained in billets.

Wilkie got married this afternoon, & had a small reception at the mess. Most of the officers turned up to drink his health (& hers) & one or two wives. Poor things - she looks incredibly young, & I doubt if she

realizes all that it may mean. I got there at the tail end & drank their health.

I rang up the family & found them well, & v. glad that I rang them up. They confirmed that Jack was at the depot, but had no news of Buster.

Peter rang up to say he was getting married tomorrow, & Ma & Janie are going up, Barbara having disappeared 2 days ago with a boyfriend in a car. It is now 20 to 12 and I am off to bed. I wish I wasn't so tired, because I realise we are living through historic days, & there are so many incidents that I could recount if only I wasn't so mentally & physically tired.

### **5th Sept**

Each day seems like the last, and it is difficult to keep a count of time. I think it was yesterday we heard of the British air raid on the Kiel canal, in which two German warships were seriously damaged, & in which we had casualties, but no one knows accurately how many. The German account says we lost 5 out of 12 planes. On the night war was declared we also carried out a raid over N & W Germany and dropped 6,000,000 leaflets (propaganda). It was yesterday too that Reggie Parminter arrived in barracks for a short time with secret orders for one of the L of C units, & told me that he was to be AQMG 2nd Echelon & was off to France today. He said we would be over there

in less than a week.

Ma & Janie went off to London in the car bright & early for Peter's wedding, which had been put forward, like so many others, owing to the war. I lunched in barracks, & then Janie rang up at about 5.30pm to say she was back & had done her tour of duty at the ARP centre, & had found Mummy who had come by train via London. So she brought her along to the Ladies Room - so sadly depleted of carpets & pictures, to see us; for Jack arrived from the Depot before tea, with various other officers - Mott, Hilton, Rose, Isherwood & various others - mostly SR. Hilton & Rose were posted to my coy - Hilton as 1st Reinforcement. Jack had had a TAB inoculation yesterday & was a bit feverish so he lay down. Billy & Jennifer Keitly were in the ladies room talking to John, & Oliver and Owen Hughes came in. We took Mummy back to Ash Vale to catch the 8.19pm to Waterloo, but the trains were running pretty late.

Ma & Barbara had returned when we got in. I went on to Camberley to fetch my boots that Stallwoods had made for me.

### **6th Sept**

Woken up at 7.15am by a 'phone from Wilkie the duty officer to say that 'message yellow' had been received. So I dived in to my uniform & rushed into barracks. The red message came shortly after I

arrived. However no raiders came over us, & finally we got the all clear. Later on in the day we heard that the raider had approached the E coast but had not penetrated the defences. A wonderful crop of rumours however are flying about. London, Reading, Richmond, Winchester, Grimsby among other towns are said to have been bombed!

Perks, my new A/CSM is nearly driving me mad as he is incredibly inaccurate in his figures of coy strength, & I have to do all the work getting out casualty lists etc as he simply cannot be relied upon.

McPhail came in after supper, & I was very glad to see him again. They are taking things calmly up at the Colony. Janie fixed up a room for Mummy & Daddy at the Priors kitchen in Frimley for a week, & arranged to go over tomorrow to fetch them. I am so very glad Dad is coming too, & that I shall see him. After MacPhail went I got down to the lights on my car, as there are strict orders as to how they are to be dimmed. I'm now off to bed, it being 12.35am.

### **7th Sept**

This was supposed to be the day before entraining, but though noone knows when we shall move, we don't think it will be just yet.

Janie dropped me in barracks & then went off to fetch Mummy & Daddy from Chalfont St Peter. I hadn't

been long in the office when Tony Fitch (who is doing asst adjt) came in & asked about a casualty report we had rendered yesterday evening. I went into it with Tony, & discovered yet another mistake of Perks'. This was the last straw. I took Tony aside & told him I simply couldn't do with Perks, that he was quite useless to me at a time like this, & that he was to tell the CO that I wanted him removed. I gave him suggestions for promoting one of the PSMs I have instead. About 1/2 an hour later Tony came back & said that they were giving me Middleton. This was magnificent news, & I could hardly believe my ears. Old Middleton was my pl sgt in Hmattaing, & I put him in for his MM & he is one of the best WOs in the Bn. In less than no time he got down to the coy lists, & spent all day simply turning the office inside out.

I rang up May's in Aldershot & asked them to send a photographer out to take the officers' group. I had always determined that such a group should be taken on mobilisation, as was done in August 1914 on the Curragh, & being the PMC I was in a position to take the initiative. We were photographed at 1pm & then Janie took Jack & me back to lunch, where we found Daddy & Mummy & Ma. Barbara had motored herself off to Ferryside via London. She seems incapable of keeping still for more than five minutes.

We had to be back by 2 pm as I & the other coy comdrs were meeting the CO to reconoitre the positions for our coys for the King's visit this



afternoon at 4.30. It had all been kept very dark though the CO had told me about it just before the photo was taken this morning.

We paraded at 4, with some of the HQ Wing & some of the 'Serial 1500' which is one of the Base HQs which are forming in our lines. They sent two officers, one of whom was Lord Carnegie. The King looked very bronzed and well, & was in a semi-open car with Dill. I called for 3 cheers but as the car passed so slowly I kept on cheering till we had produced five before he finally passed on to the next coy.

Then I had tea & a rest in the anteroom for about 1/2 an hour, & then went down to pay out the 12 'Home Details' in my coy. I also saw to the move out of 41 men of my coy to our Billet at Ambarrow Court to relieve the men who are out there. I went out there & supervised the changeover, having a chat with Alderson the owner of the house & his brother. He is the owner of Fraser Nash & BMW cars, & of course this war means the bottom has dropped out of his business.

Dad & Mum had supper with us, & then I motored them back to their quarters at the Priors Kitchen.

### **8th Sept.**

There wasn't much work in the coy to be done as we

are practically ready, so I went up to the Mess and saw to one or two details there. Had lunch at home (Mum & Dad being there) & Jack & I went down to the Officers Club for tea with Janie, the family & Ma. The in the evening I took Jack up to MacPhail's for supper & had a drink with him, meeting Louis Beaton again. After supper I motored the family back to the Prior's Kitchen.

### **9th Sept.**

Had to be in barracks at 8am as I am duty officer, with Pat Dewar as my under-strapper. There was a CO's conference at 11.30 chiefly about the reasons for not granting the men more than a few hours leave to be taken locally. The Colonel of the Regt bid us Coy comdrs goodbye & made us a short speech in BOR - the old boy being a bit "emotionally moved".

I motored home to lunch at 1.45pm & then went out to my coy billets & had a word with Rose, my subaltern out there. They seem quite happy, and are giving no trouble at all. Then I did some shopping in Camberley & Aldershot, buying myself some gum-boots, razor blades, spare studs, watch strap etc. At about 6.15pm I took over again from the 'Balloon', and remained by the telephone in BOR until half an hour after midnight, when I again handed over to Dewar. During my period of duty Patterson, our MO reported for duty. He seemed a nice young fellow, & had come straight from a private practice in

Windermere, never before having had any experience of the army. To such a big change at such short notice it must be difficult to acustom oneself.

### **10th Sept**

I slept like a log until Janie woke me at 9am with words to the effect that it was nice that we could have breakfast without the usual awful rush, when I remembered in a flash that there was a CO's conference at 9am! I leaped out of bed & dressed & was in Barracks in 9 minutes, to find all the coy comdrs: etc waiting for me. After the conference I breakfasted in the Mess.

I got back about 5pm & cut the grass in the back & front gardens, and Daddy sharpened our clippers, & cut the edges for us.

### **11 Sept (Monday)**

I sent a complete WE [War Establishment? ie up to full wartime strength] platoon out to Billets, & changed round the barrack-rooms so that the other two pls each had rooms to themselves, with Coy HQ in a third.

### **12 Sept**

I got Patterson to inoculate me with 1st dose of TAB in one arm and anti-Tetanus in the other, He did it

very well, & I hardly felt it at the time. My arms got pretty painful during the evening, & I found it hard to get any consecutive sleep during the night.

