

Sergeant Harold Lyon, East Riding Yeomanry – lantern slide lecture notes

By 1920 if not earlier, Sergeant Harold Lyon, of Market Weighton, created a lantern slide lecture based around his experiences with the ERY before and during the First World War, entitled "*The Tale of a Yeoman*". The slides clearly drew on the small Box Brownie images that he had taken at the time (many of these are also in East Riding Museums collections). Catalogued as 2001/89, there are three versions of the lecture, all incomplete. They seem to be a 1960's re-writing of his script. The first, typed on pale blue paper sheets covers from 1912 to December 1916, breaking off at slide 57, when the story had reached Kantara and the Suez Canal. This is perhaps the first part of the completed version. A second handwritten fragment in pencil (on lined paper) covers the period from December 1916 to October 1917, overlapping slightly with version 1 at the beginning - it must represent part of an early draft, as the pages are numbered 39-50. There are numerous crossings out and evidence of two numbering systems for the slides. The final version seems to be an intermediate draft, as it is typed (in blue and red) onto the same blue paper as version 1. It is fragmentary, but covers the period April 1917 to July 1918. There are many amendments and several different numbering systems for the slides.

This transcript attempts to put the three versions together as a coherent narrative, cross referencing to the slides and photographs in East Riding of Yorkshire Council's collection using their accession numbers (the lantern slide images are available on the Museum Service website as 2001.88.1 etc.). A rather brief typescript of Harold Lyon's diary is available in ERYC's Archives. The lantern slide lecture clearly drew on the full text of the diary (the original of which seems sadly not to have survived), as there are extensive quotes from it.

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The Tale of a Yeoman 1912-1918

Introduction

The East Riding Yeomanry – known familiarly as Wenlock's horse – were formed in 1902-3 by Lord Wenlock, possibly with a view originally to its participation in the Boer War, then proceeding.

As its name implies, it was a mounted regiment of the Territorial Army, recruited almost wholly from the East /riding of Yorkshire, known before the First World War as the East Riding of Yorkshire Imperial Yeomanry (ERYIY).

Its four peacetime squadrons were based as follows:

A squadron at Hull

B Squadron at Beverley

C squadron at York

D Squadron at Driffield

1912-1914

My story (illustrated in parts by lantern slides) must be confined mainly to the pre-war D squadron and later to the wartime A squadron in both of which the writer served.

It commences with a day rather less than two years after the coronation of King George V – in fact to the 15th May 1912. On that day, a youth whose 19th birthday had occurred only three weeks before, presented himself at D squadron headquarters at Driffield, was sworn in before a local JP (Mr Smith) presented with the King's shilling and became

1155 Trooper Lyon H.W.

Only six weeks later as that very raw recruit I was attending my first annual training camp, extending over two very wet weeks at :

Slide 1: Bulford Camp, Salisbury plain (June 1912) [Image not identified]

In this picture we see part of the D squadron horse and tent lines, with the men at stables. Throughout the two weeks rain fell almost constantly and the camp became a veritable quagmire.

This was one of the very few occasions when the three Yorkshire Yeomanry regiments – the Yorkshire Dragoons, the Yorkshire Hussars and the East Riding Yeomanry, together with the West Riding Royal Horse Artillery – forming the Yorkshire Mounted brigade, were gathered together in one Brigade camp.

Fifty years later, it fell to the lot of these three regiments to be joined in one single regiment – the Queen's Own Yorkshire Yeomanry, long before that time of course an armoured unit.

Passing on to June 1913, our annual camp took us to:

Slide 2: Scarborough – Black Shed Farm (Stepney Road) [= 2001.88.2]

This picture shows D squadron, led by its squadron leader Major the Honourable Guy Wilson, ascending the racecourse hill with the tented camp in the distance.

Slide 3: Scarborough camp, part of D squadron lines [=2001.88.3]

Here are the tents and horse lines of the Pocklington troop, with the writer performing his ablutions near the tent's doorway. On the right of the picture – wearing a Sam Brown belt, is Sergeant Major Robert S. Stephenson of Grange Farm, Goodmanham. Others in the picture from left to right are Harry Duffield, Sgt. Jack Hatfield, Dick Jefferson, Leonard Sampson, Ted Robinson, Harold Brigham and seated on the ground Ben Byass, killed in action in Palestine in 1917 and Frank Potter.

Slide 4: Scarborough camp D squadron forage heap [2001.88.5]

Members of the Pocklington troop drawing feed for the horses. Little did we think when this photograph was taken that fifty years later and after two world wars, four of us in the front row for several consecutive years travel together in the writer's car to the annual reunions of the East Riding Yeomanry Old Comrades Association. (E.Byass, H.W. Lyon, Jim Conmy and Tom H. Fawcett).

Slide 5: Scarborough camp church parade, 1913 [=2001.88.6]

Here resplendent in full dress uniform is the regiment on church parade, the hymns being accompanied by the excellent regimental band. In those peacetime days unless on duty no troops were allowed out of camp except when wearing full dress.

Another year had passed, when in June of that fateful year 1914 the annual camp was at York – in a field situated between the Knavesmire and Bishopthorpe Road.

Then barely two months later – August Bank Holiday 1914 found many a Yeoman cleaning his equipment and saddlery and preparing his personal kit in readiness for a possible call up. This proved to be a wise precaution, for by the afternoon of the following day, August 4th; notices were being posted in prominent positions – the wall of the Londesbrough Arms in Market Weighton for instance, announcing that “His Majesty is pleased to announce the mobilisation of the Territorial Force.....”

Slide 6: Notice of embodiment [=2001.88.7]

And by the first post on Tuesday, August 5th there came the official notice to “join by 12 noon on that day, with the warning that should you not present yourself as ordered, you will be liable to be proceeded against.” Signed W.R. Tylden Wright, Captain and Adjutant.

ON ACTIVE SERVICE

The four squadrons duly assembled at their respective headquarters, the writer's squadron D at Driffield, under the watchful eye of “father” – the affectionate nickname of that very efficient ex cavalryman, Squadron Sergeant Major G.A. Stevens, later to become our Regimental Sergeant Major. Our squadron was led by the honourable Major Guy Wilson – son of the first Lord Nunburnholme – and the regiment was commanded by Lt. Colonel Phillip Langdale of Houghton Hall, Sancton. Whilst many of those in D squadron – sons of farmers – brought their own horses, mounts had to be bought or commandeered for the rest of us. However by August 7th the regiment had taken up its allotted position on the Yorkshire coast from Flamborough South Landing southwards towards Spurn Point.

The Pocklington troop (D squadron) moved into Flat Top Farm (now demolished 1966) on the south side of Bridlington town, where a year earlier (1913) those of us who had volunteered for special duty during naval manoeuvres had been billeted. Then a few days later we moved to:

Slide 7: Sewerby Park, Bridlington. Pocklington troop on parade, August 1914 [=2001.88.10]

Where the Pocklington troop is seen on parade, in charge of Sergeant's Jack Hatfield (Allerthorpe) and Gibson Beal (Sutton on Derwent). Here it was that we – enlisted for home service only – were asked to volunteer for overseas service.

[Note – by comparison with other images, we can tell that Sgt. Beal is on the left and Sgt. Hatfield is on the right]

By August 28th after three quite pleasant weeks on the coast the regiment was moved to Kilnwick Percy Home Farm near Pocklington. Those two days on trek were not so enjoyable for those of us whose recent vaccination had just taken effect.

Slide 8: Kilnwick Percy, group of Pocklington troop (part only) [=2001.88.8]

Left to right – Back row – SSM Robert Stephenson, Jas Appleton, Percy Byass, Allan Greenshaw, Jack (Mike) Harrison, Sergeant Jack Hatfield. Middle row – Frank Riley, Wilf Ottley, Tom England, Trumpeter Shaw, Leonard Sampson. Front row – HW Lyon, Dick Utteridge, Jim Conmy, John (Banker Jack) Harrison.

At the Home Farm Kilnwick Percy, whilst D squadron were housed on straw in the granaries, many men of the other squadrons were sleeping in open cart sheds, perhaps with only a tarpaulin sheet hung across the front.

Now came the time for the separation for those of us who had offered to serve overseas, from those who had chosen otherwise. At first there were only enough men to form one service squadron – three parts or so of which I'm proud to say came from the peacetime D squadron.

This service squadron became A squadron as many more men quickly offered themselves to form B and C squadrons.

Slide 9: Kilnwick Percy [=2001.88.9]

Another picture of most the same men as those on our last slide. Members of the regiment who had not volunteered for foreign service now formed the nucleus of the 2nd line regiment under the command of Lt. Colonel P. Langdale, who for valid reasons was not permitted to serve overseas

The squadron leader of our old B squadron, Major Guy Wilson, now promoted to Lt. Colonel took command of the 1st line regiment, with Major E. Duke Moore becoming second in command. Likewise the new Regimental Sergeant major was our old SSM G.A. Stevens.

Early in November (3rd November 1914) the regiment was at the beginning of a six months stay in and around the County of Durham – Bowes House Farm (or should we say “Boases Hoose Farm”) at Fencehouses, Castle Eden (Nimmo's Brewery, Seaham harbour (Seaham Hall), Bedlington etc., the squadrons interchanging from time to time.

Here our coastal defence duties were interspersed with inland training. But it was at Seaham Hall on the cliff top between Seaham and Ryhope, that we of A squadron spent our first wartime Christmas (1914) at a time when for defence reasons, we were strictly confined to barracks.

