

Walter Gomm

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1916

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and dying condition, suffering great agony, frothing at the mouth and gasping for breath.

The battalion has gone back to Elverdinge from the Canal Bank, where they were ambushed and conveyed to "J" Camp. The Rifle Brigade occupied "J" Camp and while here their men were dying from gas. All bomb units returned to their units to-night.

Sat. Aug. 12th. Fresh bomb units arrived last night.

At the close of each course ~~the~~ men were allowed to throw live bombs. I used to occasionally hold a Mills bomb for two seconds after releasing the pin, and then throw it, explaining how easy it would be to have it thrown back again, but one day when doing a similar demonstration it burst as soon as it left my hand, fortunately we had all taken cover in the nick of time, and there were no casualties. There must have been a short fuse in that ~~XX~~ one, I never held anymore for two seconds afterwards.

Mon. Aug. 14th }
Tues. Aug. 15th } I visit the battalion in the evening.

Sat. Aug. 19th. Played the Belgians at football and win 1-0.

Sun. Aug. 20th. Bombing school close down today (worse luck) and all units and instructors are ordered to rejoin their units. I reached the battalion in "J" Camp about 4-70pm, and took over my old platoon, No. 2. I felt very grateful for my 25 days rest behind the lines, and the work had been very interesting, for not only did we learn all about our own grenades, we learnt all there was to know about the German and French ones, which was very useful. It was heavenly to be away from the horror of the trenches and the shelling, but now I must make up my mind for some more of it.

Mon. Aug. 21st. Parades:- Gas Smoke helmet drill in marching order, and bayonet fighting. The smoke helmet was a wretched contraption, it consisted of a piece of grey flannel similar to the shirts we ~~were~~ wear, and made into a hood that went over the head, and then tucked inside the tunic collar; it was saturated with chemicals and had two mica "windows" to look out of. They were most stifling to keep on for any length of time, especially