

A written account and photographs taken by  
Laurence Dudley CHAMBERS  
July - October 1917

No. 56745  
29th Reinforcements  
Wellington Infantry Regiment  
B Company

## **Enlistment**

It was in August 1916 when I wrote to Head Office Bank of New Zealand asking if I might enlist when I came of age. On the 8th Febry I again wrote asking that I might join the 29th reinforcements going into camp on 1st May and that I might have two weeks off, prior to the above mentioned date. As the answer was very indefinite the manager on the 14th Feby sent me to see if I could enlist but being under age there was no hope so had to wait.

After having enlisted and passed as medically fit I waited until 3rd of May when I again applied to Head Office and was granted extended leave ten days prior to going into camp on the 30th May with the 30th Reinforcements. As it happened the voluntary enlistments were closed for the 30ths and my leave pass was for the 25th June 17. I very soon got this altered to the 30th May as I was on good terms with Captain Roberts in charge of Masterton Defence Department.

## **Opunake To Tauherenikau**

At Devonshire House on the eve of my departure I was given a send off & first thing I did was to miss the early train in the morning, so arrived at Eltham about 1pm on Saturday. The ten days holiday had finished before they had began and on the 30th May found myself off to Camp. Our first experience was a night at Palmerston north in the drill shed, when everyone hopped the fence and of course sleep was hardly thought of.

We were up early next morning and by midday found ourselves in Trentham. Before the day was finished we were all in Platoon & in huts with our uniforms rifles & equipment generally. We spent another day in Trentham doing almost nothing but on 2nd of June were on the train early & off to Taiherenikau. We landed in Featherston Camp & a three mile march in "Bill's big boots" brought us to our new home. We soon found ourselves settled down in "Indian" tents (square ones).

Laurence Dudley Chambers was born 17 April 1897

## First days in camp

The weather was glorious with frosty mornings and Sunday passed in our new home cleaning buttons and making ourselves acquainted with the surroundings. On Monday we started off with drill and by the time a week was passed we were most of us getting "fed up with slow march and turning among the stones on the parade grounds." A day or two more and the weather began to break so that the drill soon cut up the parade grounds and it was then that we started & cleared stones in another paddock about a mile and a half from camp. Some days we had lectures in the tents on care & cleaning of Arms musketry trigger pressing and sighting with eye-discs. We were now on musketry out of doors and had hidden objects to pick up & judge their respecting distances.

On the evening of June the 11th I found that I was to wear a stripe. Two other fellows of our hut also found stripes waiting for them and another Pte Wall was made Corporal.

On the 20th of June we voted in favour of wearing "Shorts" and on the following morning the Governor came to inspect the Camp and see how the Routine drill was carried out. Our officers were as one might say "getting one on to A Coy" as they had been wearing "Shorts" in the afternoon for some time, but when inspected in the morning had their "longs" on. The shorts are fine and look very much better, [I can tell you] than the "longs".

On Saturday afternoon (our half holiday) we were inoculated & had forty eight hours off so as to recover from the [results] effects. Many of us played football after we were done and on Sunday I think if I did not put my left arm above my head I would not have known anything had happened. Some of the fellows in other tents seemed to be pretty ill though and most of us hardly moved out as it was a wet miserable day.

Tuesday morning found five men of our no 5 Platoon shining buttons and gear ready to go on guard at 10 am for the following twenty four hours. In the evening the Corporal was nearly caught warming his feet on the "Beat" in my place while I had some coffee. The officer from Head Quarters came down to inspect but as luck had it we got out of the "Scraps" and finished up next morning without any "Blasts".



"Our Home" - Laurie Chambers on right

## **Tauherenikau to Featherston to Eltham to Oaonui**

On Thursday 28th June orders came out that the Canteen was out of bounds but shortly afterwards found we were off to Featherston in the morning.

Before I go I must say that our no 1 tent mates under Pte Cripps were a fine lot. Cripps was in a team of five who won the shooting for New Zealand at Trentham not many years ago. Pte Volzke won the NZ axmens cup one year & through a bit of bad luck just missed the championship for the world. He & his brother hold a worlds record for sawing a two foot log. Old uncle "Tom" was nearly on the age limit and a fine chap. B Coy held the record for marching, easily. They used to come home the mile and a half at a hundred and forty to the minute which is going some to be sure.

In Featherston we find ourselves in huts. There is a fair amount of leave to be got & weekend to Masterton and Wellington. The next afternoon we were off on final leave. Leave was given us so that we could go to Masterton the night before, so as to be able to catch an early train and get right through to Taranaki on Friday night. I stayed in Eltham over the weekend and landed home on Monday by Buss. The next evening four of us had a "send off" at Oaonui when the Opuake people gave me a wristlet watch.

### *Bush Advocate 29 Dec 1905 Axemen's Carnival*

Eltham, December 28... In the Double-handed Sawing Championship, Casey and Pretty (Eltham) dead heated twice with Volzke Bros (Midhurst)... To the Press representatives it appeared the Voltze Bros. had won by the merest margin... but the judges awarded a dead heat... The time, 23 1-5 sec. established a new world's record, the best time previously being put up by Carson and McIntosh at Invercargill in 1904, viz. - 30 sec.