### 13 Sept

Was woken at 2am by Janie who said someone was trying to steal our car. I rushed out in my pyjamas & bare feet & found a drunken gunner from Blackdown trying to start it up. I was very angry, & rude to him. Janie didn't get much sleep from then onwards, as she was rather exhausted after the last week's rush, & having to provide meals for the family as well as ourselves.

When I got back at lunchtime I found she was distinctly poorly, & was still in bed, & Ma had rung up Moss to come and see her. He was out, but he rang up at lunch time & said he would come at 5.30pm. I came back from barracks to see him, & he examined Janie &, much to our relief, said all was well. He is going to look after her, & was most kind & helpful, & told me I need have no worries as he understood the situation & he would do all he could for her while I was away.

I had a chase down to the Ordnance Field stores this afternoon to try to get the coy & Bn HQ petrol cookers we are supposed to have as mob: stores but which have not as yet been issued. They told me that if I sent down at 7am tomorrow, I might be able to

receive them.

### **14 Sept**

I'm glad to say the cookers were safely drawn this morning early by Sgt Street. In the afternoon the CO inspected my coy on the parade ground in the marching out kit. I was appalled at the weight of the full equipment with pack that we have to carry.

### **15th Sept**

There was a bit of an alarm from the billets this morning, when Hilton came in & said that the drains had gone wrong & the smell was getting rather trying. Aldington, the owner had brought him in in his BMW as the latter wanted to find out how to go about offering the whole house to the military for billeting as he wants to go off to Scotland with his family. We sent Cpl Phillips the sanitary king out to do what he could with the drains, and redirected Aldington to the Military Land agent at Command HQ.

I had lunch with MacPhail & met Lewis Beaton ('The Bandit') again. Then I went out to the Billet & found the drains had been put right.

Now that Mummy & Daddy are feeding at the Priors Kitchen, they come up after tea for a chat each day, & Daddy & I have a gin & bitters. Oswin, who is in camp with his Tank Bn at Mytchett, came in, &

stayed for supper.

### **16th Sept** Jack's birthday.

This life of waiting & not knowing when we're off is very trying. Mobilisation was completed on 5th Sept & here we still are eleven days afterwards. Why, then are we waiting? There would seem to be a strong time factor in the military situation, since 70 German divisions are now locked up in Poland, and if we are to attack seriously on the western German frontier, we should presumably do so before those divisions are released by Poland's collapse. But this seems such an obvious point that one can hardly believe it can have escaped those in charge of the war strategy. Why are they waiting? Are we, or is France, not yet ready for the main assault? Or have they reason to believe that Germany may give in, for one reason or another, before such an assault is necessary?

I took the CSM and two pl comdrs & two pl sgts out to Spur Hill and did a 'map shoot' with them, to show them the procedure. After lunch I spent several hours with Quigley my new CQMS chasing 15/2d [15 shillings and 2 pence - about 71p] that had got lost in the Pay List!

Dad & Mum came in in the evening, & I motored them back to the Priors Kitchen.

### **17th Sept.**

Arrived in Barracks this morning to find a letter to the effect that all trucks etc were to be packed by 6pm tomorrow, when the CO would inspect them and the drivers; so this evidently means that the move of the road party is imminent, & no doubt we shall follow pretty soon afterwards. On the way in to barracks I passed a long column of I tanks apparently coming from Mytchett, so I fancy Oswin's tanks are being loaded onto the trains for embarkation.

An expert from Netheravon arrived in the evening to lecture officers WOs and NCOs on the new streamline amm: & its use - a tricky subject as the amm: will probably arrive before the range tables and sights. This seems to be poor foresight on the part of the authorities.

Barbara and girl friend Mary Monro arrived from Ferryside about 5.30pm to spend the night. Aunt Janie sent us 1/2 lb of Ferryside butter by them.

### **18th Sept**

I loaded up the trucks of the third pl and the two 30 cwt lorries (our 2nd line tpt). One is an open truck, & the other a most superior WD & HO closed van with pannelled interior and sunken lights.

The CO had a coy comds conference on the method of feeding & cooking in billets when our trucks go.

I met the CO by appointment at 2.45pm in the mess office to discuss final points as to closing the mess, and method of feeding officers on the journey to the assembly area. Then I spent 2 hours in the mess office tidying things up & writing letters to the bank and to coys. I had previously this morning had a flaming row with Pickfords of Aldershot who had crowned their gross inefficiency of the last 3 weeks by refusing to give me a receipt for the boxes which they took in for storage on 11th. I got it out of them ultimately.

The CO inspected my loaded trucks at 6pm & we were then told to put them in the garages & that they were not to be used again for any reason; also that all drivers & personnel of the road party were to be confined to barracks from 'Lights Out' tonight. I got hold of Rose & told him to see the party off if they were ordered to move during the night, & to supervise the issue of revolvers and loading cards to drivers.

Ma rang up to say Janie was still being very sick & to ask me to pick up some medicines from 'Boots' on my way home.

Heard this evening from an evening paper of the sinking of HMS Courageous by an enemy submarine.

Found Janie very sick indeed when I got home.



[Entries from here are in pencil]

## **19 Sept**

The road party went off this morning, Jack going with them. The other officers were Black (in charge as MTO) Ham, Jack, Keitley & Ross the ordnance officer. Jack had rung the family up & they got a lift in so that they were able to see the party off. I gave them a drink in the Mess afterwards & then took them home.

Moss came to see Janie today. She is a little better.

McPhail came in after supper & we agreed that this would be our goodbye as we didn't know when we actually went, though it cannot be long delayed now. We had a really splendid evening - plenty of most amusing conversation & between us we finished a decanter of whisky. His last words were 'Look alive & be thief-like. Let this day be spoken of. To our next meeting'.

## **20 Sept**

The billets were told to march in, & I went out to Ambarow Court to settle with Aldington, but as he was out I paid his daughter who took the money up to her mother & she signed the slip. In the afternoon we were told that all ranks were to be confined to barracks from 12 noon tomorrow, & that we were to

be prepared to move at one hours notice as from midnight 21/22 Sept. So it looks like the early hours of 22 Sept.

I thought I wouldn't tell Janie till tomorrow morning in order to increase the chances of a good sleep for her.

About 6.30pm I motored up to Lightwater & said goodbye to Eunice & Carol & Charlsie. Mrs Longley was there. Carol went all through my pockets, & discovered that my aspirin bottle had come uncorked & spilt its contents into my pocket. She corked it up for me with some cotton wool.

I went to see the family for 1/2 an hour after supper.

## 21 Sept

Said goodbye to Janie about 8.30 am, also to Ma, who had given me breakfast, as she has during the past two weeks. Walked on to the Priors Kitchen & said goodbye to Mum & Dad, & then got a lift on a gravel-lorry to Aldershot.

Held my final marching-out inspection at 9.30am & found everyone present.

At noon we got a letter to say we should parade at 6.45am & that reveille would be at 4am tomorrow. This information was not to be communicated to

anyone before 8pm.

Old Rich looked in this evening. I thought it was so good of him. He had been to see Janie, and said she was in good heart which cheered me enormously.

After supper Bill rang up to say goodbye as he had just got down from London. I persuaded him to come along with Eunice, & we had a party in the Ladies Room - all standing as there were only 2 chairs, & the place looked most bare with no curtains, carpets, pictures or furniture. It was grand of him to come along as I really thought I should be going without seeing him. Since mobilisation he has been a Lt colonel. Went to bed at about 2pm having taken 2 aspirins.

## 22nd Sept

Was called by my servant (Kirby) at 4am with a cup of tea. Sent my valise down to the dump for transporting to the station. Was present at the issue of ammunition to the coy. Had breakfast in the mess, & then paraded my men. On advance sounding was first to march my men onto the parade ground. We marched off on the COs word of command A coy leading. We went via Queens Avenue, Linchford Rd, Alexandra Rd, London Rd to Farnborough station. It was a tiresome march as we were wearing gt coats and packs - the officers 2 haversacks as well. After about an hours wait on the platform we packed into

the train. We still didn't know our destination. As we passed through Basingstoke Micheldever and Winchester it became increasingly obvious that our destination was Southampton. There we boarded the Biarritz, & I went up to the GE hotel for lunch & to send a letter card to Janie.