On Christmas night we greatly enjoyed an excellent concert given by good friends from Seaham harbour, and can one ever forget the rendering of “the mountains of Mourne” Whenever the writer here’s that melody his mind goes back immediately to that Christmas night of 1914.

The next landmark must surely be that day in May 1915 – the 20th to be exact – when at the head of some 40,000 troops assembled on the town moor, Newcastle, the regiment led by A squadron proudly drew swords as we rode past His Majesty King George V and Field Marshal Lord Kitchener of Khartoum.

Straight from the parade ground the course was set once more for our native county. For many of us that first night on trek was anything but a comfortable one as we vainly tried to sink our hips into the hard concrete floor of Nimmo’s Brewery at Castle Eden.

There followed a night each at Wolviston, Stokesley, Helmsley (until we were turned out to attack the Royal Scots Greys at Gilling) and Pickering on our way to Filey.

After crossing the Tees at Stockton we were assumed to be in enemy country and to fight our way southwards through any other troops that were stationed in the area.

The grand finale came at the village of Seamer where being attacked by the Yorkshire Dragoons A squadron was taken at the gallop in column of sections (fours) down the macadam road – resulting in a great pile of horses and men including the writer. Was it not Sergeant “Bunny” Hudson whose return to consciousness brought forth the comment “Eh! But it must have been a b.....big shell.”

Day by day throughout the trek, measles had been taking its toll of no.1 troop A squadron. It was until Filey was reached however that the writer and one of his close boyhood friends (Lance Hollings) succumbed and were isolated in a comfortable private house in Rutland Street. One cannot speak too highly of the way we were nursed by the householder, as Mrs Pashby and her daughter.

Ten days later, leaving the measles cases behind, the regiment was on the move southwards again, this time by rail to East Anglia. Here we were to unite with our new comrades, the Staffordshire Yeomanry and the Lincolnshire Yeomanry to form 1/1st North Midland Mounted Brigade, later when in Egypt re-named the 22nd Mounted brigade.

Memories are still fresh of those days at Diss (June 6th), Riddlesworth (June 11th), and finally on July 5th Costessey Park.

Slide 10: Costessey Park, July 1915, evening stables [=2001.88.11]

Here we see the horse lines and (3rd man from the right) newly promoted 1155 Acting unpaid Lance Corporal Lyon, H.W. performing, for the first time the duties of orderly Corporal.

Slide 11: Costessey Park, Sunday dinner, after the storm [= 2001.88.12]

Sunday dinner had to be taken in the open after a raging storm on Sunday night had demolished the mess tents.

An hour before midnight on the last day of August 1915 the regiment was turned out to hear the call – the urgent call – for more infantry for the Gallipoli campaign. Need it be said that the men volunteered with one voice, although it meant the loss of our hoses and the unaccustomed role as foot sloggers.

Slide 12: Costessey Park, trenching (HWL is third man from the right) [=2001.88.13]

On the 17th September 1915 all the horses were sent to the Leicestershire Yeomanry and the following day infantry training began in earnest. Who was that trumpeter who brought the first crisis by sounding the infantry reveille – “get out of bed”? History does not record its devastating effect on “father” Regimental Sergeant Major G.A. Stevens, a regular cavalryman of many years standing. But I don’t remember it happening again. The atmosphere had been rather electric.

There are memories too, of that visiting staff sergeant instructor – with his kindly encouragement voiced in no uncertain manner “Tha-a-ts bettah -----NOT MUCH.”

Embarkation leave had been given in August. On September 19th the regiment was inspected by a former commanding officer of the regiment – Colonel J.B. Stracey-Clitherow (Hotham Hall), but now commanding a battalion of the Welsh Guards. On September 24th we were inspected, firstly by a divisional general Broadwood and then in the afternoon by General Sir H.H. Smith-Dorrien, who three years earlier in peacetime had inspected us on the Salisbury plain.

Slide 13: Costessey Park YMCA tent [2001.88.14]

But perhaps fortunately for us our conversion to infantry was not to be. The 74th Dismounted Yeomanry Division – whose divisional sign was the broken spur – sailed away to the ill-fated Dardanelles campaign without us. Tropical clothing and helmets had been issued and on the 30th September 1915 our hoses were brought back and we were mounted again.

It was in this hut where many of spent our last few hours before, very early in the morning of 27th October, we rode the few miles to Thorpe railway station, Norwich, there to entrain with our horses for an unknown destination.

Slide 14: Southampton docks [=2001.88.15]

By early afternoon the train pulled into the dock shed at Southampton and there just across the platform, was the transport Victorian, which was to take us on the next stage of our journeying’s.

It was no easy or pleasant task getting all the horses aboard – down the steeply sloping gangways and backed into their narrow stalls with no space for them to lie down for the whole of the sea voyage. By 7pm our voyage had commenced.

Following four days at sea we passed through the straits of Gibraltar at about 8pm October 31st 1915. Then after circling round for a couple of hours in the constant glare of searchlights situated on the rock, we sailed away into the night.

During the next day we received a message that the Mercian carrying our comrades of the Lincolnshire Yeomanry had been heavily shelled by an enemy submarine and was putting into the Algerian port of Oran for repairs and burials.

At daybreak on Guy Fawkes Day 1915 after circling round in the darkness for some seven hours, the Victorian sailed

safely into the welcoming shelter of Valletta harbour, Malta, greatly relieved were all on board after having been at sea for more than a week without any escort whatever against enemy action.

Anchored in mid harbour we were given no opportunities for going ashore. We were well entertained however by the Maltese boys, who swarmed around the ship in their native bum boats, offering cigarettes, chocolate etc. for which we let down water buckets containing our money and receiving in exchange our requirements of the wares offered.

Many other boats bearing the copper coloured diving boys, who, whenever a silver coin was thrown into the water, dived down in an endeavour to secure it, the lucky winner coming up with the coin between his teeth. That night we had an excellent concert on deck, the ship's rigging serving as the upper circle.

Then at noon on the 6th November, the Victorian steamed out to sea once more, this time with a lively escort of Japanese destroyers for which we were more than thankful.

It was understood that we were bound for Salonika but our destination was again altered. As a result at about 3pm on November 9th, our boat made fast alongside Gabari docks in the huge harbour of Alexandria, Egypt.

Disembarkation commenced at once. Horses were picketed on the dock and the men returned to their hammocks aboard ship for the night. Next morning, the horses, were unfit to be ridden after two weeks at sea, were led for some miles eastwards through the strange scenery of the Egyptian city to Chatby camp.

With the blue waters of the Mediterranean only a few yards from our tent, there were ample opportunities for sea bathing, so welcome in what at the time was, to us the sweltering heat of Egypt. Most of us of course soon learned the meaning of "gippy tummy" to our discomfort.

Entraining at Alexandria by the light of a full moon, we reached the capital Cairo in the forenoon of November 22nd 1915.

Slide 15: Cairo – Kasr el Nil bridge (and in the distance the barracks) [=2001.88.16]

After a sumptuous dinner which was waiting for us in the Kasr el Nil barracks (22nd November 1915), we set off on the seven mile march, sometimes riding, but perhaps more often on foot, leading our horses. Our route lay along a narrow dusty road, fortunately shaded by huge overhanging Lebbek trees. How thrilled we were when we caught, in the distance, our first

glimpse of those world famous pyramids of Giza, in the shadow of which was to be our abode for the next week or so.

Slide 16: Cairo, Mena House Hotel (near the Great Pyramid) [=2001.88.17]

At the end of that long straight road we turned right at Mena House, at that time converted into a military hospital and were soon at our allotted part of the large camp.

Slide 17: Cairo, Mena camp and the Great Pyramid [=2001.88.18]

Mena camp and what a dusty filthy camp it was. However our stay there although short did give wonderful opportunities to explore those famous pyramids and the Sphinx.

Slide 18: Mena, the Great Pyramid of Cheops (or Khufu) [=2001.88.19]

And here is the Great Pyramid of Cheops (or Khufu) taken by me from the front garden wall of the Mena House hotel. This pyramid is some 4000 years old – originally 481 feet – but now only 450 feet in height since the outer casing of polished granite was removed to provide building materials some 1000 years ago.

Its base covers 13 acres and each of its triangular sides is 5 acres in extent. It consists of approximately 2,300,000 huge blocks of stone, some of them 30 feet long. The total weight of this pyramid is estimated to be 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ million tons.

It is said that 366,000 men were employed in its construction, 100,000 of whom were occupied for 10 years in making the causeway along which the stone was brought from the Mokattam hills at the other side of Cairo.

Whilst looking at this slide notice dark patch near the centre of the base of the pyramid. This is the entrance to the passage leading to the heart of the pyramid. Notice too the flat top left, as the result of the removal of the outer casing of granite.

Slide 19: Mena, base of the Great Pyramid [2001.88.20]

This shows the base of the pyramid and my companion Ray Reed (June 1916), with a boy guide and our three donkeys – at that time the main means of transport. Most of these photos were taken when I visited Cairo on a few days leave in mid June 1916. On my visit on holiday in 1963, I was disappointed to find modern motor roads running around and between the pyramids.

Slide 20: Mena, the Great pyramid, H.W. Lyon (now Sergeant) near base [=2001.88.21]

In this picture you get some idea of the size of the stones forming this great monument, as compared to the writer. And from this you may judge the difficulty of climbing to the summit, but even more so, the problem of the descent down an almost sheer drop of 450 feet.