## **Back to Featherston and off to Isolation Camp Tauherenikau**

Final leave was all too short & I found myself in Camp at about 4.45 on Tuesday the 14th July 1917. Hardly had we entered camp when we found orders awaiting us that we were to sail on the following Thursday. Of course our Company hardly knew how to take it as many expected one or two more days off to say final goodbye. Having been swabbed we soon had tea and were in our old huts again. Wednesday we were as busy as could be getting ready for embarkation, giving in rifles etc and receiving Seakits.

[10 July 1917 was a Tuesday]

Promoted to Lance Corporal 12 July 1917

This done I was just off to the Discharge Stores to send home the rest of my civilian clothes, when a Corporal told me to report at the Hospital. A long sheet of paper said that my swab was doubtful and that I was suspected of carrying germs. This meant I had to pack up and bundle my stuff into the Ambulance to go for a holiday to Isolation Camp Tauherenikau.

My first night was on the boards but got straw next day. We were on a good win getting up at about 8.30am or 9 shaving sometimes and generally doing nothing. After a couple of days we had four more patients who had not done a days' drill. We played football most of the time and even in the moonlight.





"Swabbing" 10 July 1917



Lance Corporal Laurence Dudley Chambers





Ambulance at Tauherenikau 15-22 July 1917



Tauherenikau 15-22 July 1917





"Isolation" Tauherenikau 15-22 July 1917

## Back to Featherston from the Isolation Camp at Tauherenikau

After a week we were all returned to Featherston. I was then on Baggage Guard and back in B29 again but of course had a new lot of men from Wellington & Wairarapa. I was not quite a stranger though as I was still with the same old NCOs. Our men who were not a patch on the old lot turned up very well after their final leave.

Transferred to H Company 28th Reinforcements  
Thursday 26 July 1917

Transferred to B Company 29th Reinforcements  
Tuesday 31 July 1917

It was the 6th Aug 17 the morning of the earthquake when they returned and on Wednesday we packed up to find ourselves off to Trentham. Friday we sent a Guard to take charge of the Transport 92 (Ruahine) and on Sunday one of them went mad and jumped overboard. This company of ours one day at Tauherenikau refused to obey an order so down came the Camp Commandant who was immediately counted out.

### *Wairarapa Daily Times 6 Aug 1917 Heavy Earthquake Shocks - Worst Experienced for Years*

At 3.18 o'clock this morning, Masterton was visited by one of the worst earthquakes ever recorded in the district. By many people it was considered of a more pronounced nature than the earthquake in August 1904... It is computed that the main shock lasted quite 25 seconds... followed at intervals by a number of other tremors... up to fifteen... the region of the railway station and Lincoln Road... chimneys suffered severely, and crockery, glassware etc., in some houses were scattered in all directions... falling chimneys have done considerable damage to buildings...

Magnitude 6-7.5



"Mounted" Featherston July-August 1917





Featherston July-August 1917



Featherston July-August 1917



## Preparation for Embarkation

Promoted to Corporal 11 August 1917

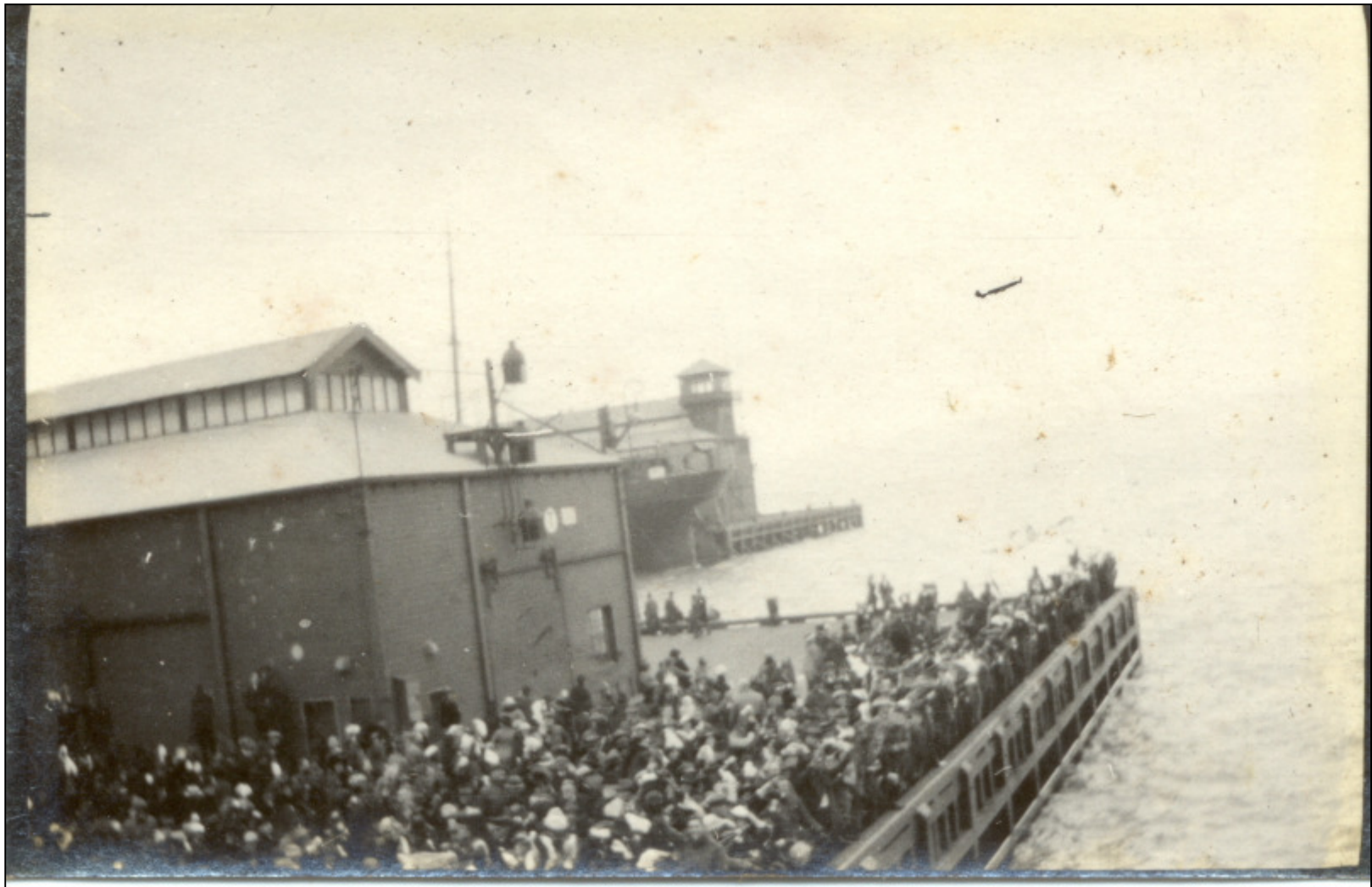
### *Evening Post 11 Aug 1917 Inspection of the 29ths*