I was exhausted, & went & slept in my cabin which I shared with Eve Hickey, till about 5pm. By that time we had moved out to Spithead, where, surrounded by Booms, minefields, submarines & destroyers, our convoy collected. It was most interesting. The N Staffs, & Gordons were two other regiments who went over in the same convoy though there were others. The 21 A-Tank Regiment shared our boat with us, & Brig Hudson VC was also on board. I had spoken to him on the phone often in the old SOP days when he was CI [Chief Instructor] at Sandhurst.

### **23rd Sept**

Had breakfast at 6.30 as we were entering Cherbourg harbour. There we disembarked & saw our trucks. This raised the general hope that we should be proceeding in them, but this was shortlived as they moved off shortly afterwards, Jack telling me in confidence that the destination was Laval. I lost no time in buying a map & finding that the town was not very far from Le Mans. Later I heard that Laval was the HQ II Corps, & Le Mans GHQ.

The troops were marched over to the huge station buildings alongside the quay where the Queen Mary berths, & accommodated on the verandah. There we took off our equipment, but because we weren't allowed to smoke owing to petrol stores beneath the verandah we marched the men out of the buildings onto some waste ground near the station & then they sat about & smoked. I sent Tony off to change some money for the troops at the Field Cashier. It was an awful job involving a very long wait in a very long queue. HQ L of C was established at one end of the erstwhile Casino, the other end doing duty as an officers' club. I went in to the latter to write a letter to Janie, & met ex-Col Crossfield (now Sqn leader) whom I knew in Burma & who was subsequently on one of my SIO's courses at the SOP. Also met Crowdy[?] late WO SOP & now commissioned. I drank many beers with the RAF. They were all part of the 2(B) Wingco of the air component.

After a tiring day, during the afternoon of which we let the men go into the town to have a look round the shops, we entrained at 5pm & remained in our carriages till 10.5pm when we moved slowly out of the station.

Although I repeatedly asked Axworthy for the censor's stamp so that I could get my letter off, he always birked the matter & was distinctly disagreeable. I am sure he didn't want Lucy to hear that Janie had got a letter. I think both he and the CO

make unnecessarily heavy weather of these moves. Each phase is preceded by a coy comdrs conference and there is a general flap which is quite unnecessary.

Tony, Rose & I were in a carriage together, & we were soon asleep.

### **24 Sept.**

After one or two stops when we went along to see the men, & arrange for the collection of hot water so as to make tea, we arrived at Laval station in bright sunlight about 11am. Jack was there to meet us, but no Levi or Ham. Jack went off with Tony Fitch to send our trucks down to us, & after waiting for some time in the station yard we moved off in our trucks to our billeting areas.

My men are in four farms, a platoon to each farm and coy HQ in a fourth. The names of the farms are La Touche - Les Bois - Le Clou - La Rigourdière. They are on the outskirts of the village of Soulgé-le-Bruant, about 12 Kms from Laval.

I have been suffering from a very painful throat since I woke up this morning, & by the time I had finished billeting my coy I felt really ill. There was a CO's conference at 6pm so I took Tony in & said I was feeling pretty groggy, & the CO sent me off to see the Doctor. He put me in bed straight away. My temp was 104.

## **25 Sept (Monday)**

Thanks to the doctor's efficiency my temp was nearly normal this morning & I had a fine nights rest. I wrote to Janie today & sent it in by Tony who told me that after every officer had badgered Axworthy he had at last given in & issued some orders about sending in mail. He is a fool.

I am billeted in an empty furnished house in Soulgé in a nice big room with a most comfortable double bed. It is at a large crossroads, & my window looks out over the main road, opposite a cafe called 'A La Croix Verte'. There is an old white haired lady who comes along in the daytime & has been most kind to me. My servant Kirby stays with me all day (& night) & gets me a hot drink every 2 hours. Barty, Tony Rose & Jack came in to see me.

## **26 Sept.**

Had no temperature, though was coughing a good deal & had a fairly congested chest.

Apparently Rex K-C has gone off somewhere, presumably to select our billets in our next area, & we don't expect to be here long.

I asked the old lady to arrange for the washing of my 2 prs of pyjamas as I had sweated into them when my

temperature was high. At the moment I am wearing a pair Barty lent me yesterday.

Tony Fitch came in several times to see me, also Rose & the Doctor. Jack paid me quite a long visit, & went out & bought me an exercise book in which to continue this diary. The Paris-Soir which my batman brought me talks of big German troop concentrations about Aix La Chapelle. Is this the beginning of the long-foreseen attack across the Limberg Appendix?

I was a little bit feverish in the evening, which was disappointing as I hoped to be rid of the bug by now.

[Note: There is a sketch on the last page of the new exercise book, with the subscription 'My billet Soulgé 26/9/39. (Owner - Mme JOUMELAIS)]

## **27 Sept**

Big news - a letter from Janie, written on 22nd - the day I left. Thank goodness contact is now established.

Another lovely crisp sunny day. My temp was normal at breakfast time, so I only hope it remains so all day. Levi and Tony came to see me. They had a conference at 11 at which they expected to hear some news.

Tony came in after the conference & said they were told they wld be moving by road - date & destination



not mentioned. It would be a combined column  
cmded by Barty & wld start in the early hrs before  
dawn.

Barty came to see me just before lunch. He told me  
Corps were asking for me for a staff job, & the Bn  
had replied saying I was sick. Corps then wanted to  
know when I shld be well, & an estimate was I  
understand given. Barty says I am to go to hospital so  
as to have fair chance of properly recovering, & when  
I am well will presumably go straight to the staff job.  
He also told me strictly in confidence that the Bn  
moved early on Friday next, & was going to its  
concentration area. He expected it would then do  
intensive training. Noone seems to envisage the Bn  
being in action for some time yet. Barty also told me

[To new, french, exercise book]

**1939**

**27 Sept (contd)**

that he went to 2 Div yesterday, & found them  
established in a marvellous chateau, XV C but  
modernised only last year. Each member of Div staff  
has a gorgeous room, h & c laid on etc etc.

Jack came in for a chat, also Tony & Fitzpatrick the  
padre. He held a voluntary church parade this  
afternoon to which 50 fellows came.

Then who should suddenly knock & enter my room but Tommy Thompson, whom I last saw at Southampton about a year ago, & with whom I worked in very close touch during my four years at Farnborough. He is at GHQ (maps) with Hotine & Brown & Heap - all the old names - & he said Hunt was screaming for me - the same story that Walter had. So that more or less proves that the job is an I one at GHQ. Tommy said he was motoring through Soulgé & saw our fellows about so asked if I was with the Regt & ascertained where my billet was.

I wrote a long letter to Janie giving her the news, which I know will cheer her up immensely.

Later this evening Rose came in & told me that Pte Carr, the driver of my PU had crashed into three men of B coy who were walking along the road, & had killed one of them (Hunt) & hurt the other two. This is a nasty affair, & one which administratively must be an infernal nuisance at this juncture.

### **28th Sept**

The doctor came in, & confirmed that I was to go to No 9 Gen hosp near Le Mans this morning by an ambulance which he hoped to get from a Field Hosp near here.

Then a message arrived as follows;

TO Capt TBL Churchill MC

FROM Adjt Manch R

Ay 11

Date 27

On discharge from hospital you will report to MS branch GHQ for duty as Intelligence Officer.

(Sgd) J G Axworthy Major

0925 hrs

So that's that. I acknowledged receipt on the envelope and sent it back.

Then the CO came in to say goodbye. He seemed rather emotional and appeared genuinely sorry that I was going. I do hope he settles down soon - he seems so worried & het up just now. I didn't think he would take it quite like this.

Rose & Tony Fitch came in, & I told the latter I'd like to see CSM Middleton before I went. Later he came in, & we had a chat. I'm sorry the 'old fighting team' (as PSM Kirk called it, when Middleton was posted to my coy) is not going to function together any longer. I got to know Middleton so well in Burma that I regard him as a real friend.

Next came George Axworthy to say goodbye. He seemed in good heart, & may be cheering up. I told him I was very sorry the CO was taking things rather

hard, in the hope that he might realise my implication that George, as his adjutant, might cheer him up a lot by his own attitude. But I doubt if it really went home. I believe this to be one of the most important roles of an adjutant. [There speaks a former adjutant].