Slide 21: Mena, the Great pyramid, entrance to passage [2001.88.22]

Before entering we must remove our boots – not because it is holy ground – but to enable us to hold our feet on the worn and polished stone on the uneven floor of the passages. For quite a distance it is necessary to crawl on hands and knees.

Slide 22: Mena, the Great pyramid, looking down the passage [=2001.88.23]

This picture shows a part of the passage which leads to the sepulchre of Cheops. The only light was thrown by a piece of candle which each of us carried. In 1963 the passages and chamber were lighted by electric lamps.

Slide 23: Mena, the Great pyramid (Pharaoh's chamber and sarcophagus) [=2001.88.24]

And here in the heart of the pyramid is the stone coffin which previously held the body of the Pharaoh Cheops.

It is pleasant to return to daylight and fresh air once again, but if you are not too tired, we will take a little exercise by climbing to the top. This we reach, somewhat short of breath, in spite of several rests on the way up.

Slide 24: Great Pyramid, view from the summit [=2001.88.25]

Our picture shows the shadow, at its apex, the village of Mena in which most of the Cairo and pyramid guides reside.

Slide 25: Great Pyramid, view on the flat top [=2001.88.26]

As previously mentioned, this pyramid was previously encased in granite, but about 1000 years ago, the Caliphs, in search of building material for their mosques removed the outer casing, so leaving – as we see it here – a flat top. (Caliph, the name assumed by the successors of Mohammed)

The pole in the centre of the picture shows the original height of the pyramid before the outer casing was removed. The man standing is the guide who took us up and squatting down is the man boiling his kettle to make us a cup of tea. And very welcome it was, in spite of the charge of one shilling per cup at 1916 value.

Slide 26: view of second Pyramid from summit of Great Pyramid [=2001.88.27]

Here we get a view of the second pyramid – that of the Pharaoh Cephren – as seen from the summit of the Great Pyramid. From the Cephren pyramid likewise the outer casing was removed except for the cap extending downwards to 150 feet.

Slide 27: Ruins of the granite temple, the Sphinx and the Great Pyramid [=2001.88.28]

The granite temple – frequently referred to as the temple of the Sphinx – was discovered in 1853. Actually it is not a temple, but it was a massive monumental gateway forming the entrance to the masonry causeway leading up to the Pyramid temple on the east front of the 2nd pyramid (Cephren).

Slide 28: The Sphinx and Great Pyramid [=2001.88.29]

Picture shows the writer and a boy guide about age 16 seated some distance away from the Sphinx, with the Great Pyramid in the background.

The Sphinx some 66 feet in height is a figure of a recumbent lion bearing the King's head, surmounted by the royal head cloth. It is hewn out of the living rock and is supposed to represent Cephren, builder of the second pyramid.

On the occasion of the writer's return visit in May 1963, this "boy" by this time a man of over sixty years of age was recognised by our guide Mabrouk Abou Taleb Katab, and the other guides around. On being shown the photo, the "boy" of 1916 immediately recognised himself also. What, then, was more natural than that we should have another photograph taken together, 47 years later? That photograph, taken by Mabrouk, was unfortunately a failure and a great disappointment.

Although I have spent so long in describing the pyramids, our stay at Mena camp lasted only about a week – though I had several more opportunities to visit these ancient monuments in 1916 and 1918.

On 28th November 1918, after entraining at Cairo station, A squadron travelled southward to Wasya junction, then westwards to reach Medinet El Fayum, - the main town of the Fayum oasis – at 2.00 on the 29th. After de-training a ride of some four miles brought us to our destination – a barren strip of stony desert – at Deir-el-Azab at 04.00.

Slide 29: Fayum oasis, El Azab camp from the south east [=2001.88.30]

Very quickly this strip of desert became a large brigade headquarters camp, and in the picture we see some of the tents and horse shelters, and in the foreground what was to be the parade ground.

Slide 30: Fayum oasis, El Azab, A squadron cookhouse [=2001.88.31]

Here are the squadron cooks with their "modern" cooking utensils etc. Third from the left is Dick Forrest, cook in charge, and a real character.

Slide 31: Fayum oasis, El Azab, A Squadron horse lines [=2001.88.32]

Picture here is a portion of the horse shelters – a wooden framework covered mainly with a matting made of maize straw, intended to keep the horses protected from the hot sun. The three men are native "Syces" whose job it was to assist with forage and to keep the horse lines clean.

Slide 32: Fayum oasis, El Azab, senior officers of the regiment [=2001.88.33]

From left to right – Major Buxton, Major Dalton White, Lt. Colonel the honourable Guy Wilson, next unrecognised, then Major E. Duke Moore. The writer's shadow in the foreground.

Our days here were spent in training exercises, polishing buttons and saddlery and in using up many miles of army red tape, and for very many reasons, except for the loss of an excellent Nile cold storage company canteen, where we were always glad to be sent out on our patrols of outpost duty.

There, our duties were mainly to patrol the western desert, to intercept any attack on the Fayum from that direction, by the Senussi tribes, who aided and encouraged by the Germans were threatening Egypt from the west.

There were, too, many hundreds of Senussi sympathisers in the oasis, an area roughly three quarters of the size of the East Riding of Yorkshire and the largest natural oasis in Africa.

Slide 33: Fayum oasis, El Azab, dhoura crop flooded by Sakeer [=2001.88.34]

Although we were in the Fayum oasis for just over 12 months, the only rain during the whole of that period fell within 14 days in January 1916.

Hence the crops are dependent on water which is brought from the Nile through the main canal – the Bhar Yseuf (the river of Joseph), and then carried on through the network of irrigation canals assisted by the various means of irrigation.

In the picture we see a field of Dhoura (maize) near our camp, being flooded by the ox driven Sakeer in the background.

Slide 34: Fayum oasis, El Azab, ox driven sakeer [=2001.88.35]

And in this next slide we get a closer look at this strange piece of ancient machinery. A rough horizontal wooden cog wheel, engaging a vertical wheel, to which are fitted metal buckets, or even earthenware jars, the motive power being a blindfolded water buffalo walking round and round in a circle.

Slide 35: Fayum oasis, El Azab, irrigation of water wheels [=2001.88.36]

There is of course the problem of reaching the land which is higher than that of the canal and this is accomplished as seen in the picture. These massive wheels, in this instance about 40 feet high, have a hollow rim divided into compartments. As the wheel is turned by the flow of water in the main canal, water is lifted in these compartments and tipped into the raise channel through which it flows onto the higher land.

Slide 36: Fayoum oasis – the Shadoof [=2001.88.37]

Here is a somewhat more laborious method of irrigation – the Shadoof. As will be seen, this consists of two large stone pillars, across the top of which is placed a heavy wooden beam. From this beam is slung a long pole, with a bag of stones at one end to act as a counterweight and suspended on a rope from the other end, a skin bucket.

Slide 37: Fayoum oasis – the Archimedean screw for raising water [=2001.88.38]

By turning the handle, the contraption is turned and “worms” the water upwards and floods the land.

Slide 38: Fayoum oasis – El Azab – the stadium [=2001.88.39]

In course of time, a large Y.M.C.A. hut – The Stadium – consisting only of a wooden framework, covered with maize-straw matting, was erected in the camp. Here, on two occasions, we were privileged to receive visits from the wonderful concert party run by Miss Lena Ashwell (Lady Simson – wife of Sir Henry Simson) two never-to-be-forgotten treats.

Slide 39: Fayoum oasis – Abu Gandir halt – loading camels with “dries” [=2001.88.40]

Christmas 1915 – the second of the war, but our first one overseas – was spent at Abu Gandir – on the western side of the oasis.

The squadron cooks performed wonders with the home-made clay ovens, providing us with the traditional Christmas fare – roast turkey, plum pudding, etc., etc. In the evening, we all sat round a huge camp-fire and enjoyed a sing-song, except for those unfortunates who were on picket duty.

Our rations and the forage for the horses, was brought out on the Fayoum Light Railway to a convenient point and then loaded on to camels for delivery to our camp. Here you see the camels being loaded with “dries” a very coarse hay, for the horses.

Slide 40: Fayoum oasis – Abu Gandir – camel loaded with sacks of barley [slide not identified]

With a field of growing cotton in the background, here we see another transport camel laden with bags of corn for feeding the horses.

New Year’s Day, 1916 and the following two weeks were spent at Kasr-el-Gebali, near to the great 26,000 acre lake – Birket Karoun – which lay across the northern end of the oasis. Here almost torrential rain added to discomforts.

Slide 41: Fayoum oasis – Gharack west – cutting “tibben” (chopped straw) [=2001.88.42]

By March 10th (1916), “A” squadron had taken over the outpost camp known as Gharack west – an area with various names – El Gharack es Sultani; or Abu Sepsis; or Esbit Mawalik and here we stayed on through the intense heat of summer until mid-August, when we returned to headquarters at El Azab.

In this photograph we see the “Nurag” – the Egyptian power choppy-cutter – near our camp at Gharack west. A heavily laden platform carried on a number of circular knives; this is drawn over the straw by oxen time and time again. As fresh straw is laid down, the cut straw is raked into the centre of the ring.

As with most methods of agriculture, the motive power is provided by “gamous” (or water buffalos) or camels or donkeys.

Slide 42: Fayoum oasis – Gharack west – a native plough [=2001.88.43]

Here is my close friend, Sgt. Fred Pickard, a native of Dunnington, near York, standing beside a primitive plough which was working alongside our camp. The plough is made entirely of wood, except for the extreme tip of the pointed share, which is iron shod.

