

2nd Can. Inf. Bde.

France May. 15th 1917.

From

Captain G. P. Duncan,

Chaplain

2nd Can. Inf. Bde.

To

Lieut.

Col. McEwen.

A. D. C. S.

Canadian Corps.

Sir:

I have the honour to submit the following report:

I was detailed for duty at Aviano Camp to begin on Sunday the 8th of April.

On Sunday evening I arrived there about nine o'clock. One man had been sent ahead with a few supplies for the coffee stall.

As no water had been arranged for, and the battle was to begin early on Monday morning, I asked private Somerville and my batman, Mr. Dean to assist me in digging water. We had difficulty in locating the well in the darkness,

2 but finally succeeded. The mud was very deep along the road, and the battalions were moving into the line in large numbers. As they went bravely along I began to realize the opportunity for service. We succeeded in getting a fair supply of water, but were compelled to stop, as the Germans were pouring over a great many shells on the Arross Bethune road.

I tried to sleep in a shack, but on account of a battery a few yards away, did not succeed. At three o'clock in the morning we began preparations for supplying coffee to the wounded. An hour and a half later, the barrage began. Major Demiron - an Imperial Artillery officer - said it was the most intense firing he had ever heard. As our shack was surrounded by our guns, the concussion smashed glasses and window panes. Col. Fraser C. B. of the dressing station described the barrage as greater than any at the Somme. At zero hour a

13 pause. One leaf in hooped
out, a crash of machine guns a
moment after, ~~after~~. Then the
whole front was one blaze of
light, and guns thundered over
the hills and valleys. It was
one constant roll, and even
to men accustomed to war, a scene
never to be forgotten.

Early in the morning the
wounded began to arrive at
the Dressing Station. The face
them coffee, and as the day was
cold the men were very grateful.
All day long we worked in
the stall, on the road, and in
the dressing station. Snow
fell during the day, and poor
wounded men were glad to
have a drink of hot coffee.

In the afternoon, the Germans
sent over a large number of
gas shells. Many of them
fell around the dump. In
addition to the gas shells, one
gas point mine, landed near
our coffee stall. One poor
fellow was ~~instantly~~ killed instant-
ly, and three others were wounded.
An officer in another part of our shack
was gassed, and died before he

4.
reached the hospital. Another man was
killed, while he lay on a stretcher. His
arm was blown off, and it was impos-
sible for him to live.

Captain Gibson and I continued the
work day and night for over a week.
The men sent by the department to assist
worked very strenuously, and many woun-
ded and tired men were ready to express
hearty thanks for the work done by
the Chaplain's Service.

He remained at the camp from
the 9th of April to the second of
May. During that time I was called
upon to conduct funeral services
near Tarsburg and other points. I
also visited the dressing stations
at the time camp was being carried.

On the 10th of April I respond-
ed to a call from the 10th Battalion.
Col. Cromer showed me over
the battle field, and evidence of the
bravery of our men could be seen all
around. It has been a privilege to do
some little thing in the great advance, I
regret I was not able to do more.

I ~~remain~~ have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient servant,
Geo. P. Duncan,
Chaplain, 2nd Can. Inf. Bn.