Then Jack came in to say goodbye, & we had a good crack. I think Tommy Woolsey is making him do far too much of Woolsey's own job. Still Jack is being most efficient & I think the powers that be realise it. Jack said Tommy & co are all terrified to use the PUs for anything like a call on another coy comdr for tea or supper. Really they are schoolchildren! One might think we were still at peace. While Jack & I were talking the doctor came in & said I was to be called for at 4pm today by 5 Fd Amb & taken to the base hospital E of Le Mans - about 70 miles. It is amusing to have real dealings with 5 Fd Amb, as it is one of my very old Staff College exercise friends, that I used to use in the composition of a force, & find used in many problems set for us.

The doctor seemed to think the hosp would keep me 4-7 days, as I am pretty weak after that high temperature, although it is now normal, & has been for nearly 48 hours. He came in to say goodbye just after lunch, & left a case card & a letter to be given to the OC of the hospital. He has been extraordinarily kind & efficient, & I wish I could show my gratitude adequately.

The ambulance came at 3.45pm & I was bundled in. I said farewell to my servant Kirby, & then we set off on our journey of 60-70 miles. The driver went off at the hell of a pace, but it wasn't too bumpy inside, though if one had been wounded it would have been a ghastly journey. I had two troops as fellow passengers; one in the RASC & one RAMC - both with bad throats. We went through Le Mans, where I quickly recognised the cathedral on the hill & the flying buttresses from my visit here with Dear old Dr Druce some 19 years ago. Finally we drew up at a magnificent chateau in the village of Le Grand Lucé (or so I gather from two different nursing orderlies; I fancy that's not quite the name, but I'll find out later). It is an enormous place with the most lovely grounds and formal gardens, exactly like those of the Loire castles that Janie & Ma & I visited just over a year ago. It is owned by a Princess (this sounds so romantic!) who lives in a suite of rooms in the chateau now. Otherwise the rooms have been emptied of furniture & simply have hospital beds. There are 59 sisters & nurses - most of them non-regular QAIMNS (Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service) - and a staff of doctors - most of them I fancy either retired RAMC or TA RAMC. I was put to bed after some slight delay as the hospital is not yet properly organised. I gather I am the first officer patient of the war! There are a number of troops in beds with various maladies. I believe they have actually 180 beds in the chateau, & they will have 600 ultimately, but they are awaiting

marquees & tents.

Various doctors came to see me. Nobody seemed to know who I was or why I was here. The CO - a Colonel RAMC & an Irishman - I should think a dug-out but a decent fellow with a DSO and bar - visited me & said I should never have been sent but should have been left in billets. I didn't argue with him, but I'm quite convinced the good man is entirely mistaken. However I pleased him by telling him how kind everyone had been, when he said he was afraid I should find things 'a bit rough'.

All I got to eat was a cup of extremely salty bovril and four pieces of hard toast. However the sister was so appologetic, & said that from tomorrow I would be fed from the QAIMNS kitchen, that I swore to her that I wasn't a bit hungry & actually the one thing in the world I wanted was bovril & toast.

## **29 Sept**

The bed was distinctly hard after my comfortable billet at Soulgé. I was woken at 6am with a cup of tea (which I call very civil) & then some hot water arrived & I washed & shaved. The garden in the early morning sunlight looks too heavenly for words. What a gorgeous place to convalesce in, this chateau will be later in the war.

I am determined to get out of this hospital as quickly

as possible & get to my job at GHQ. For one thing they will be moving from Le Mans at any moment & I have no idea where they will go, & secondly the sooner I get to my section & start organising it as I want it the better. It is always hard to have to work to someone else's ideas, particularly in this case when that someone else, although undoubtedly meaning very well, will have no real idea of what the section will have to cope with.

At 10am a MO came to see me, with a QAIMNS sister. The perisher (a captain) said I was to stay in for several days, & when I remonstrated, said it was no good being in a hurry. I gave him the letter saying I was to report at GHQ and he hardly looked at it. I was, if you please, to have my throat painted (though I have no sore throat) - and to take 3 aspirin at night - Christ knows what for, my temp has been normal for 3 days. When I realised what a maggot, and an obstinate maggot, he was, I determined to wait till I got an opportunity of seeing the colonel.

By good fortune the latter came in an hour later, with the Matron. I told him my troubles, & pointed out that the idiot of an MO seemed to think I was ill having just been admitted, when really I was merely convalescing: & when I showed him the letter, he said I could go out tomorrow, the dear good man.

He said to the Matron that if I didn't go soon I might lose the job, and get sent God knows where; and that

I was to be trusted to look after myself & not overdo things. Thus I hope once again some piddling little obstructionist has been brushed aside.

I got dressed after lunch & went for a walk in the grounds of the chateau which really are lovely. Then I went into the village and bought some postcards of the chateau, but the cards were not very good ones and by no means did it justice.[There are 3 postcards, the house, the stable court and the garden tucked into the diary.]

Two officers of the Dorsets came in this evening, Major Goff, with Bronchitis, and 2/Lt Stephenson with a twisted ankle. They were very pleasant, & the former was a good conversationalist able to talk on any subject - so rare in the army. I hope I meet him again.

### **30 Sept**

I left the hospital by car at 9am for Le Mans , & went to La Bourse which is part of GHQ. There I was told that the MS branch was in the French Barracks at the other end of the town. I went there, & was told to go back to the Bourse! Returned, & determined to cut out the MS branch as I couldn't find it, but instead went to I where I reported to Col Whitefoord who was v nice, met Barry who was very helpful, & saw Brown-Clayton (12L) who did a course under me.



They redirected me to another office in yet another part of the town where Geoffrey Hunt, who is the head of my section, has his office. Went there & found he was out but met his understrapper & my future colleague Oliver. There I looked at some photos, & then went back to the Bourse where I met Sir Colin Jardine, who was charming & remembered me well, & at last ran into Hunt. He took me off to the Town Major & got me a billet in the Hotel du Saumon, & then took me on there to rest, & lent me his batman. By this time I was pretty exhausted, so I had some coffee & sat down & rested. I should have mentioned that while at the Bourse I visited the Field Cashier & drew 1000 francs & got my cashbook, & met Henry Duke of Gloucester just coming out. In the cashiers office I met Lord Munster, until recently USS for war, now an ADC to someone, wearing grenadier gds badges, & saw also Jefferies, Gort's ADC, who did a course under me some time ago.

Hunt came back just before lunch and we went & had a gin & vermouth at a cafe on the square facing Chaunzy's statue. Then lunch in the hotel, & I rested again after lunch. About 4.30pm I went for a walk & made one or two purchases & visited the Cathedral. They have removed most of the wonderful old glass, though a certain amount could still be seen. I found Queen Berengaria's tomb, which I remembered from my last visit with Dr Druce, & I said a prayer for Jack & Buster & self at St Michael's chapel.

## **1st Oct**

Slept well. 'Marked time' nearly all day until 5.15 when Harris (RE)(Army Survey Co) gave me a lift to the station in a car which he had at his disposal. The train didn't go till eight pm & we all hung about chatting. This train party consists of all the troops(Clerks, batmen etc) belonging to GHQ, plus those officers who hadn't gone by car - I need hardly add that all the brass hats & more senior staff had gone by road. I shared a carriage with Mackenzie, a war time Lt who in peace is a member of Lloyds, & Chamberlayne, a captain RARO Scots Guards. A most amazing man.It soon was apparent that I should have provided myself with food for the journey, but noone had thought to tell me so, & I immagined that there were some arrangements on the train for an officers' mess & so had done nothing about it. Chamberlayne immediately made me an honorary member of his private mess, & it wasn't long befor he unpacked a huge cooked chicken, a bottle of excellent Burgundy, another of white wine, two flasks of brandy and some bread & butter & three cardboard plates. Mackenzie was asked to join too, & the three of us had a most wonderful dinner party and, I may add, we drank all four bottles of wine & spirits! I need hardly add we slept beautifully.