Slide 43: Fayoum oasis – winnowing corn [=2001.88.44]

Under the very welcome shade of date palm trees, the corn, which has been threshed with the stem of a palm leaf serving as a flail, is cast into the air continually, so that the slight breeze can blow away the chaff.

Slide 44: Fayoum oasis – Gharack west – transport camels [=2001.88.45]

These camels have just brought from the light railway, loads of forage for our horses. The man on the left is Trooper Cyril Hollings, a boyhood friend of the writer's from about the age of 7 years. His brother will be seen in slide 46.

Slide 45: Fayoum oasis – Gharack west – "A" squadron shoeing smiths [=2001.88.46]

Our picture shows an essential section of every cavalry regiment – the shoeing smiths, who also have responsibility, under the regiment's veterinary surgeon, for the sick horse lines. Left to right – Farrier Sergeant Bell, Bert Bean, Roy Thomas and Bob Blacker. Beyond can be seen riding camels of the Indian Bikaner Camel Corps.

Slide 46: Fayoum oasis – Gharack west – group eating water melons [=2001.88.48]

And how refreshing these melons were, when one realises that the temperature might be anything up to 120 degrees F – too hot almost to stand on the sand. Back row left to right: Lance Hollings, brother to Cyril, as seen on slide 44, Ben Byass, Sgt. Fred Pickard. Front row: Geordie Robinson, Sgt. Syd Thompson and Fred Brown.

Note: Whilst "front row" is clear enough (the three men on the near side of the table), it is not clear what is meant by "back row" – is it the three men seated behind the table, or three of the four men standing perhaps? And if the latter, WHICH three men?

Slide 47: Fayoum oasis – Gharack west – "A" squadron Sergeants' mess [image not traced]

Back row left to right: Fred Pickard, H.W. Lyon (standing), Farrier Sgt. Bell, - Lewis, Joe Marshall, S.S.M. Walter Featherstone, Billy Wilson. Front row: Jack Southall, Walter Duggleby (with jug), SQMS John Highmoor.

We were fortunate in possessing an old gramophone – rather decrepit but still useable – and a supply of well-worn records. We could usually persuade Farrier Sergeant Bell to take charge of it and wind it up by telling him that he could play it better than anyone else.

We have almost come to the end of our story at Gharack west, but before leaving, we must just take a run out with a daily patrol to the outpost Hagar Mashguk.

Slide 48: Fayoum oasis – halfway rock on the route to Hagar Mashguk [=2001.88.49]

Leaving camp after daybreak, we strike out almost due west into the desert and climb a steep rocky ridge. Looking back, we get a splendid view of the Fayoum oasis. After riding for some five or six miles, we have a short halt at the Half Way Rock as seen in the picture. Left to right: - Ray Reed, Gilbert Howarth, Will Turner.

A few miles further on, we get our first glimpse of our objective – ten or more miles from camp, with not a soul nearer.

Slide 49: Fayoum oasis – Hagar Mashguk [=2001.88.50]

Here we are at last, destined for a day of sweltering heat, with practically no shade from the hot sun and only a water-bottle full of water to last us until we return to camp at nightfall. Our outpost is on the uppermost ledge just below the top of the rock, but on the side farthest from the camera. This photo was taken by my comrade Gilbert Howarth, who was the central figure on our last slide.

Slide 50: Fayoum oasis, Hagar Mashguk, on outpost duty [=2001.88.51]

Left to right: Ray Reed, George Lancaster, Will Turner. Photo by G. Howarth. It was our duty to look out for anyone approaching along the desert caravan route from Bahariyeh oasis and we had a fine view over what looked like miles of level sand to another cape fifteen or so miles away.

At intervals we were sent out to this promontory – Cape Ryan – for a stay of several days and you can imagine our surprise when we found that the intervening ground was just one mass of shifting sand dunes, of anything up to 100 feet in height, necessitating a continuous winding back and forth between the dunes.

Slide 51: Fayoum oasis, Cape Ryan, the sulphur springs [=2001.88.52]

Our visits although occasional were not looked forward to, especially as the only water that our horses had to drink was that which emerged from a spring (where you can see the camels in the picture) under the shade of these trees, ran a short distance then disappeared again into the soft sand – a very strong sulphur water.

Slide 52: Fayoum oasis, small native hamlet near to Gharack west [=2001.88.53]

Another mounted patrol took us along the edge of the desert, which passed this hamlet. Here you see Rex Ainslie – whose father at that time was vicar in Hedon – being entertained by the village worthies and offered a gift of roasted peanuts, local grown and a welcome gift.

The ox in the foreground is “hobbled” that is its two forefeet are tied with a piece of rope only about a foot long between them – thus enabling the beast to hobble about slowly about, but preventing it from bolting.

Slide 53: Fayoum light railway, El Minieh halt, returning from leave [2001.88.54]

Whilst at Gharack west we all managed to get two short leaves, each of four days in Cairo. On this occasion Sgt Walter Duggleby, seen on the forefront of the carriage and I were just returning from one such leave.

The light railway brought us from the main railway at Fayum town to a point only a short ride from our camp. At the time of my revisit in 1963 this railway had disappeared and is now replaced by bus services.

On the 12th August 1916 we finally said goodbye to Gharack west and returned once more to the Brigade headquarters at Deir-el-Azab. Whilst we had no regrets at leaving El Gharack neither had we any love for our brigade camp except that there we had excellent canteens and plentiful supplies of water and good food.

In the Nile Cold Storage Company's canteen it was grand to hear Hassan calling – “Eggs e’ cook (boiled eggs) or eggs e’ bacon, e’ sausage, e’ liver, e’ tomato – a wonderful mixed grill, so tasty and popular with us all. Here also we could buy plenty of canned fruit and flood it with Nestles milk.

It was here that one wit wrote a parody on a certain well-known hymn

Art thou weary, art thou languid?

Art thou sore distressed?

If so, come to Deir El Azab

For a rest!!!

Then out into the outpost line once more, this time to:

Slide 54: Fayoum oasis, Kom Medinet Madi camel transport [=2001.88.55]

Here we see our meagre supply of drinking water being brought up. Each camel carries two tanks – “fantassies” – each of which contains 10 gallons. By the time the water had arrived, we were getting fairly hot.

The camp as you can see was on the top of a steepish mound or hill, at one end of which we discovered a mass of broken ancient pottery, which include many old Greek lamps, hundreds of years old. Cyril Hollings, who has been mentioned earlier, picked up an old green coin which on being sent to the Cairo antiquities museum was found to be of the reign of Thotmes III (or Tuthmosis) the date of which I believe was in the region of 2000BC, that is around 4000 years ago.

Slide 55: Fayoum oasis, Kom Medinet Madi, swimming pool [2001.88.56]

Although there was a network of irrigation canals throughout the oasis water for washing was none too plentiful. The water taken from the canals was so infested with the disease germs that it was forbidden even to wash with it until it had been treated liberally with a strong disinfectant.

For this reason a large swimming pool had been constructed by native labour, alongside a small canal, the water of course having been suitably treated with “Cresol”.

As you can see, the walls of the pool consisted of filled sandbags. This photograph was taken during the swimming and diving contest. The comrade emerging from the water in his birthday suit is Frank Harrison (Hovingham). Swimming trunks were neither provided nor necessary.

Slide 56: Fayoum oasis, point 24, west of Medinet Madi [=2001.88.57]

Our last picture in the Fayoum shows us on a small desert outpost, possibly seven or eight miles from the oasis and camp. Throughout the day our only shelter from the blazing hot sun was that provided by the sacking fastened to the rough wooden supports as seen in the picture.

At least we had a fantassie of water – which can be seen – and a reasonable quantity of good dry fuel lying around with which to boil water for a mug of tea. This fuel had been left when the outpost was manned daily by the Bikaner Camel Corps, sun baked camel dung.

Now the time has come for the Brigade to depart from this oasis, in which we had spent the longest, hottest and most monotonous 12 months of our lives.

Throughout that year our only contact with civilisation was on the occasion of our two leaves in Cairo, only eight days in all. Yet when the writer returned to Egypt as a tourist almost 47 years later, the thing which gave him the greatest thrill, after a 65 mile motor drive across the tarmac desert road from the pyramids, was that first glimpse of the Fayoum oasis.

On Saturday 2nd November 1916 A squadron left Deir El Azab camp at the hour of 20.00 and after entraining left Fayoum station at 23.00. Passing through Cairo at 0300 on the 3rd, we reached Kantara station on the west bank of the Suez Canal at 0900 – 11 hours after the start of our journey, the horses being packed eight to each cattle truck.

Slide 57: Kantara pontoon bridge over the Suez Canal [2001.88.58]

After de-training we marched over this pontoon bridge, leading our horses. These showed their dislike of the swaying motion of the bridge in no uncertain manner.

Before the war Kantara consisted of a few mud huts, a quarantine house and on the west bank the railway station on the line heading to Port Said. By this time it had grown to quite a large camp. It was the beginning of the Kantara Military Railway which ran eastwards into the Sinai desert, serving as the sole line of communication for carrying supplies to the desert column.

Before very many months however, it had become one of the largest base camps in the world, with its network of railway sidings, miles of jetties on the canal, with a dozen or more ocean going ships unloading stores for the rapidly growing forces in Sinai and later Palestine.

[the first section of Harold Lyon's lecture notes breaks off at this point]

2nd Section

[The first two paragraphs match the last two above and are crossed out].

The single line railway was being pushed across the desert at an average speed of a mile or more a day.

Parallel to this a water pipeline had been laid, the water being siphoned under the Suez Canal and eventually forced across a hundred miles or so of desert by a number of pumping stations.