His Excellency the Governor-General (the Earl of Liverpool) inspected the 29th Reinforcements at Trentham this morning. The following temporary appointments of n.c.o.'s have been approved by the Commandant of Trentham Camp (Col. H. R. Potter, C.M.G.):- ... B Company: To be corporals, L.-Cpls J. R. E. Bennett, M. Carr, L. D. Chambers, A. Knapp, J. L. Philpott, W. B. Smith, Pte. F. J. Randal...

Monday the 13th August 1917 our rifles were handed in and Tuesday Sea kits issued. Wednesday Reveille 4am. We were buzzing round cleaning up, burning our straw, packing up ready to parade at 8am. At 9 the Trentham band played us out from the station and at 10.30 we were on the wharf at Wellington. I met dad almost immediately & we kept together as far as was allowed. Dad gave me a parcel & found another awaiting me on board so was well off. A very short time before we left the wharf (about 1.30 pm) to go out into the stream the crowd were allowed on the wharf so I took a snap or two but did not see Dad again. He must have been there among the crowd as this book was put aboard and I received it after about four days out.



Farewell of Troopship 'Ruahine' 15 Aug 1917



Farewell of Troopship 'Ruahine' 15 Aug 1917





Farewell of Troopship 'Ruahine' 15 Aug 1917

## Leaving Wellington

At 6pm we started on our voyage with fine weather & a beautiful calm sea. Our Company was lucky to get bunks on the promenade deck starboard side as we sailed east. Some of the Companys are down below in hammocks. Four of us Corporals are in a third class cabbin which is not bad but gets very warm. Three of us are only twenty & two to the day while the fourth is as good as a father having been in the navy for nine years.

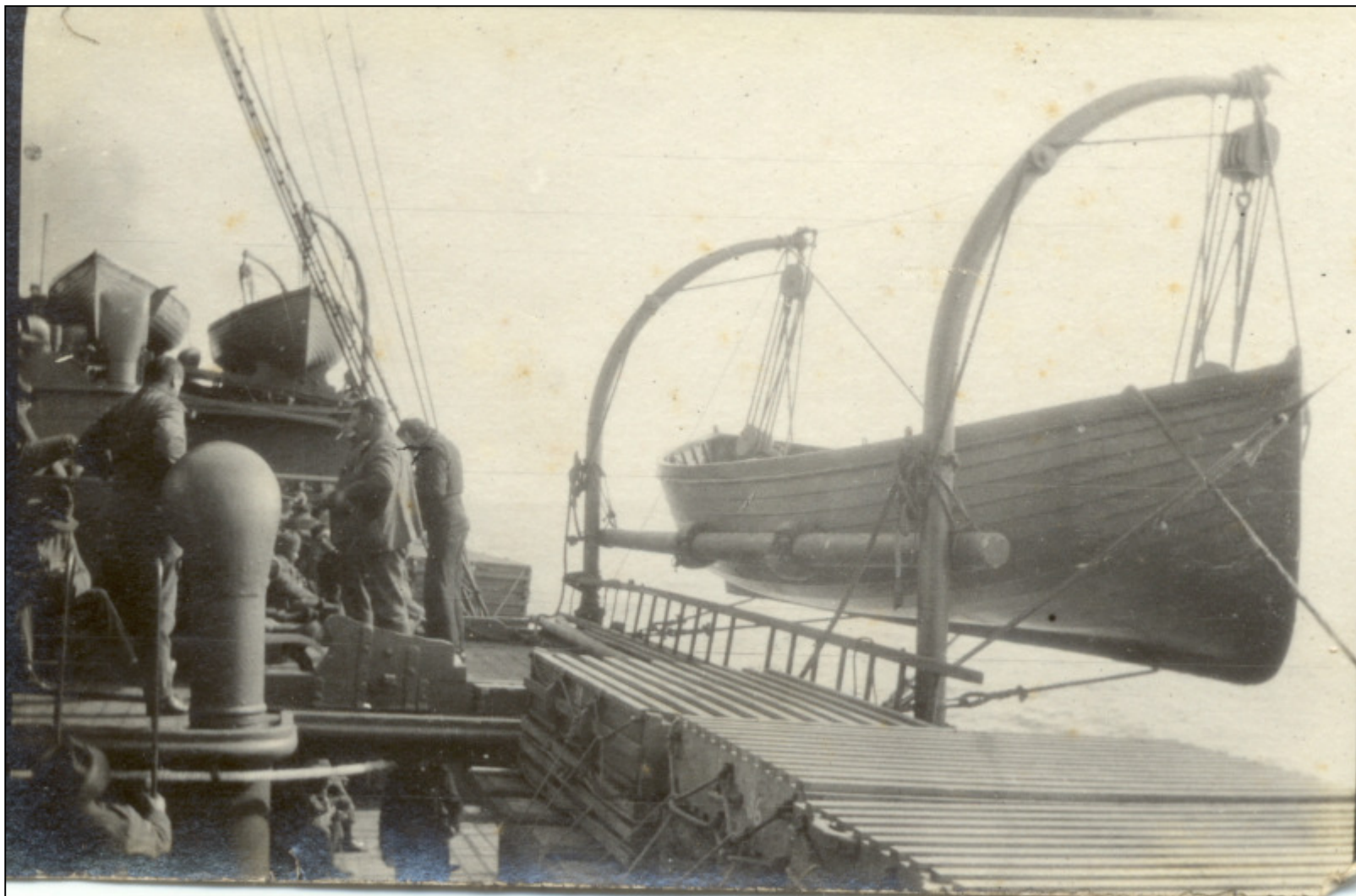
Reveille each morning is at 6.30 followed by breakfast at 8am the second sitting, as the Company sleeping below have theirs first. Roll call is at 9.30 followed by gargle and very often physical drill. Beyond this there is usually very little to do except when on fatigue. On some afternoons we have drill but very often do nothing. Competitions of all kinds are going on with all sorts of games. Sweepstakes on the number of knots each day are held and every night there is a concert so time does not lagg at all.