## **2nd Oct**

We passed through Rouen at 6am & I saw the road

along which Janie & I & Ma motored only a year ago - then through Albert where Chamberlayne pointed out the Virgin which all through the war leaned over almost horizontally from the church spire but never fell. She is now restored to her proper vertical position. We saw in the distance the Australian Memorial on the ridge, near High or Delville Wood or both, & then we got to Arras where we detrained. The three of us lunched at the Cafe Moderne opposite the station, & then got a car to our billets at the village of Harbarq, 12 Kms or so NW of Arras. Here the Ops & I staff of GHQ are located in the chateau & in surrounding farms, while the rest of GHQ is split up in other villages, some as much as 10 miles away I believe. As I went in to the chateau I found the Duke of Gloucester in the hall reading a letter or a message.

My billet I share with Browne Clayton (12L) who did a course under me about 2 years ago. It consists of one room in a farm house, with no beds. Clayton has a camp bed, & Geoffrey Hunt was kind enough to lend me his, to obviate my having to sleep on the flagstones. He is a kind person.

### **3rd Oct**

I went along to the office at 9.30am & found it established in a room in a farmhouse about 500 yds from the Chateau. I am glad we are slightly removed from the centre of activities. Oliver, a TA Capt in the Border R (with war service) is in our section(1aV)&

Stevens, a Sq Leader is also in it. The other member of the office under Geoffrey Hunt but belonging to a sec of his own (1aVI camouflage) is a TA Lieut called La Coste.

We spent the day getting the office straight & unpacking.

### **4th Oct**

I got down to the filing of the few photos we have on the sec - all taken by Bomber Cmd of towns, aerodromes & rlys in Germany on 19 & 20 sept. 'B' Mess is slowly getting itself straight. It is being run by Chamberlayne, and is situated in a farm about 100 yds from the chateau. 'A' Mess is established in the Chateau & consists only of heads of Depts. There is a 'C' Mess in a village some 3 miles away.

### **5th Oct**

I was on duty from 8 to 8.30am on the telephone in the Information room of Ia branch this morning. Then I had breakfast, & went to the office where I finished off my filing, & then initiated La Coste to one or two interpretation questions.

After lunch went for a walk till tea time. All this area must have been devastated during the last war, but there is no sign of war now. The country is however frightfully open and rolling, offering marvellous

machine gun fields of fire, and one can well realise what bloody battlefields they must have been. There are several British cemeteries near at hand, & of course the big ones like Thiepval and Villers Bretonneaux are not far away.

In the course of my walk I spotted an AA gun in a field, defending GHQ. There must be a good many about, but those are the sort of points one knows & hears nothing about. This secrecy campaign may be a great nuisance, and the dispersion that we have gone in for at GHQ certainly creates considerable difficulties but I'm sure it's the right answer. If we ourselves in GHQ are so ignorant of the whereabouts of our own branches etc it follows I think that the enemy must be far more so.

### **6th Oct**

I got hold of a 'pool' car at 1030 this morning, & picked up Seal Coon (priceless name! a wartime officer who works in 1X & is quite a decent bird though very much of a civilian) & went in to Arras to do some shopping for the office. Bought paper clips, candles ( as the lights are often switched off at the mains in the evenings for no apparent reason) wastepaper baskets, cough mixture, lozenges and ordered a filing cabinet for air photographs. As the shops close at 12 noon, I was at a loose end till lunch time so I went & had a drink at the Café Moderne, & then went along to the Hotel de l'Universe where I

had arranged to meet Coon for lunch. I went into the anteroom place & found Munster in there by himself. He is of course quite young, and very chatty & pleasant & easy to get on with. He was a Lord in waiting to Edward VIII, & was of course USS for war till the war broke out. He told me that the German Ambassador told him a few days before war was declared that war was impossible; & added that that the wretched man was kept in complete darkness by hid Govt: as to what was happenning. He had known Ribentropp well, & said he was quite pleasant but a terribly dangerous and influential man. He said the chief german trade attache was lunching with him shortly before the war, & inveighed in the strongest terms, and in the typical Prussian manner, against the Nazis.

I asked him what Windsor was doing. He put the back of his hand to his mouth and whispered 'I've just been meeting the sxxx'. He said Windsor didn't like him, & vice verca - Windsor remarked on seeing him 'What on earth are you doing here - I thought you were at the War Office'. He replied 'I was, but I chucked it up'. 'What are you doing masquerading in a grenadier uniform?' He said he was ADC to the CinC. 'Oh youre on of those tuppenny ha'penny soldiers are you?' Munster replied 'Well there seem to be a lot of tuppenny ha'penny people about just now' and he added that he thought that was one up to him. Windsor did not reply. He did not introduce his wife, who was apparently there too.

Then Coon arrived, & almost at the same time, the Cinc followed by Jefferies. We went in to lunch, & Gort & Munster fed at a neighbouring table. The CinC looked in excellent form, & talked & laughed all through the meal.

Then we motored back to GHQ & shortly afterwards Windsor & Henry arrived, though I didn't see them. I had to entertain the I staff from II Corps who arrived to hear about our section's work, & to be told about air photos. There were four of them, a major and three captains, one of whom gave me news of dear old Chinny. He said he was well and very efficient, but very hard worked.

Chamberlayne said Gort, or 'Fat Boy' as he calls him often, using the Brigade's nickname for him, was so cheerful when he was at GHQ this afternoon he was afraid it could mean only one thing - that the prospect of a scrap was imminent.

I wrote my fifth letter to Janie tonight. So far I have only had one from her, dated 22nd Sept. I suppose her first ones all went to the Regt, who have either not sent them on, or sent them to the wrong place, though there can be no excuse for either of these courses. I am so worried about Janie & wish to God I could get some news.

I should have said that I asked Munster what was the

feeling between Baldwin and Windsor. He said they were friendly & that Windsor never flew at him, and that their meetings were not acrimonious. Baldwin said that it would be perfectly all right if he had wanted to marry a cook or a housemaid; but he simply couldn't marry a divorcee. On the other hand, Windsor and the Archbishop loathed each other like poison. Windsor delighted to keep him waiting for hours, & then, as the archbishop complained, puffed smoke in his face from his pipe, as he passed him to go out!

### **8th Oct.**

This is a Sunday, but no parsons have appeared and no service was held. This I call a remarkably bad show. Le Mans was crawling with them. There are quite a number of troops here, and of course any amount of officers.

I got leave from the office for this afternoon and evening, and determined to get up to see the Regt. The first & most urgent problem was to get hold of some means of transport. I knew the getting of a car was quite out of the question, so I rang up the Adjt of the Intelligence Corps (Sullivan RARO Queen's) & asked if I could have a motor bike. The answer was in the negative. I was discussing this difficulty with old Uncle Watts (AEC)(who had stayed in our Mess in Secunderabad) when he said that the cipher officer from II Corps was coming to see him some time this



morning & that I could if I liked go in his car with him to II Corps HQ. This would have meant trusting to luck to get back by jumping lifts, to say nothing of getting from II Corps to the Regt. I decided to risk it & go, when La Coste suggested my lunching with him at Lattre (a neighbouring village where HQ Int Corps is, & where the motorbikes are garaged) where his mess is, & then scrounging round for a bike, as he thought he could probably find one. I went off with him, had an excellent lunch, & was lucky enough to find a bike. So I set out, calling at GHQ on the way to find out the exact location of the Regt, which turned out to be GHEIN, East of Douai. The journey was about 30 miles, in the rain, on cobbles (pave); I had no map & I hadn't ridden a bike since 1930, with the exception of the trial run I gave myself one afternoon during our mobilisation period at Aldershot.

However, I got up to Bn HQ somewhere about 4pm & saw Levi, George Ax. Mutt, John Keitley, Fitzpatrick the padre, Wilkie & Barty, & found them all cheerful & rather sunburnt, & situated in a jolly good mess, with far better quarters, & in much nicer conditions than we have at Habacq.

I gathered D coy, (Jack's) had been put under cmd 4th Bde that afternoon, so they were some miles away, but I went on to see Jack, & ultimately found him having some tea. He was looking very well & was cheerful & most surprised to see me. We had a good

crack, but it was beginning to get dark, so I had to beat it after about 1/2 an hour. I also met Tommy Woolsey, he was rather childish and said he was enjoying the war as he had just been given the powers of a detachment commander. This seemed to give him enormous satisfaction. It is hard to comprehend.