Going back to December 9th 1916 our camp was established at Hill 40, simply a desert hillock a few miles east of Kantara, from where we had an opportunity to visit Port Said.

At Kantara it seemed very strange to see steam boilers having the name and number plate Northumberland County Council and seventy natives making a macadam road into the almost trackless desert.

Running on the railway were engines in the colours of the London and South Western Railway alongside those of the Egyptian state railways.

At that time all rolling stock to the military railway had to be taken across the canal by pontoon ferry, the only two bridges at Kantara being light pontoon bridges.

Slide 58: Sinai desert, Hod El Arras, Xmas 1916 [=2001.88.59]

Christmas 1916, the third of the war and our second in Egypt found us forming an outpost two troops strong at Hod El Arras, too small palm groves at the foot of a very high shifting sand dune and on the right flank of the lines of communication.

Here for shelter, we built ourselves huts from the long palm leaves, the tips of which are razor sharp spikes.

Xmas day was spent in re-erecting our happy home – Sergeant's mess – as the result of several of our visiting fellow Sergeants having celebrated Christmas Eve rather too lustily by walking through the walls and having a good time with themselves generally, much to our discomfort.

Our picture shows the arrival of rations, forage and Christmas mail.

From this time onwards our water allowance was one gallon per man per day per-haps. This was divided as follows – two pints for drinking, two pints for washing and four pints for the cookhouse.

Slide 59: Sinai desert, Hod El Arras, horses on sand dune [=2001.88.60]

Here we see a small patrol descending a sand dune on its firmer side. Notice how deeply the horses sink into the soft sand. Left to right: Burt Bean, Sergeant Charles Elliot and Corporal "Syd" Thompson.

On my first visit to this outpost, I had charge of the escort to a [...] wagon, loaded with forage and rations. To this wagon were harnessed no less than eight horses. Even then in several places

we had to dump part of the load, then after unloading the first part of the load, come back for the [rest?].

On December 27th 1916, we were relieved by the other two troops of our squadron and we withdrew to Hill 70 – some miles east of Hill 40 – for our delayed Christmas dinner.

And what a spread – Turkey, plum pudding, mince pies, oranges, nuts and more. Those who had been in camp had spared no effort to make the mess hut look really Christmas like, with Chinese lanterns, bunting and coloured paper etc.

At one end of the hut was hung a red blanket; fastened on this were crossed swords and their highly burnished scabbards, two bugles and two trumpets. Then on the ground in front, set in a collection of gorse, were piled three rifles, with fixed bayonets. The whole arrangement was most effective.

On Sunday December 31st 1916, in this camp, many of us attended our first divine service at which the congregation was half white and half black. The latter being men of the British West Indies regiment.

From this time on we were constantly moving up the line, staying anything from one to seven nights in the various bivouac areas.

Slide 60: Sinai, Bir El Romani – watering horses [=2001.88.61]

Here on reaching Romani, we were greeted at the water troughs which you see here, by “say, do you know Bev’ly.”, by men of the West Riding Royal Horse Artillery.

On the last day of January 1917, we reached Bir El Abd, with an excellent well of cool water. Here it is supposed Joseph and Mary rested on their journey to Egypt when fleeing with the little Jesus.

This was the last bivouac area in which we had the shelter of tents. From here by way of Bir El Salmana, Tilul, **Mazar**(?). Bardawil – each merely a point on the desert without habitation of any kind, staying one night at each and sleeping in the horse lines with our saddle for a pillow.

At last we reached El Arish on the river of Egypt (not the Nile), now a dry wadi. After three days “rest”, for most of the next week(?) beset by a blinding sandstorm, we moved forward to join the Anzac Mounted Division at Sheikh Zowaid – only a few miles short of the Turco-Egyptian border and almost off the desert of Sinai. NB Palestine was of course at that time in the hands of the Turkish government and forces.

Slide 61: Sinai, military railway reaches Sheikh Zowaid [=2001.88.62]

For some time we had pushing some ten to fifteen miles ahead of the railhead, ahead of the railway construction gangs and acting as an advanced screen in front of the infantry. By the end of February 1917k, the railway caught at us at Sheikh Zowaid, as seen in this picture.

Four days earlier (February 24th) we had been on patrol to Rafa and for the first time set foot in the Holy Land.

The only advantage we had from being ahead of the infantry was that we got the first chance of the delicious juicy Jaffa oranges, for as for as the infantry arrived, up went the price to about four times the price we had previously paid.

Our next bivouac area was at Bir El Mellaha (?) at the point where the northern end of the boundary line between Egypt and Palestine reached the Mediterranean shore.

21st March 1917 was a day of great excitement, when money was made and lost, as the Rafa spring race meeting or the Sinai Grand National races, mainly between officer's chargers which had been organised to relieve the monotony and boredom of the troops.

Slide 62: Palestine: Khan Yunus village [=2001.88.63]

On March 24th 1917, the railhead reached Khan Yunus, the first village one comes across in Palestine and which seemed such a veritable paradise when on March 5th we had first seen it whilst on patrol.

Slide 63: Palestine – Gaza, distant view from the south east [=2001.88.65]

Note the thick prickly cactus hedges, more formidable even than barbed wire entanglements. And here I quote from my diary written at the time – “March 14/15th 1917, reveille 2400 (midnight), moved off at 0200 and arrived Deir El Belat 0630, then moved forward on a reconnaissance in force towards Gaza, of which we had our first glimpse.

On outpost until relieved by 4th Essex at 20.45 and arrived back at Deir El Belat at 22.15 to find that we had time only to get our tea, water and feed the horses, get feed onto saddles and move out again at 0200 (March 21st) for the **FIRST BATTLE OF GAZA.**

Past well on the right flank of Gaza, where we were shelled from north side (dense fog had fallen just before daybreak, which repeatedly delayed movement of all troops engaged).

As the first shells came over, our Egyptian interpreter, Vikry Effendi and his batman, left us in a hurry and were later found hiding in the sand dunes.

At 1300 we moved across towards Gaza and had a one and a half mile gallop across the open plains to attack Gaza in the rear.

Lieutenant Bailey insisted on our keeping in strict drill order. When SSM Featherstone galloped up shouting “the order was for 50 yards between troops Sir”, Mr Bailey shouted “I don't care a damn Sergeant Major, until the men keep their dressing I won't go any faster.”

Slide 64: Palestine – Gaza with shell hole in mosque [=2001.88.66]

March 27th

After darkness had fallen, we had to withdraw. During the night the Turkish forces were heavily reinforced. We returned to Deir El Belat at 0800 and left again within an hour, moving northwards along the coast, across the mouth of the Wadi Ghuzze in support of “Money's detachment”.

Lots of ships were unloading stores by small boats at Deir El Belat.

In three consecutive nights we had only a total of two hours' sleep.

March 28th

Reached Brigade bivouac area at 0415 after acting as guides throughout most of the night and moved off again at 0800. B squadron were heavily fired on. Returned to the same bivouac area at 1600 and had a bath and our first full night's sleep (i.e. since March 23rd).

Slide 65: Palestine – Deir El Belat, on the beach after bathing [=2001.88.64]

March 29th

Reveille 0600 and left bivouac at 0730 for Deir El Belat. Cooking our own grub, but having a jolly fine time making pudding of army biscuits and dried raisins.” (end of extract from diary).

The first battle of Gaza had ended in failure, perhaps one factor being lack of water.

From this time, in this part of the line, trench warfare developed, whilst on the right flank opposite Beersheba, the opposing forces were up to 20 miles apart.

Out of 84 hours, our horse had been off-saddled for a total of only 6 hours.

On our return to Deir El Belat, we found that, where a few days before, we had ridden through growing corn, a new railhead had sprung up, with huge forage, food and ammunition dumps, casualty clearing stations, heavy lines of telegraph wires etc. One could hardly believe it to be the same place.

Here we had ample water supplies as by digging a hole only a foot deep, water immediately welled up to the surface, but within a few minutes it was full of tadpoles. It was easier to make tadpole soup than a cup of tea.

Later when we moved our bivouac area, we found that by digging down several feet – actually only a few yards from the sea, we could get an excellent supply of clean fresh water.

As our camp was in a very short distance from the sea, we were afforded ample opportunities for bathing and the picture show the horses on the beach after having had a dip. Note that they are all tethered in circles, requiring little supervision.

Slide 66: Harvesting in Palestine [=2001.88.67]

When the worst of the operation was over, the natives, under escort of the Egyptian Camel Corps, were allowed to go out and gather what was left of their harvest and our picture shows this in progress. Oranges were plentiful, but we now had to pay 2 piasras (5d) each for them.

Slide 67: Camel transport on the march [=2001.88.68]

Away from the railhead, all supplies had to be carried by camel transport and our picture shows a long column of camels on the march.

Slide 68: Moving out from Deir El Belat [=2001.88.69]

On April 17th, as shown in our picture, we marched out again to play our part in another effort to take the Gaza-Beersheba line, but with no better success than the operations of only six weeks earlier. During this time, the Turks had fortified the whole line and had been heavily reinforced.

Slide 69: Palestine (south), on the march past a native village [slide missing]

This shows us making our way towards the right flank in the direction of Beersheba.

The eve of my 24th birthday (April 21st) was celebrated with a show of fireworks in the form of a heavy bombardment by enemy planes at Sheikh Nuran.

At the close of these operations (2nd battle of Gaza) we were moved back to the outpost line at Terl El Fara on the Wadi Ghuzze.