The canteen sells a good many things which are much appreciated by the boys. The prices are very reasonable and cigarettes are twopence per packet. (Three castles) Books and games have been distributed also YMCA paper and envelopes. Some of the lifeboats after the first day were swung out and we were all told off for certain boats.



Troopship 'Ruahine' August 1917





Lifeboat on the troopship 'Ruahine' August 1917





Troopship 'Ruahine' August 1917



Back: Corporal Frederick John Randal  
Front:: William Burns Smith, John Leslie Philpott, Jack Robinson Effingham Bennett





Troopship 'Ruahine' August 1917



On board troopship 'Ruahine' August 1917 - Four Corporals 'B' Company Platoon 5

Middle left: Jack Robinson Effingham Bennett

Middle right: Laurence Dudley Chambers

Front left: William Burns Smith

Front right: John Leslie Philpott

The names of the men at the back are unknown

[www.nzpictures.co.nz/images.htm](http://www.nzpictures.co.nz/images.htm)

Laurence Dudley Chambers Collection



## The Four Corporals



Jack Robinson Effingham  
Bennett (1897-1976)  
No. 59303



Laurence Dudley  
Chambers (1897-1959)  
No. 56745



William Burns  
Smith (1897-1923)  
No. 59473



John Leslie  
Philpott (1888-1955)  
No. 59447

### *Evening Post 08 Feb 1923 In the Country - Otaki*

By Telegraph - Special to the Post. The death occurred at Otaki yesterday of Private W. Burns Smith, son of Mr and Mrs W. Burns Smith, of Otaki. Deceased, who was a very promising young man of twenty-five years, had been in poor health as the result of war service, and for some time he was at the Te Waikato Sanitorium and at the Otaki Hospital.

## Life on board

On the stern is a six inch gun which with a few rifles means a slight protection. The rifles are for musketry & for practice in shooting. The testing device is a very clever one. The man shoots at a tiny target about eight inches from the muzzle. A rod inside a tube is put inside the barrel of the rifle & instead of the striker exploding the cartridge it hits the end of the rod which flies forward hitting the target. The target has two bullseyes marked on it: one a certain distance above the other. The man aims at the top bull and the striker rod hits the lower one.

Through sickness two of our holds have been fumigated & the smell together with a couple of breezy days found many heads over the side including my own. After this came lovely fine weather and by the 25th August many were having salt showers night & morning. On the 26th Aug 17 (Sunday) at midnight a funeral was quietly held as a Maori had died of C. S. M.

On the 27th August we were vaccinated but the dose being very light there were very few sore arms. We were then coming into warmer weather so the sailors were making up wire ropes for the awnings. We were then coming among the pretty flying fish which live in the warmer climates. Many of our men were sleeping on deck but now and again some were shifted by tropical showers which came up very suddenly.

Private Thomas CLARK 56137 F Company 29<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements

*"This man developed Cerebro-spinal Meningitis on the 18<sup>th</sup> ultimo and in spite of all that medical skill could do he passed away at 7.20 p.m. on the 26<sup>th</sup> instant. After conferring with the P.M.O. I decided that a hasty burial was necessary for the safety of all concerned. Accordingly at midnight 26/27 of August the steamer was stopped and in the presence of myself and the Adjutant and other senior officers was buried with military honours, the Bugler sounding the last Post."*

Archives NZ Military Personnel File - Reference AABK 18805 W5530 0025360

Portrait in Auckland Weekly News 1917

New Zealand Herald 15 Sep 1917

### Births, Marriages and Deaths.

#### ROLL OF HONOUR.

**CLARK.**—On August 26, 1917, died at sea of cerebro-spinal meningitis, Private Thomas Clark, Twenty-ninth Reinforcements, youngest son of Thomas Clark, of Awanui North, and stepson of Mrs. Agnes Clark, of Dargaville; aged 19 years and 3 months.