I had a fearful drive back. Suffice it to say that I returned to my billet at 10.30pm bruised & blistered having lost my way several times, having run out of petrol just E of Arras, & having given a French peasant a lift on the back of my bike in order to use him as a guide.

## **9th Oct (Monday)**

A cannonade started at 5 past 8am. All the AA guns and automatics defending GHQ, & there are a good many, opened fire at one machine which was flying at about 400ft & incidentally practically passed over my head, & at 8 or 10 other 'planes which were much higher. It turned out that they were all Frenchmen, & actually one was hit 3 times, but none was brought down.

At 10.10am blast me if the guns didn't open again - this time at a British puss-moth which promptly sideslipped into dead ground & scooted off. The pilot said afterwards that the bursts were all round him & that it was distinctly unhealthy.

Today I changed my billet, moving to a tiny room near my office. It is off a farmyard, opposite the midden, next to the stable, & next but one to the pigstye. But it has a very comfortable bed, & nice kind farmer & wife who are great talkers. They give me coffee in the morning & evening & hot water whenever I want it, & even offered me cognac with my coffee. They have one son who is at the war.

## **10th Oct**

I was warned yesterday that arrangements had been made for me to go to GQG tomorrow to visit their photo section & be shown photos of the SIEGFRIED

LINE. I was to take Lacoste with me, & we were to go in the Liaison officer's car.

We duly started at 10.30am & called in at Air Component HQ near Arras first, & then at Tillaboy to leave mail for the secret wireless listening station. We got to the Military Attache's office just before 1am [?] & went off & had an excellent lunch at the Plaza cafe not far from the Rondpoint.

Then we picked up the car again at the Mil Attache's office & were motored to GQG situated at La Ferté sous Jourasse - of fateful & glorious memory of 1914. We stayed at the chateau occupied by the British military mission to GQG - across the bridge & at the top of the hill above the town. Bolster, in the 5th Fus, was our chief guide, though they had a splendid little french captain, with impressive rows of medals, as their liaison officer & PMG. They took us to dine at the 'Epée' - a famous pub with the most excellent food - where numerous past celebrities had fed during the last war. It was Von Kluck's mess in 1914.

After dinner we motored to the chateau in which the 2<sup>e</sup> Bureau is housed, & saw our opposite numbers, the photo interpreters branch. They were very charming, though a little sceptical I think of our capabilities. They almost wanted to show us how to use a stereoscope! They showed us numerous photos of the Siegfried Line & described the characteristics of the casemates & other fortifications. We arranged to have another session with them tomorrow, & then

motored back to the Mission where we slept. I was put up in the Guest room, which they told me had been occupied the week before by Lord Gort!

[Back to ink]

The next day we walked to the 2 Bureau after breakfast, & met our friends again for a further discussion. I produced a run of some 8 or 9 photos which I had brought with me, & which had been taken by the RAF over an area well to the East of Holland. I had noticed some work near & in woods which rather puzzled me, & wanted their views. They examined them, & diagnosed the work to be a new Reserve Line to the Siegfried Line. It caused quite a stir, & I felt our prestige had gone up a bit more! They produced this morning some little plaster of Paris models of casemates

in the Siegfried Line which were of course extremely interesting & instructive. These they produced from an inner room of which they seemed somewhat secretive. I rather think they must have had a model of a sector of the line in there, but this is pure conjecture. At all events they weren't going to let us in.

They also produced a description in French (a sort of brochure) of the Siegfried Line with ground & air photos, and architectural drawings of the casemates. We asked if we could have a copy, & also permission for Gerry [Lacoste] to make a sketch of the models of the casemates which they had shown us. They said

they would have to get the sanction of their No 1, but as by this time we had arranged to pay them yet a third visit on our way back from Paris, we agreed we could do it then if permission was granted. We were then going to pick up various sets of air photos of the line which they had made up for us, & which was one of the main purposes of our visit.

We walked to the épée again for lunch. On the way we passed the little stone monument at the corner of a side-street leading down to the river which commemorates the death of an officer of the Welch Fusiliers at this spot in 1914. Someone had tied a little Union Jack to the railing in front of the stone.

After lunch we collected our suitcases from the Mission, & were motored in a rather ancient car driven by an English chauffeur to Paris. He had as a companion beside him a clerk from the mission. Both were ex-1914-18 war veterans who had married french wives & lived in France. They amused us by their conversation, & their exclamations of wonderment as the car crept up to the break neck speed of 35 mph!

One purpose in going to Paris was to buy office furniture - chiefly steel cupboards, a Gazateer and a wall-fixture with leaves for fixing maps, which we had seen at GQG & which Gerry had acutely examined to discover where it was made. This turned out to be at a shop called Flambeau, which we visited

among many others, & found it to be quite excellent for nearly all our requirements. They make sectional office furniture in steel, reminiscent of Roneo's work but in my opinion rather superior to it.

Gerry introduced me to Frank's bar at the Ritz where we agreed it was a crime not to drink champagne cocktails at 9 francs a time. We dined at the Coupole & spent an excellent evening which I shall not forget.

### **11th Oct**

The next day, having completed our purchases, we picked up our driver at the Mil Attache's office & set off again for GQG. There we met our friends again, who by this time were most friendly. They commented that my French had improved as a result of my visit to Paris(!) We got permission to make the drawings, & were loaded with a number of additional photos & brochures which they certainly had not originally intended to give us. Our two friends gave us their cards - their names were Capitaine Louis GAU (Aviation) & Capitaine PECRESSE - & promised that on our next visit they would give us a night out in Paris, & show us round as only a Frenchman can. I fervently hope this may be possible some time.

We motored back to GHQ with our spoil from GQG that afternoon & evening, arriving after dark.

## 12th Oct

This & subsequent days were spent in recording & filing the information & photos we had got at GQG.

It is time some description of our daily work was included in this diary.

The system we worked was that one copy of any photos received was filed in our filing cabinets; and these photos were indexed by reference to the map sheet on which they appeared. A slight complication arose when map-sheets of different scales were available for the same area. But in such cases, the most appropriate sheet was used - a tracing of each map sheet was maintained on which the areas covered by the photos was traced & given a reference letter & number. Then a book register was also kept, with pages relating to each map sheet, & details entered against each 'job' showing details of the photos. All this plotting & filing took considerable time to do, quite apart from the examination of the photos, which of course had to be carried out very carefully & under a magnifying stereoscope. This information was summarised in 'Interpretation Reports' which we issued from time to time, & circulated to I(a)i, (iii), the War Office, GQG and the Air Ministry. At this time there was only Gerry & me to do this work, though we used Hill, our draughtsman, to ink in our traces. As we only had one room in which Geoffrey Hunt, Steve (our liaison



officer with the Air Component) Oliver, Gerry & I worked, there was precious little room, & when we had a big job of work on, involving large mosaics, we commandeered the whole room & the others had to stop work and clear out!

About this time Oliver, who had been ailing with colds and food poisoning, retired to hospital, & soon after came off our strength & went home to England. He was too old for the job, & chronically lazy; actually we found him rather a nuisance, & as stubborn as a mule. Geoffrey had tried to find various excuses to get rid of him, & obviously the best way would have been to have let him fade out as unfit. But the the silly old man wouldn't take a hint, & refused to realise that Geoffrey was only trying to save his face. Finally there was a rather unpleasant scene when he & G were interviewed by the DMI, in which the silly little man started arguing back & got himself thoroughly ticked off. This made him realise that even if he stayed on his life would be made a burden to him by the DMI who would certainly trip him up if he could, & I strongly advised him to write out an application asking for a transfer to another job where his services could be better utilised. He jumped at this, & asked me to write the application which I did. He signed it & gave it to Geoffrey, & then retired to his bed in his quarters. That was the last we saw of him, as he was shipped off to hospital & then sent to England.