In the weeks that followed, command of the Palestine Expeditionary Force passed from General Sir Archibald Murray to General Sir Edmund H.H. Allenby

[End of second section]

3rd section

[This seems to take up the story just after the 2nd Battle of Gaza, but at least half a page is lost. The numbering system for the slides clearly changed several times and it is unclear on this draft as to the final ordering, owing to multiple crossings out of both text and numbers. Not all of these images survive as lantern slides, in some cases only the original prints exist. In these cases it may be inferred that they did not make the "final cut" and were not included in Lyon's finished lecture. As above, matches to ERYC catalogue numbers are given where applicable].

.....exceptionally heavy bombing by the Turks at Sh[eria?]. This picture needs no explanation except that the Ford cars did most wonderful work as ambulances where I think I am safe in saying no other cars could travel. *[Possibly =2001.88.98, which shows casualties being loaded aboard a motorised ambulance].*

In these operations, tanks were used for the first time and our picture shows the fate of one of the eight that went out into action and only two of which returned to tell the tale. [=2001.83.12. no.3, captioned "some tank." Research suggests it is either "War baby" or "Natty"]. At the close of these operations our brigade entered the outpost line at Tell El Fara, another outpost of the old Crusaders i.e. Beth Pelet.

This shows us just behind the lines and here is my dugout. [=2001.88.71]. For three weeks we had not had our clothes off at night. It was here that on May 10th 1917 the survivors of a draft from England reached us, after being torpedoed in the transport Arcadian. Two of our Market Weighton boys – brothers to one of my lorry drivers (David and Bob Bell) were drowned and one of the survivors was the Pock[lington] director in QHH?

From here I went into hospital at Mohamedyia with gastritis, while the regiment came back to Tel El Marakeb for a rest.

This hospital is near Pelusium as shown in the Bible maps on the north coast of Sinai, about 30 miles east of the Suez canal. The hospital was close to the shore and consisted of large marquees. At night when the lights went out, one could hear pitter patter on the tarpaulin floor of the tent. Mice? Nothing of the sort. Only big crabs and little crabs, thin crabs and fat crabs tasking their evening promenade up and down the tent in search of any scraps of food. [2001.83.12 no.s 47-48 show the hospital, though sadly not the crabs.]

A raft had been anchored out to sea, to which the men could swim and this had broken away from its moorings. This shows men of the ELC towing it ashore. You can see the ganger standing on the raft and the next slide will show you a closer view of him swinging his rawhide whip or sjambok. Should a man be slacking, down comes the whip across his head and shoulders. *[image not identified]*

On Saturday June 30th 1917 the hospital was inspected by General Sir EHH Allenby who had just taken over the command of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force from General Sir Archibald Murray.

The footpaths in the hospital consisted of wire netting laid on the sand. The various wards vied with one another for decorations in the shape of regimental badges made from stones gathered from the beach, broken glass etc.

After being in hospital nine weeks I along with others was sent down to the base at Kantara in an open truck as seen in our picture, and then a fortnight later went up the line again on which journey this picture was taken. Rough shelters were provided on the passenger trains as shown and you can imagine what a happy time we had travelling for about 12 hours through the night in these loose coupled trucks. *[possibly 2001.88.106]*

Long delays were frequent, partly owing to its being only a single line to bear the immense amount of traffic, except at stations where loop lines at sidings were provided and partly owing to such occurrences as depicted here. *[Image not definitely identified, but in the album of Lt. Robert Spence Stephenson, ERY, in ERYC's Archives collection, there is an image of a wrecked train. No context for this is provided, but it seems clear that men of the unit "swapped" images they had taken, so it may be what Lyon is referring to here].* It was not unknown for five engines to be off the line in little over a 100 miles of railway and you can imagine the effect this had on the regularity this had on our supply of rations. We re-joined the regiment on the coast at Tel El Marakeb near to the village of Khan Yunus, the first one comes in Palestine. Arriving at our bivouac areas, which is almost on the water's edge about nightfall, we soon "got down to it" in our primitive shelter of blankets and sacking.

[Gap in text here]

With a conical net. This is weighted around the open end and the man swings the net round his head and flings it out so skilfully that it falls opened out flat on the water – the weights draw the edges down and a little group of fish is enveloped in its folds.

This picture shows the modern home shared by Sergeant Elliot and myself [=2001.88.73]. It is made of blankets, sacking or anything else we can pick up and the next view gives you an idea of the luxurious interior of our happy home. Here is the Market Weighton postmark on the wrapper of a parcel which has been sent out. These wrappers were carefully preserved and sewn together for this purpose. These two slides show the view from the front and rear of the bivouac. Notice the twelve horse limber. [=2001.88.74 & 75]

The Sergeant's mess at Tel El Marakeb. Quite an elaborate building as you will see. The table is made of filled sandbags and half-filled sandbags perform the function, more or less, of lounge chairs. Here are tea and rice pudding and I assure you that neither is improved by the addition of fine sand – at any rate so far as giving one chronic indigestion is concerned. [=2001.88.76]

Many of you are aware of the immense difficulties that were experienced in feeding our Indian troops in the field as only meat killed by their own caste will be eaten. This shows the Indian butchers at work behind the lines. *[image not traced]*.

Khan Yunus, the village which seemed to us such a veritable paradise when first we saw it from just over the frontier. This village was about a mile or so inland from our bivouac area at Marakeb on the coast. Here are all the canteens, supply depots etc. [=2001.88.63]

A Norman building of Khan Yunus, built by the Crusaders. It looks quaintly out of place amongst its eastern surroundings. [= 2001.83.12.18]

On October 28th 1917, we moved out towards Shellal on the Wadi Ghuzze in preparation for the offensive which resulted in the fall of Gaza, Beersheba and Jerusalem. Our picture shows a short halt to off saddle at Khan Yunus. At first we were in reserve, then whilst the Australian mounted troops were working around Beersheba, we took up position filling a rather dangerous gap in our thinly manned line.

From Khan, we had to return 12 miles to Shellal to water our horses and this slide shows us resting before returning to the line. Notice the leather muzzles to prevent the horses eating sand. Our next picture shows one of our men cooking dinner for himself (Nov 2 '17) and me (Dick Uttridge). Cooking utensils were necessarily of the simplest form – a mess tin lid supported by four empty bully beef tins, between which the bits of fire that was made to fry the corn beef and later to boil the mess tin for a drink of tea. [=2001.83.14.38]

A typical Bedouin family in the wilderness near Beersheba. [*possibly* = 2001.83.12.36]. Note the tent made of blankets as seen in Bible pictures. By this time things were moving quickly. Beersheba had been occupied at 6pm two days earlier on October 31st by Australian Light Horse and 7th Mounted Brigade after being surrounded by the former, who galloped over several deep trenches, taking the enemy troops in Beersheba completely by surprise. This was followed by the taking of Hariera and other important strong positions held by the enemy. We did not pass through Beersheba until about midnight of the 5th/6th November and we had a two hour wait lying in the street for our turn to water horses. As the Turks had done as much damage as possible to the water supplies, and only to the very large force of cavalry working in this sector, watering was a very slow process.

From here we passed on to Kuweilfeh due north of Beersheba, where we were filling a gap between two infantry divisions and I was one of the unfortunate ones who had to bring the horses back 14 miles to Beersheba to water after they had been without a drink for 36 hours. Gaza fell on November 7th and practically the whole enemy line was for the moment in full retreat. The civilian population of Gaza had been evacuated (40,000) and the whole place was more or less in ruins. All doors, window frames and other woodwork had either been used for shoring up sides of trenches or been chopped up for firewood. Our picture shows a shell hole in one mosque [=2001.88.66]. Note the cactus hedge with the long sharp spikes projecting from the huge leaves.

The next slide shews as nearly as possible the first distant view we had of Gaza when on reconnaissance the day before the first attack on that town, eight months earlier [=2001.88.65].

On Nov. 8th, (1917), the Yeomanry Mounted Division, of which we now formed a part, was sent across to the coastal sector, where the greater part of the cavalry were forcing their way up the plain to make a flanking movement. Many empty shell cases left by the enemy were marked in English "munitions for Turkey". On our way we spent a night at Tel El Sheria where two arches of a huge railway viaduct had been demolished and where the only water we had to drink was that in which were lying scores of dead men and horses – the result of very good work on the part of our airmen. I must admit that that was the worst water I ever drank. As our troop formed the advance guard and guides to the bivouac area, I had only 1½ hours rest that night.

On Nov. 9th we were at Huj where two and a half squadrons of the Worcester and Gloucester Yeomanry made a most successful charge at 12 field guns firing at point blank range and captured the lot with many machine guns. The next day we pushed on to Tel El Negili and then to Hatteh where our picture [=2001.88.84] shews us resting on Sunday Nov. 11th (1917) after drawing rations. Later we moved on again to the village of MEJDEL where we had a most sumptuous feast of oranges – the first opportunity we had had of making any purchases since operations commenced.

ESDUD (Ashdod) almost due west of Jerusalem was passed, and here, whilst watering in the Wadi Sukerier [*see image 2001.88.85*], we lost several horses owing to quicksands. Then on to Yebna, near which our picture shows us resting [=2001.88.86]. At this place (Nov. 13th 1917), we turned eastwards towards AKIR. After a gallop of about two miles of open plain, El Mugar, Wadi Janus, [during which we were] subjected to fairly heavy enemy rifle and machine gun fire, we reached the foot hills of the Judean Hills. The Turks left their positions without a great deal of persuasion and a cavalry charge [*see image 2001.88.88. - this may be the only surviving image of cavalry charge at El Mugar*], was made at the retreating troops and many prisoners taken. At daybreak of Nov. 14th we were searching the native village of AKIR [=2001.88.89] for any stragglers of the enemy.