Vaccination - Troopship 'Ruahine' 27 August 1917





Vaccination - Troopship 'Ruahine' 27 August 1917



Troopship 'Ruahine' August 1917



Troopship 'Ruahine' August 1917 "Phosphorene" is advertised on the piece of paper being held

## **Photographic film processing commences**

On 30th Aug 17 I started a little photography to pass away the time using the chiropodists room for darkroom & for working, it having been fitted up for washing. On 2nd Septr we were issued with First Aid field Bandages sewn up neatly in khaki bags and our "dead meat" tickets. On the 3rd we crossed the equator at 8pm but held no celebrations as an officer in a previous reinforcement was accidentally killed. Each night now we found ourselves ploughing through a phosphorous ocean having a beautiful silver wake away behind. During our voyage we have gained about twenty minutes a day but we must not forget that Antipodes day followed our first Thursday out making the two Thursdays in one week.

Our darkroom is grand as we cover the ports with round pieces of roofing material enabling us to work day or night. Some of the little snaps are fairly good but by the 4th Sep found that the water had become too warm thus spoiling a film which to start with was a good one. Our gun fired three rounds for practice today at boxes thrown over. Here and there we watched seagulls which the officers soon frightened away if they came too close with rifles.

On the 5th we were cleaning up the ship & wishing or hoping for leave at Panama. We received a wireless message to say Lens had been captured. This was the first news we have received since we left. In the evening we carried lights.

## **Approach to the Panama Canal**

We were all up early on the 6th Sep 17 to find that we were lying in wait near two or three Islands which were not very distinct on account of the rain and mist. There was lightning every now and again too. At 6.15am we began to move slowly blowing the siren at short intervals. At 8am we are again waiting near more Islands on our Port side & a couple of vessels away ahead of us on the horizon. We watched one of them gradually coming towards us. As we waited we noticed two or three whales or blackfish spouting in the distance. Next we saw a good many large brown moths flying about the ship. They were about six or seven inches across the wings as one or two were caught, but only delapidated ones. A few little grey birds were flying about too. The approaching boat worked by blacks circled round us & went directly back to harbour. We moved on slowly for a while when at 9.30 a launch brought men to inspect us. At 9.45 we steamed on again passing some very pretty islands covered with beautiful green vegetation. On one of the main islands was a good sized town. Far in the distance we saw land as the fog & rain had cleared up very quickly but it was not very bright. Almost ahead of us were two islands connected by a railway & a third stood a little out to sea. This one was just a rock & possibly used for signalling etc.

The two islands are covered with very pretty trees but one has a large crain [??] near the top of it which gives it the suspicion of being a fort. Behind these in the distance is Panama. Here and there we noticed seagulls & pelicans on bits of wood and bouys & next a long wall the water behind which seemed higher so must have been a dam. [special note at bottom of page: "It is not a dam but merely a wharf or breakwater."]

## Entering the Panama Canal

Our pilot put men aboard just as we came into the entrance of the Canal which seemed about two hundred yards across. Next we saw a huge structure upon which stood twelve ... crains. A little further on was Coal Hauling machinery dredges pontoons covered with machinery graders also huge black sheds all along the waters edge for some distance. Having passed these we now see a large wireless station which may be seen for miles the steel construction masts for the receiving wires are a great height. Further on we passed the very pretty vegetation which grows almost to the waters edge and among it in an old water course were four old dredges sunk in the mud. Just a little back we saw a mule & a couple of real cow boys among the palms. We passed here and there nigger settlements until we came near the first lock called Miraflores where an old nigger in a boat sang out to us "All right you kill the Kaiser".

We passed another dredge and soon saw the large arrow - on the centre of the wharf between the locks - which points the side to take. At 10.15 we are alongside and a crew of blacks put aboard. On the wharf are concrete pillars for electric mules which tow the vessels from lock to lock. The first doors of steel closed behind us so up came the water lifting us about 28 feet. Another lifted us to the level of the Miraflores lake through which we sailed at a fair pace. We were then fifty [eighty crossed out] five feet above sea level. As we passed each set of locks our fellows exchanged badges coins etc while the american soldiers some on leave, & some carelessly carrying rifles side arms & belts ... tobacco etc. The sidearms were not fixed, but the rifles loaded. When a new sentry is put on the old one gives over the ammunition. We sailed on through this pretty lake surrounded with pretty vegetation palms and native settlements. In one place were some large buildings some of which were factories. One by the sound must have been a sawmill.

## **Pedro Miguel Lock**

At 2pm we were at the second lock called Pedro Miguel. This is a single lock which raised us thirty feet which is the high level eighty five [one hundred and fifteen crossed out] feet above the Pacific Ocean. From here we sail through the Culebro. Cut nine miles long the construction of which meant the moving of 90,000,000 cubic yards of earth. The bottom is 300 feet across so of course we had to go slowly here. On each side were small native villages & in places the natives were working shifting metal by machinery and sluicing. We passed very close to some natives & two kiddies held up some sheets of brown paper upon which in big letters was KILL THE KAISER.