After my return from the visit to GQG I stopped writing my diary each day as I was so tired by bedtime that I didn't feel I could bring myself to write by the light of a candle, & in some discomfort & cold. Routine work went on, & the only incidents worth recording took place at intervals. So I shall put down these incidents at random now, though in chronological order, & throw in a date now & again when I am certain of it.

[Back to pencil.]

In these early days of GHQ both working conditions as well as living conditions were distinctly primitive, partly due to the restricted office accommodation and the difficulty of adapting small living rooms in farmhouses to office purposes, partly to the lack of official equipment (much of GHQ's mob: equipment had not yet turned up) and partly to the rawness of the clerks, many of whom were TA soldiers who were completely strange to their work.

I don't think I have before adequately described the village of Habarcq. It lies on the Arras-St.Pol road and consists of a number of rather smelly farms grouped round an unkempt chateau. The farmers are all poor and their farms are all they have to keep them from starvation. They work hard, with their womenfolk, and hope for an occasional letter from their sons who have all been mobilised and are with the French armies. Here the memories of the last war

are vivid, and they seem to regard the period of peace merely as an interlude between one great war and another.

The streets in the village are very muddy, and scored with the ruts of farm carts which are continually moving from one end of the village to the other. The farms are built round a courtyard in which are to be found a dirty green pond, a number of muddy ducks, hens and chickens, sometimes some pigs, nearly always a dog or two. The cows and horses are stalled in little sheds opening on to the courtyard, and usually part of the farm buildings. In the middle of the yard is a fresh mound of manure - the midden - from which drains away a stinking runnel of greeny-brown liquid. Hens are to be seen pecking about in the midden, and once a day the farmer's wife comes out to turn the dump with a fork. This is the moment to close all doors and windows.

In the ever present stench and noise of such a farmyard the business of a great headquarters went on. Officers in gum-boots, orderlies in greatcoats, despatch riders on motorbicycles, swathed in scarves & wearing balaclava helmets & leather jerkins, covered in mud & skidding from side to side, vied for roadspace with the farm carts, cattle and peasants in the walled streets of the dirty little village.

One day it became necessary for me to make a second shopping expedition to Arras to buy more office

equipment. It was always difficult to lay a claim to transport, but I had been lucky and had obtained one of the 'pool' cars to take me in at about 10am. I asked Chamberlayne if I could buy anything for him for the Mess, and he not only jumped at the offer, but decided to come in himself in order to get his hair cut.

We separated in Arras and did our various commissions, meeting at the moderne for a drink about 12 midday. Chamberlayne turned up with a beaming smile and protesting loudly at the heavy aroma of scent with which he had been invested by the too jealous attentions of the barber, who had insisted on giving him a 'friction'. Durand-Ruel, our interpreter, also arrived & we drank cinzano & pernod and Quinquina. Chamberlayne armed himself with two bottles of a special red wine from the patron's cellars, & we set off again for Harbarcq, only to be stopped in the main street of Arras by a gendarme who said that an 'Allerte' was on & all traffic must stop.

Chamberlayne made purposeful strides for a 'bistrot' which his eagle eye had espied, but as I tumbled out I perceived a very attractive girl on the opposite side of the road dressed in a crushed strawberry-and-cream frock who was smiling in my direction. Saluting her I asked if we might share her 'abri' to which she willingly agreed. It turned out she was the daughter of the owner of the Maison Huguette, a dress-shop in the main street. Durand Ruel & I

trooped in & were introduced to Madame, & then I went off to collect Chamberlayne, who was rather loath to leave his bistrot, but brought with him a large bottle of cognac. This we all drank in the little parlour of the shop, and so charming was this little impromptu party that I thought that the 'all clear' sounded all too soon.

Gerry Lacoste introduced me to a family called Benoist who lived in Arras. M. Benoist was a great friend of Gerry's father, and had been best man at his wedding. The family consisted of Monsieur & Madame and their three daughters Denyse, Jeannine and Manon. M. Benoist had a big hardware business at the junction of the Grande & Petit Place in the town. They offered me the hospitality of their bathroom which I gladly accepted, & used to go in there about once a week to have a tub & then tea with them. They were always most kind, and asked me to dinner twice. We used to play card games with the girls after dinner, & enjoy a 'family evening' which was a grand change.

Owing to the fact that Belgium retained her neutral status and would not cooperate with the French & British staffs, it was impossible to get any air photos of Belgium except obliques taken from the French side of the frontier, & these naturally did not cover very much ground & were not very satisfactory. Runs of the Scheldt and Lys were particularly required, and someone had the idea of asking the Imperial War

Museum for any 1918 photos of these rivers. In due course an enormous batch arrived and I had the job of sorting them out & joining together the useful ones. When I had done this, a number of people called at the office to examine them, notably members of those cavalry regiments which were to go forward in advance of the infantry and be prepared to fight delaying actions on the river lines. The DCGS (Gen Neame VC) also called in one afternoon and had a look at them & was very interested. Later it was decided to send the photos of the rivers up to 1 and 2 Corps HQ, & I was told to take them up & explain them to the I staffs.

I took the batch for 1 Corps to that HQ first. I went up by staff car and delivered them to the I branch at 1 Corps HQ in the big school buildings just across the river on the outskirts of Douai. I went on through Orchies to see Jack in a little house which since I last visited him he had turned into his coy mess. He gave me lunch, & Tommy Woolsey and Eric Holt were there also. Jack's room opened off the mess room & he looked very comfortable there. I gave him some truffles which I had bought in Douai & with which he was very pleased. Then I went by car to 2 Corps HQ at ..... & handed over their batch of photos. It was dark by the time we got back to Arras.

While I was with the Bn I called in to see Levi, Barty, George Ax etc & Fitzpatrick the padre asked me to find out if a man could get married by proxy as he

had a case of a fellow in the regiment who wanted to do so if possible. So when I got back to Arras I called in at the PM's office & spoke to two DJAGs (Deputy Judge Advocate General) who had quite an amusing legal argument about it, & finally one of them went into the JAG's office and put it to him, & came back with the answer that it was not possible under English law, though they thought it was under French law.

[Here the diary ends.]

Manchester Regt

Details from January 1940 Army list (as at 31 Dec 1939)

<u>Surname</u>	<u>Nick/Name</u>	<u>DOB</u>	<u>Wife</u>	<u>Rank</u>
	<u>Reg/Res</u>			
	Mutt			
	Ala			
Axworthy	Frederick <u>George</u> White	06 Jun 01	Lucy	Maj
Black	Kenneth Ross Fulton	07 Jan 05	Elizabeth	Capt
Churchill	Jack/John Malcolm Thorpe Fleming			RARO
Churchill	Author/Thomas Bell Lindsay	01 Nov 07	Janie	Capt
Clark	Rex/Robert King	27 Nov 13		Capt
Clutterbuck	Robert Gerard	24 Oct 19		2/Lt
Dent	Hugo/Hugh Darling	01 Dec 14		Lt
Derham ReidD				SR
Dewar JPPD				SR
Dorling	Francis Holland	11 Apr 77		Col
of the Regt				
DrylandJames				
Eddowes	Bill			
Evans	<u>Nigel</u> Keith	12 Dec 18		2/Lt
Fitch	Tony/John Anthony Colson	14 Aug 12		Lt SR
Fitzpatrick	Richard William	14 Jul 96		Padre 3rd
Cl(Maj)				
Fouracre	Jack/John Leighton	05 Mar 12		Lt SR
Frampton	George	08 Sep 06		Capt
GardnerJohn Angus		03 Sep 17		2/Lt
Green	Chinny/HRC			
	RARO			
Ham	<u>Gordon</u> William	22 Aug 12	Flora?Lorna	Lt
Heelis	John			
Hickey	Eve/Edward Middleton	06 Jan 01		Maj
Hilton	RW			SR
Holmes	Eb/Edward Barclay	03 Jan 92	Dee	Lt Col Reg
	To CO 1st Bn, Singapore			
Holmyard	Christopher Geoffrey Cotel	09 Jul 17		2/Lt TA