Later, when we moved on, we saw in the distance red-tiled buildings, which of course was a strange sight, but on coming into the village street, a greater surprise was awaiting us. White people, dressed in European clothes swarmed around us evidently very thankful to see the Turk departed. Here we bought dark brown bread at 2/- per loaf, cramming it into horses' nose bags, water buckets and any available place and had the time of our lives feasting on this luxury. We were given to understand that it was Baron de Rothschild's Jewish Colony and proved to be

quite a flourishing place, with quite large and up-to-date wine presses etc. [*see 2001.88.90*]. One woman had travelled considerably and knew Hull, but of course very few had any knowledge of English. After a short halt, we proceeded towards the railway line some miles north of the junction of the Jerusalem line with that coming from the south. Several trains had escaped from Jerusalem that morning, but now we had the Holy City cut off as regards any railway communication.

On taking up positions astride of the line we were subjected to considerable sniping and shelling and it was here or nearby that Corporal Ben Byass, son of Mr. Byass of Park Farm, Everingham, was killed and Mr. Frank Riley (of Cliffe Carrs) was wounded. On being relieved by the Lincoln[shire] Yeomanry, we withdrew over the railway(?) line for a night's rest. Early next morning, the Brigade attacked a very steep hill called ABU SHUSHEH RIDGE, but our troop happened to be acting as escort to the guns and our *picture* [=2001.88.91] shews us watering horses at the village well during the sweeping of the hill by gun-fire, previous to the cavalry charge.

It was during this charge that the Hon. Neil Primrose, Lord Roseberry's eldest son, (father of Lady Halifax), was killed. This is a snap taken almost from the summit of the ridge about two hours after its capture, and gives a fairly good idea of the rough stony country over which we were passing [=2001.88.92]. The dust in the centre is raised by the London Yeomanry passing through Ramleh and Ludd (Lydda), these having been taken about the same time as the ridge on which we are standing. Jaffa could be seen quite distinctly on the skyline.

As advance guard, we came quite near to the village of AMWAS (Emmaus) where Mr. Ernest Byass of Newbald was wounded on the 16th (two days after his brother was killed) and then, leaving the Turks in possession, we turned westwards again along the Jerusalem to Jaffa road. The next picture [2001.88.93] will shew a welcome find while on flank guard to the Brigade – a deep well of splendid water. Reaching Ramleh by 10pm we bivouacked for the night, and leaving at 10am next morning (Sunday Nov. 18th 1917), watered at the town of Ludd which is shown in the next two pictures [*this last phrase crossed out, so evidently these images were deleted from the lecture; not traced*]. Here we heard the first chimes of church bells since leaving England more than two years previously. After being on home leave, Lt. Col. Guy Wilson, DSO, CMG, re-joined the regiment on this day, following a three day's ride on horseback from the railhead.

The regiment now entered the outpost line and our troop was sent to reconnoitre a certain village a few miles away. Running our nose into a veritable hornet's nest of machine guns, we returned rather faster than we had gone out. That night we rested just north of Ludd and expected having a somewhat easier time in the outpost line in the Plain of Sharon. However, it was not to be – orders came through that we were to march on Ram-Allah and Bireh, with the intention of cutting the road running northwards from Jerusalem to Nablus (Shechem) along which, by latest information the Turks were evacuating all possible supplies from the Holy City.

This slide shows the methods of agriculture in the plain of Sharon in the vicinity of Ludd, and through which we were passing. [*This sentence crossed out – no such images traced*]. On leaving the plain, we soon got an idea of what kind of country was before us. For two whole days we trekked through hilly country strewn with huge boulders and rocks, and almost impassable for

horses, there being practically no track of any kind. All wheeled transport including guns had to be left behind. After leading our horses for miles with the reins of one horse slung over the sword on the horse in front, the dis-mounted men being on the hill tops and the horses of course in the valley, we reached AIN-ARIK on the night of Nov.20th (1917), [see 2001.88.94], to be heavily shelled by the Turks, who had their guns on the hard road which was our objective.

All the reply we were able to give was from a section of the Hong Kong & Shanghai Mountain Battery, which was like a puppy barking at an elephant. Having eaten our emergency rations during the last two days, we had to exist as best we could on half-ripe lemons and oranges, gathered, or rather knocked off the trees by stones, as we passed along, together with a few figs which were sold to us at most outrageous prices.

I am reminded of the remark which came from one of our local preachers as to how much the boys would enjoy themselves as they came across places mentioned in the Bible. When up on the hills on outpost in front of Ain-Arik, someone said after looking at a map "That's the hill on which Saul was anointed"...Reply – "Uhm is it? I wouldn't want to be there now", in none too happy a tone. Our picture (not one of our taking [not traced] shews a view from Mispah, or Nebi Samwil as we knew it, looking over the hill of Gibeon to Ram Allah at which we aimed. The hill of Nebi Samwil was taken by the 75th division after most severe fighting on Nov. 20th, 1917. This was the furthest point reached by King Richard in Jan. 1192 and known to the Crusaders as "MONTJOYE."

After more than four days, during which time we had only our emergency rations as mentioned before, there was some excitement when a pack horse bearing half a day's fresh rations arrived and we wondered how long these would have to last. At night it poured with rain yet I enjoyed a good night's sleep on top of a stone wall, covered over with my ground sheet, and kept perfectly dry.

Early in the morning we received orders to retire to Beit-ur-el-Tahta (Lower Beth-Horon) and the picture was taken just as we left Ain Arik. We reached Tahta about noon on the 22nd [November], with very blistered feet as the result of having to walk or rather scramble most of the way over boulders, again leading our horses. [see 2001.88.95]. We managed a full night and day's rest and had a good supply of rations once more, then next morning went out as left-flank guard to the 52nd Division attacking El Jib. While out, the whole division was practically surrounded, the enemy reaching within one hundred yards or so of our Brigade HQs. And where only two days before we were taking our ease. Luckily for us, reinforcements of Australian Light Horse and Yeomanry galloped up in time to prevent any really serious results. Returning the following night to Beit-ur-el-Foka (Upper Beth-Horon) our horses were sent back to Ramleh and we became the East "Walking's".

Dismounted, we were sent forward into the hills in front of Foka and the picture shows our outpost [=2001.88.96], this being taken during heavy shelling. At night, we were given a rather rough time and had to retire repeatedly down and up these rugged hills until we were just dead beat. At last after midnight we came to a halt on the face of a hill, looking across the valley to El Foka on the opposite hill. Here we made a sangar from the stones lying around and remained in

it until 5am, when we received orders to move higher up the hill. All our work had been in vain and tired as we were, we had to set to work quickly to make another sangar before day-break.

The next picture [*see 2001.88.97*] shows a Barmby Moor man watching the Turks drawing water from an excellent well at which we had drawn water a day or two before – imagine our feelings when you realise that our water bottles had been empty for some twelve hours and we had no hopes of obtaining any until we could be relieved. However, at midnight of the 29th November, we were relieved by the Highland Light Infantry of the 60th Division and marched back through Beit-ur-el-Tahta to Annabeh, where we got our horses back after being without them for some days.

From here we rode back to Akir for a rest. My diary gives the following: - “please take note of the dates December 2nd. Had my first wash and shave since November 23rd.” (i.e. 9 to 10 days). After rather more than a month constantly on the move, the division was sent still further back to Julis and this proved to be our last turn in the line in Palestine.

Map 4 [*Sadly, Lyon’s maps have not survived*]. If you will allow me, we will just have a look where we have been for the last four or five weeks.

At this point I was taken down the line with colic [illegible word] jaundice and arrived in the 70th General Hospital, Cairo, late at night on December 15th, after having had 29 hours in the train following two very rough days in an uncomfortable sand-cart. I was several weeks in the hospital, including a most enjoyable Christmas, when things were made as home-like as possible, thanks to the untiring efforts of the nurses. “70th General hospital, Cairo from convalescent block, Abbassia Barrack(?)”.

[Except where noted, almost none of the images relating to Lyon’s sightseeing round Cairo and elsewhere in Egypt have survived and much of this text was either cut out entirely or heavily edited, presumably as he felt it was of lesser interest than the military story]

Visit of Fuad [*i.e. King Faud of Egypt, see 2001.88.100*]. The Polygon command depot was my next home, and from here I was able to go into Cairo almost every night. Close by was a Remount Depot, where at that time there were some thousands of donkeys in residence. You all know what an awful row one donkey can make, but when, at feed time, a few thousands of them give a “simultaneous broadcast”...well...’nuff said. A very close boyhood friend of mine, from Market Weighton, [*this will refer to Cyril Hollings, who joined the RAF from the East Riding Yeomanry*] was stationed in an Aircraft Repair Depot just near and we had a really good time together. Many of the slides I am going to show you now were taken while on leave from the Fayum oasis, and should really have come in the first part of the lecture, but I thought it better to place all of the pictures of Cairo together, with the exception of those of the Pyramids.

This shows the verandeh to E4 ward, 70th General Hospital, Cairo, re vultures. The Sultan, later King Faud of Egypt visiting the 70th General Hospital. The gentleman in the tarbush leading is the King, and when this was taken he had only just succeeded his late brother.