At 2.30 we passed a liner called Guatemala and shortly afterwards another called Armbamba. Next was a large bridge of steel on which was painted in white DANGER 44,000 VOLTS. Near here too were a couple of skyscraper cranes which might lift a vessel from the water. Next was the Panama Gaol after which we saw huge dredges working. Each has a kind of bucket shovel fastened to a long shaft. I took a snap of one of these but will try & describe it as the photo may be too small to be of any use. The shaft with bucket attached goes down to the bottom and as far as I can make out must be dragged along the ground. After being hauled up the detachable bottom is removed dropping the material into a punt.

Up on a high bank are a good many soldiers in houses which in this part of the world seem to be all raised up off the ground for protection against insects & snakes I suppose. Barracks they may be called. One soldier said that along the canal were twelve thousand soldiers artillery aviation etc. Next we came to the artificial lakes with remains of trees still standing with their dead limbs above the water.



## **Gatun Locks and Christobal Harbour**

Before us was another wireless station just after the same stile with its high steel pinacles. A few minutes and down came the rain again. We passed the Gatun locks at about 5.30pm to 7pm when we found ourselves lowered eighty five feet in three locks to the sea level, the sea still being seven miles away. By eight pm we were in Christobal harbour. We passed the 'Mokoia' exchanging greetings as we came alongside a coaling wharf.

The huge amount of machinery is an eye opener. A part of the harbour about four hundred yards long & a hundred yards wide is surrounded by a wharf of concrete built of large concrete pillars. Between the pillars is a wall the top of which is just above the water to stop the coal when dropped in front spreading out into the harbour. Also when coal is dropped in the water runs away over the wall.

On the centre of this concrete wharf is a steel platform carrying two sets of rails for electric trucks which carry about five ton of coal each. There are dozens of these trucks so the construction must be immensely strong. On the inner side of this structure run more rails which carry a steel bridge right accross the hundred yards of coal. Think of this bridge accross all this distance running by a few wheels on rails with goodness knows what machinery upon it. The bridge first of all carries two sets of rails for the electric trucks. The coal is hauled high into the air by a large shovel which seems to be almost human in its movements. It comes down open fills with coal as it closes & is lifted to a great height when with one swing inwards the jaws are opened dropping the coal into a shute from whence it is dropped into the trucks.

Next is the coal from the trucks to the ship. Another set of rails on the outer side of the wharf carries heavy machinery. The coal is dropped by removing a side of the truck, into a shute which gradually drops it on to a large belt. This belt carries the coal high up into the machine when another belt coming out over the ship having a shute attached which reaches the hold, drops the coal into the holds. This steel shute hanging from the end of the belt looks like an ... truck. To fill up the odd corners on the other side of the ship a couple of barges were brought round. From their masts hung machines consisting of an endless set of buckets in a case. From the top of this reaches a shute (trunklike) into corners not yet filled. This is moved about as the niggers feed it by shoveling the coal down underneath it.

## Departing Christobal Harbour

Some of the men from the 'Mokoia' had a bit of a march but we were not allowed off at all. We had a Guard on the wharf all the time. It was rather amusing to watch the American sentry who lounged about with a satisfied smile on his face while our fellows tramped up and down the wharf with nearly all their clothes off & still perspiring heavily.

Many niggers traded views postcards coins etc. One or two American girls came & threw us fruit and small things. Our boys threw back odds & ends so I threw a print of our four Corporals with my address upon the back. Went up to the crows nest but could not see very far. The town seemed to be some distance away behind palms & trees which were very pretty. In the evening we steamed out into the harbour to wait until the morning. It was a lovely morning when we passed with five other transports and a cruiser, out to sea making a northward course.

It was the 8th Sep that we began to realise that we were in a sea where danger might be very close, for we were hardly out of sight of land when we started zigzagging & continually changing position. All the vessels seem to be painted grey in this part of the world. The Christobal harbour is artificial made of heavy rubble & concrete blocks heaped up. At night we have all lights out and no smoking is allowed after sunset. We saw one or two other vessels at different times. The atlantic ocean seems to be a different blue compared with the Pacific but we still see flying fish and at night watch the phosphorous in the water.

## **Crossing the Atlantic**

Sunday morning I was Ships Orderly Sergeant but there is very little to do on board. On Monday the 10th Sep was erected a proper crows nest at the head of the fore mast for a lookout for submarines. Also four of our men are placed in different parts of the ship on the lookout. Still too hot for photography as the temperature is 89 inside & the water 85 degrees and we want it down to 60 degrees F. H.

On Tuesday night I think we passed a lighthouse on our port side. We are not positive but I think it was a lighthouse because after each three minutes it came up very bright & dull again. Two o'clock in the morning of the 12th Sep this light was still visible far behind us. We carried lights to fore and aft which is not done except when passing trading routes. (saw seagulls and swallows so must have been near land.) [sideways in margin]

On the 13th Sep the cruiser came very close to us so tried my luck with a snapshot which I hope will be developed in a few days time. B Coy held sports today as did the others each day. There were different rumours then of going to a British Naval Base (Burmadoes) & that there was a German raider at large which sunk a British vessel. Orders said that we had to number our boots using still figures provided. The crows nest was erected we have had four submarine watchers on all day & night.

On September the fifteenth at 7.30am we sighted land on the horizon which at midday we found to be Bermuda a British naval base. This island is about forty or fifty miles long with a fine land locked harbour. It is an American holiday resort being only about a days sail from the mainland. Here the American cruiser Charleston left us while the British battleship Carnaven took charge of us. This battleship is a sister ship to the Hampshire. During the afternoon some red fish were caught something like soldiers only with tiny black spots. A fish like a three pound trout was caught too. In the evening we left sailing north. Next morning was spent writing letters mail closing Tuesday - and Church Parade.