Holt	Arthur <u>Eric</u>	19 Jul 18		2/Lt
Howarth(TA)	F			Lt Col(RA)
Isherwood	CM			Lt
	SR(Unemp)			
Keitley	John Bernard Humby	05 May 19		2/Lt
James(76)				Col
Levis	Levi/Francis Arthur	07 Mar 96		Maj
Moore	Barty/Alexander William Uvedale	04 Jun 95		Lt-Col Reg
	CO of 2nd Bn			
Moorhead	Tim/Charles Dawson	17 Sep 94	Maisie	Lt
Col(DAAG)				
Mott	CK			
	RARO			
Musson Edward			Laura	Col
	Former CO			
Newton	Lancelot George	16 Dec 18		2/Lt
O'Brien	Herbert	11 Sept 00		Lt(QM)
Oliver	Kenneth Cuthbert Lindsay	18 Oct 18		2/Lt
Palk	Piggy			
Parminter	Reggie/Reginald Horace Roger	28 Mar 93		Col
Patterson(MO)				
Quinn	Thomas			Lt(QM)
Richardson	Old Rich			
Rose	Tony/KW			2/Lt SR
Ross				
Snow	Frederick	22 Mar 88		Maj(QM)
Stern	HS			Lt Col
Tod	Archie/George Archibald	07 Jan 09		Capt
Tuehy	Charles			
Venour	Walter Anderson	11 Aug 05		Capt
	Tom's successor at SOP			
Wilkie				
Williams	Geoffrey Morgan	4 Aug 18		2/Lt
Woolsey	Tommy/Edward Francis	10 Dec 07		Capt



<u>Other Military</u>					
<u>Surname</u>	<u>Nickname</u>	<u>dob</u>	<u>Wife</u>	<u>Rank(1938)</u>	
Notes					
Oliver Secretary, VSCC	Oswin			2/Lt	Early
Adam(RAF)	"a wet fish"	Alexander		Sqn Ldr	
Allison(RN)	Jack		Barbara		
Anderson(Gordon H)	John Denzil Cortlandt	17 Apr 05		Capt	
Anderson(RAMC)	2nd choice as successor at SOP Fellow Art Student				
Baxter				Col	
Bolster(5th Fus)	<i>Geoffrey Haddon</i>			Maj	
Browne-Clayton(12L)	William Patrick	27 Sep 06		capt	
Chamberlayne (RARO)	Crimus Henry Leopold Francesco		Maria 15 Jun 93	Capt	
(Scots Gds)	Tankerville				
Churchill(RN(FAA)) Tom & Jack)	Buster/Robert Alec Farquar			(Brother of	
Crossfield				Col/Sqn Ldr	
Daunt(RASC)	Richard Hubert	31 Dec 03		Capt	
Davidson(Gordons)	Kenneth Chisolm	04 Jul 97			
Dill	Sir John Greer	25 Dec 81		Gen	
Dobson					
Essame	Hubert	24 Dec 96		Maj	
Frink((4/7 DG)	<i>Herbert Ralph Cuyle</i>	26 Aug 99		<i>Maj</i>	
Gartlan	Gerald Ion	24 Jun 89		Brig	
Gloucester(Duke of)	Henry				
Goff(Dorsets)	Robert Ewen Cameron	10 Jul 98		Maj	
Gray(Queens)					4th
choice as successor at SOP					
Hawes(RA)	Leonard Arthur	22 Jul 92		Col	
Hawkesley(RN)					
Hudson(Foresters)	Charles Edward	29 May 92		Brig VC	
Hughes(HKVDC)	<i>Guy Owen</i>	08 Jul 17		2/Lt IA	
Hunt(Rifle Bde)	Geoffrey Hamilton	12 Feb 00		Maj	
Jacobs-Larkcom(RE)	Eric Herbert Larkcom	21 Jan 95		Lt Col	
Jardine(RA)	Sir Colin Arthur	24 Sep 92	Col	Col	
Jefferies					
ADC to Gort					
Keen(RM)	Bernard				
Keenlyside(RWK)	Christopher Headlam	04 May 13		Lt	Reg

SOP Student				
Keitley	Billy		Jennifer	
Kirkness				
(SR)				
Lacoste	Gerry/Gerald		Lt	(TA)
	Architect, BEF GHQ I section, Benoist contact			
Lloyd				Gen
Mackenzie				Lt
Maund	Bingle/Bingham	Ellen	RAF	Neighbour,
	WW1 pilot, family friends			
	(Bingham got 4 free tickets a week from the Aldershot cinema for putting a copy of the programme on the Officers' Mess notice Board – hence frequent trips to the flicks with them!)			
Munster(Lord)				
Murphy	Molly			
Neame(RE)(DCGS)	Philip	12 Dec 88		Gen(VC)
	(Toby at prep school with his sons)			
Noakes	Frederick Charles	09 Aug 92		
Oliver(Border R)				(TA)
Page(RA)				Maj
Porris				
Rance(Worcs/Sigs)	Hubert Elvin	17 Sep 98		Col
Seal Coon				
Secker-Walker				
Stephenson(Dorsets)				2/Lt
Stevens				Sqn Ldr
Sullivan(Queens)				(RARO)
Thorpe	<i>Charles William Gordon</i>			
Tod	Colin Fraser	13 Jun 98		Maj
	SOP student brother of Archie(Manchester R)			
Torrance	Kenneth			
Vaizey	Theo/John Theodore de Horne	30 Oct 98		Maj
Walker(Cheshire)				
	SOP student			
Watts(AEC)	Uncle			
Whitefoord(RA)	Philip Geoffrey	24 Sep 94	Col	
Willes	Irene (nee Churchill)			see
	page 87 in Chronicles			
Williams	Bill		Eunice	Lt Col
Willoughby(Middx)	John Edward Francis	18 Jun 13		Lt
	3rd choice as successor at SOP			
Wilson	Jumbo			Maj-Gen
Woods(RN)				Lt
	HMS Thetis survivor			
Wyatt				Col

## Civilian

<u>Surname</u>	<u>Names</u>	<u>Notes</u>
	Myf/Myfanwy	Rosemary's godmother
Banks	Leslie	A celebrity?
Barker		Ferryside folk
Beaton	The Bandit/Lewis	
Benoist	Denyse, Jeannine & Manon.	French friends of Lacoste and
Churchill, Arras, from 1940 and post-war		
Butters		Friend of McPhail
Cargill	Millie	Churchill family friend
Churchill	Lillie	Tom's aunt
Churchill	Mummy	Tom's mother
Churchill	Daddy/Alec Fleming	Tom's father
Churchill	Gwendoline Janie (nee Williams)	Tom's wife
Druce		Botanist - took young Tom on plant-
collecting travels in 1920s		
Ellison		
Elson	Pat	Rosemary's godmother
Estridge		Ferryside folk
Gibbs	Reggie	Betty
BP executive and MI5 for the duration.		She was an orphan cousin, he was a
Haines	Robin	Friend of Lewis Williams
Hamnett	Nina	Author – referred in letter to an officer
with bowler and umbrella who gave her a fiver – TBLC.		
Higgan	Frances	Farnborough friend
Jones	Charlie	Tilly
Jones	Willy	Ferryside folk
Lewis	Bob	Ferryside folk
Lindeman		A resident of Farnborough abbey
“there are no pockets in a shroud”		
MacDonald	John	(Of Glenbrittle) A friend of McPhail -
Highland pony/cattle expert.		
Mathews	Jean	Farnborough friend
McGliesh		Farnborough friend
McPhail		Doctor at Frimley TB Sanatorium -
Bagpipe fan, ergo Jackfriend		
Monro	Mary	Friend of Barbara
Morland-Lewis	Teddy	“Friend” of Barbara – painter who
died on active service in North Africa, I think.		
Neville	Betty	Ferryside folk
Roderick	Maj	Ferryside folk
Seagrave(?)	Edmund	Desiree
considerable influence		Editor of some literary magazine of
Stephens	Professor	
Sullivan	Jill	Farnborough friend
Sutherland	James	Seaforth Pipe-Major - friend of
Mcphail		
Whitmore		
Williams	Ma/Pauline	Janie's mother

Williams Tony/Lewis  
(protected trade) to Australia post-war  
Williams Peter  
died Dec 08– outlived Tojo then.  
Williams Barbara

Janie's brother worked for BICC

Janie's brother RA(TA) FEPOW,

Janie's sister