## Halifax Harbour

During Tuesday we passed one or two fishing smacks but the weather being wet we played cards & ludo. At 4pm we sighted land. As we passed in through the heads we noticed a hospital ship with her bow well up on the rocks. The lights of the harbour were very pretty as we came in and by 8.30pm dropped anchor in Halifax harbour. Early next morning we found we were one of many ships transports merchant ships seven Belgian Relief ships and soon the land all round is covered in very scrubby forest with houses scattered about.

Thursday morning we had boat drill lowered the boats & sailed round among the other transports & vessels until midday. Some of the boats stayed away much longer one boat going ashore to be given them tea by some lady who was very pleased to see them. Developed a couple of films in the afternoon but the warm water just about ended their lives. At dusk we up anchor soon finding ourselves alongside a wharf. We four corporals slipped down to clean buttons & boots. Luck had it we were nearly finished when at 9pm leave was granted until midnight. Not many minutes found us going up the road at the rate of knots.

The town with its brick and stone buildings dingy and oldfashioned is built on an isthmus which is fairly high in the centre. Many of the streets are cobbled but as a whole they are very poor. Two of us took a tram car to the Exhibition. We wound in and out & round & round for an hour part of the time with a black nigger woman educated & very well dressed. Wished it was daylight for a snap. We were too late for the Exhibition which they say was nothing wonderful so wound our way back. Everywhere we noticed people foreign looking to us sitting about on their doorsteps.

Late at night there were soldiers & sailors everywhere & young girls running about the streets. The houses were, many of them, very pretty with lawns in front & no fences. The land is very poor, the only product being a few apples. Fruit is fairly cheap so before we went back on board bought a few apples & bananas & one or two postcards. We noticed a Church of England institute & a branch of the YMCA. Our quartermaster bought us 23 films for a sovereign but somehow we could not get any more. The Barber on board promised us gaslight postcards but now we are in mid ocean he changes his mind & I have only a little paper. We got on board in good time but next morning there were still a good many missing.



## **Getting Coal on Board**

Friday the 21st showed us a good days work before us. On the wharf was 300 tons of coal to be carried aboard in baskets. B Company was unit for Duty so missed the coaling which was finished by 1.30pm.

From where we were we saw a couple of battleships a training ship beside merchant vessels. In the distance was a steamer painted light grey with a black whale painted on her side. Another dark grey steamer was painted white fore & aft. At the bow the dark paint resembled represented a stern while the dark paint at the stern looked like a bow. This makes the vessel look smaller & if going slow a submarine might think she was going the opposite direction or look as though she were reversing. This white fore and aft also helps to deceive the speed of the vessel.

We left Halifax on Saturday 30th Sep 17 and saw the Hospital boat still on the rocks near the heads. We had now escort for a time but had an auxiliary cruiser with us. We were fourteen steamers in all & travelling east, still in calm weather, but the weather was getting much cooler. Next morning we had full dress parade & inspection by our O.C. No church parade. For the next seven days we did very little. There was some gun practice. All through we kept or the Ruahine kept a central position having a very valuable cargo aboard.

## Halifax to Firth of Clyde

Another death occurred on the 27th Sep. A Maori strained himself at some sports & a blood vessel burst in his head. On the 29th it was ordered that the Ports were to be kept closed. At 4.30 ten destroyers hove in sight. They soon came over and so made us feel more safe. It was then that we started to use the Welsh coal and were steaming at full speed.

On the evening of the 1st Oct we watched the American & Canadian transports & the munitions boats leave us most likely going to Liverpool. Now there were only five of us left. NZ Ruahine and Mokoia. Australian Miltiades Carpathia & Medic. The rest of the convoy were Themistocles, Anchises, Victoria (aux gun), Kroonland, Archives Mongolian Grampion, Carmania, Themistocles, Ionican, Canada. I am not quite sure whether these are correct. Possibly some of them are wrong. Some of the destroyers still accompany us.

Tuesday 10th Oct we were up early to find that the destroyers had left and that the closest we had been to a submarine was that a sailing vessel was shelled about a hundred and fifty miles behind us. At 6.30 we were off an island called Alsig Craig half way between Belfast and Glasgow. We soon found ourselves in a channel. Each side of us were pretty old fashioned houses & castles of stone spread over rolling hills of green pasture. The shrubs all about set off the fine old buildings making them look beautiful & homely. Harvesting was going on, the crops seeming to be growing right down to the waters edge. We passed villages here and there and a few small paddle steamers. We wound on in and out up the firth of Clyde. Later we passed in through a boom barcade from which may have hung a wire net to stop submarines. This barcade is guarded by two or three small boats carrying guns. We just got through when we carried away a bouy the chain having caught round one of our screws. Two or three small boats soon fixed us up and off we steamed again.

## End of the Voyage

Next we passed an immense four funnel liner and a large warship painted like a zebra. We soon entered the Caledonian Canal along which are many towns & factories by the hundred & shipbuilding yards by the mile. We saw an aeroplane factory passed one or two War Tanks in one place and were very struck at the large number of girls in uniform & some in trousers working at all kinds of work even to coal trucks and working at the construction of ships. I think they do a good deal of the painting at about 10d per hour.

We saw a good many destroyers before our voyage ended each carrying a good number of torpedoes. At last we came up alongside the Mokoia to find our voyage ended on the 2nd Oct 1917. We were surrounded by sheds so went up to the mast head to have a look round. There was town as far as I could see spires & huge chimneys belching out smoke. The next was news that about eight of the Old B Coy had been killed in a train accident. The seven days previous to our arrival there were Air Raids on London.

Rations were served out & blankets given in before we left the old Ruahine leaving by train for Sling Camp. About 9.30 we started off in a third class carriage which is as good as NZ first class. We travelled for fourteen hours before we arrived so saw a good deal of the southern scenery. We were travelling on the L S W R & the G Railways. We passed through towns of all kinds and sizes and saw many beautiful old homesteads. We saw the Oxford Aviation school & watch the aeroplanes which come quite close at times. Sometimes we see a dozen or more at a time. I do not think the camp here is as good as Featherston but the food is good. The weather is getting pretty cold now & there is rain now and again. Everyone is sending Christmas Cards now as the mail is closing tomorrow. I will have to pack this up and get on with other writing.

Love to all from Lawrie

## The Camera

It was thought that the camera used to take these photographs was a Vest Pocket Kodak made in U.S.A. by Eastman Kodak Company, Rochester, N.Y., U.S.A. However, the patent dates on the back of the camera suggest that the photographs taken before arriving in England were taken by a different camera.

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Patented in U.S.A. Jan 21, 1902 - Mar 4, 1902 - May 6, 1913 -  
Aug 18, 1914 - May 30, 1916 - Aug 22, 1916  
Jun 13, 1917 - **Aug 28, 1917**

British Patents 9006-1912, 9007-1914, 5043-1915

Patented in Canada 1916

Patented in Australia  
13077 May 2, 1914 - 13078 May 6, 1913 - 15818 Mar 19, 1915

other patents pending

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Additionally the camera is inscribed with "Newport News, VA" - was it purchased there?



## Vest Pocket Kodak



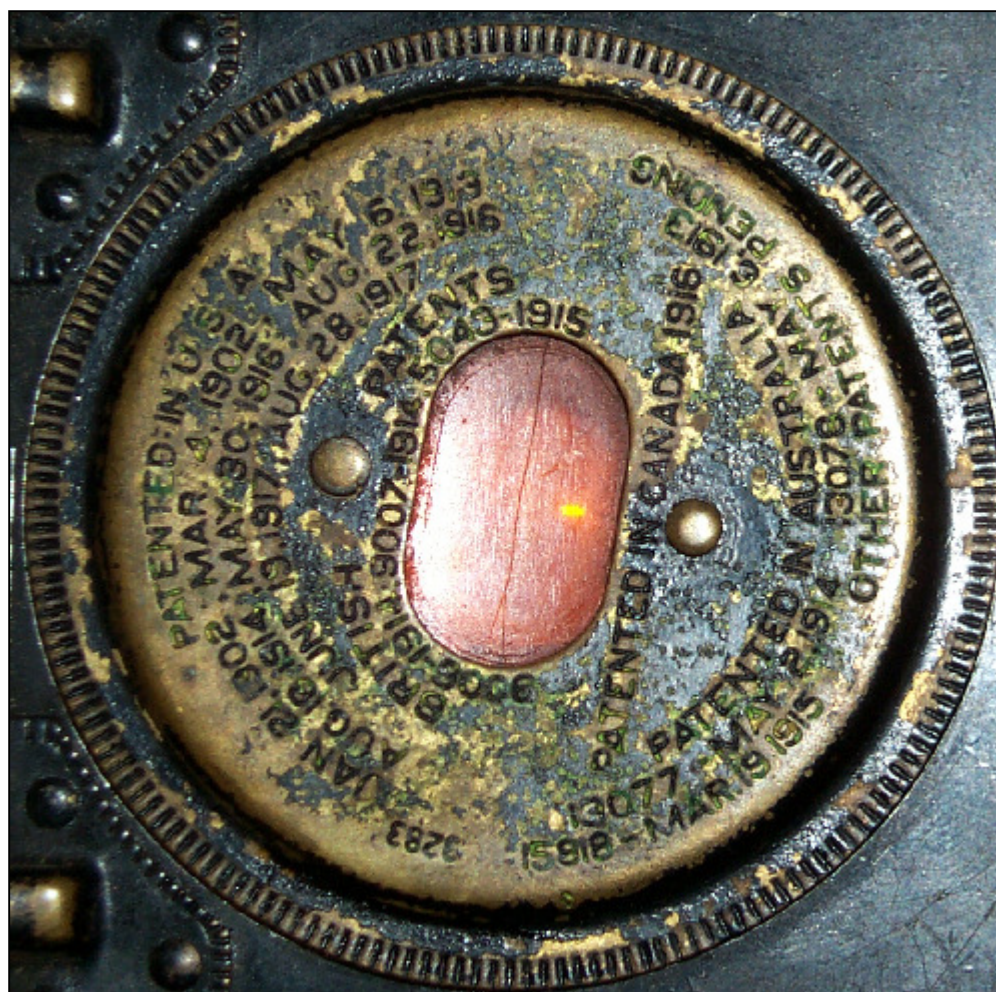


L. D. Chambers 56745 - Newport News, Virginia, USA





Made in USA by Eastman Kodak Company Rochester NY, USA 14408



Vest Pocket Kodak Patent Information