The picture before you shows a convalescent outing on the Nile while I was in the 70th General Hospital. The boat from which this snap was taken was maintained by the British Farmers’ Red

Cross Society and if there are any present who subscribed to that fund, I should like to thank them very heartily for this most enjoyable trip up the Nile. The other boat was kept up by the Durham Miners. Our picture shows the class of boat passed on this trip.

Now let us take a look in the capital of Egypt. Opera Square – the Trafalgar Square of Cairo, Shepherd's Hotel, which is mentioned in practically every novel dealing with Egypt was just off the picture to the right [*see 2001.88.101*]. The statue represents Brahim Pasha. This is where several of the murders took place during the riots of May 1919.

Water carriers, goat skin.

A street scene (coloured) taken from a miscellaneous collection of slides.

Lemonade seller.

Cooling drinks, of which I would not partake if you gave me a pension for life.

Street scenes near Sultan Hassan mosque

On the left we have the Sultan Hassan mosque [*2001.88.102*], which has never been finished. I have been to the top of the highest minaret and from here we get a splendid view away over Cairo to the Pyramids of Giza. On the top right is the El Rifai mosque (Coronation mosque) and is where the King attends service. Here it is that the Holy Carpet – actually hangings or curtains – is hung after its return from Mecca.

Interior of Sultan Hassan mosque / The pulpit Sultan Hassan mosque

Before entering, we must hire – it would no doubt be cheaper to buy – a pair of special slippers to place over our boots, so that we do not defile what to them is very holy ground. The floors are very extravagantly adorned with thick Turkish carpets and the walls are most beautifully inlaid with ivory, ebony, silver, platinum etc., and most of the woodwork is in cedar of Lebanon.

Our next picture shows another small mosque in the neighbourhood. Notice particularly the very beautiful dome.

The Citadel, Cairo [*2001.88.103*]

The large building with the domes is the Citadel (or Mohammed Ali or Alabaster) mosque, second only to the St. Sophia mosque in Constantinople, and of which it is a copy. The central dome alone contains at least two thousand electric lights and the mosaic work in the walls and the Turkish carpets surpass even the Sultan Hassan mosque. Here again we have to take off our boots before entering. The citadel itself is one of the main barracks and includes the military hospital in which Corporal John Harrison died in May 1916 [of Market Weighton; East Riding Yeomanry no. 1284, he died of typhoid]. In the centre of this hill is situated Joseph's well, some 520 feet deep. A winding passage with openings into the shaft of the well, takes us about 300 feet down, and from there an arrangement similar to the ox-driven sakeer as seen in the Fayum oasis, draws up the water the remaining 200 feet by means of a bucket fastened on a rope. It is most difficult climbing back to the surface, but how it is possible to carry water up, I cannot imagine. At this time, the brother of the Sultan of Turkey was a prisoner in the Citadel, as the

result of his being captured in a charge by the Dorset Yeomanry, operating against the rebel Senussi on the western frontier in 1916.

This view was taken from the hill on which the Citadel stands and gives a view of one of the largest cemeteries in Cairo. *[this sentence and the rest of the manuscript page dealing with Islamic practices is crossed out and evidently did not feature in Lyon's final lecture version].*

The Holy carpet parade prior to its leaving with the pilgrims en route for Mecca! The Holy carpet is, as many of you know, not a carpet as we know it. It is a set of new hangings for the walls of the KHARBA, the square mosque in the heart of the Mohammedan city of Mecca and consists of the stiffest possible black silk, embroidered heavily in gold. The embroiderers are a special guild of men with a peculiar and picturesque dress, who work in the precincts of a mosque in Cairo. The ceremony takes place in the open space below the Citadel. The Egyptian soldiers in white uniforms and red tarbouches keep the ground, and, in their midst, swaying to and fro, is the howdah, or covered litter, ablaze with spangles of gold, on the hump of a camel which will do no more work after bearing the Holy carpet. And this howdah – not the carpet which is popularly supposed – goes by the name which describes the pageant – The MAHMAL. Egyptian ladies on donkey.

The pilgrims go by train to SUEZ and then take the steamer to Jeddah. It was a sad blow to the conservatism of Islam when the holy carpet and the holy people were thrust into railway carriages. When the chief dangers of the journey are over and the pilgrims well on their homeward journey, they write letters to their kinsfolk at home, pouring forth gratitude to God, who by the mouth of his servant Abraham, enjoined men to make a pilgrimage to the house of their God. Then those friends who have stayed at home, paint on the whitewashed walls of the houses, pictures of locomotives, ships, palm trees and raging lions, to show how the occupant has travelled by land and sea, and has braved dangers from wild beasts, but is now returned safe and sound. This description is taken from Mrs Butcher's "Things seen in Egypt", with slight alterations.

Rhoda island *[see 2001.88.104-105]*, supposed to be the scene of Moses' hiding place in the ark made of bulrushes. The chief Nilometer, for registering the height of the Nile is situated on this island. At the time this picture was taken, we were just waiting for the ferry boat seen, to take us across to the island.

View on the Nile banks. Now we will take a run out to the Great Barrage by train. Arriving at the station, which is shown in the picture, we take a donkey, or ride on a small trolley which runs on lines, about half a mile or so to the first huge dam. This shows the dam as we approach it from the station, and is taken from the south-east i.e. the side on which the water is held up. And our next picture shows the roadway over the dam. On the right we have the lines on which moves the hoist, which is used for altering the depth of the sluices. In the centre of the roadway are the narrow gauge lines on which the trolleys run, pushed by the natives. Notice the woman coming through the archway, carrying a basket on her head.

Passing on, we come to several very artistic arches, one of which you see on the screen. It almost makes one think we have got to China in mistake. All the land between this and the next dam, has been transformed into most beautiful gardens kept up by the Government. The gardens also

contain a museum in which are models of all the sluices etc. used in the irrigation of the Fayoum and other parts of Egypt. We were most fortunate in having an introduction to the head gardener, whom, I believe was sent out from Kew and here held a very good position. In his private garden, Mr. Draper grew as many English flowers, both wild and cultivated, as possible. There were roses, violets, buttercups, forget-me-nots, etc. and if it had not been for the heat, we could have thought we were back in the old country for a few minutes. Mr. Draper sent one of his servants with his private trolley to take us all round the gardens and we had a really good time.

Next we come to the smallest of the three dams, seen here from the north-west side. This is very much smaller than the others, but I should say is holding up a stream quite as wide as the River Ouse at York. Then last of all we reach the western dam, which is here seen from the balcony of the twin tower to that seen in the foreground. Here is the island, which is converted into such lovely gardens, but, it must be remembered that to keep them green and nice, an army of gardeners is at work all day long, watering all the grass etc. with hose pipes.

After having afternoon tea in the garden café, we mount our donkeys and ride to the station, where we take the return train to Cairo. Our next trip takes us out on the fine electric cars to a suburb of Cairo – Heliopolis, some six or seven miles to the north west of the city. The camp in which I was stationed by the way, was rather nearer to Heliopolis than to Cairo. Only seven years previously, this was a patch of barren desert, excepting a small, filthy, native village. Now there is a flourishing suburb, and our picture shows the general class of architecture. Here is the tram-car on which we have just come out, and in the background the Roman Catholic cathedral, of which our next but one slide shows a nearer view.

Obelisk – Heliopolis, Cleopatra's needle. All inside the arches is most beautifully carved. Heliopolis aerodrome is now one of the main stopping places on the air route both to India and the Cape.

One of the Sultan of Egypt's palaces. A military guard is posted just off picture to the right. When this was taken, the fence was entirely covered with the most beautiful purple flower. I am told that one man was the architect for the whole place and finally built the place seen here as a house for himself. It is a magnificent building of brown stone, and is approached by a very wide staircase of white granite. However,

[A gap in the text here, which judging from the illustration numbers amounts to two images; the next fragment of a page begins as follows:]

.....flashed its tongue and the flies were in its mouth. [*Presumably a reference to a lizard?*] A view in Exbekiah Gardens, one of the centres of the YMCA activities in Cairo, where troops could obtain most welcome hot baths. A real luxury out there, for a purely nominal charge. All sorts of games were provided, excellent concerts were given every night and very good fare could be partaken of at a most reasonable cost. At this point, I should just like to mention one English lady, MRS. DUNN. Ask any man who was in Cairo during the war, if he knew Mrs Dunn's tea garden – you will immediately have the most pleasant smile as he recollects how he queued up for the most delicious porridge ("zurgau") with as much sugar and milk as one cared to use. For popularity it surpassed even the YMCA and the very sincere thanks of myself and others who

benefitted thereby are due to Mrs Dunn and her willing helpers from the ranks of the English ladies in Cairo, for the vast amount of time and energy which were spent in giving this great treat to the men at such trivial cost to our pockets. Or next picture shows a somewhat poor specimen of a banyan tree. I'm sorry I cannot show a better, but it will serve as an illustration. Notice the runners coming down from the branches and taking root in the ground. In many cases these extend three times as far out from the trunk.

At Giza, on the way to the Pyramids, there are some quite passable zoological gardens, and our picture shows two ostriches therein. This ends our sightseeing in Cairo. From here I was sent to the Yeomanry base depot at Kantara [see 2001.88.58] and before many days, the regiment came down the line – all horses having been handed over to the Indian Cavalry. At 1.am on April 9th 1918, we entrained for Alexandria.

Our picture [2001.88.106] shows us on the train in the early hours of the morning. This is the Sergeant's luncheon and sleeping car, the truck carrying the kit bags. Two or three of us were lucky enough to "mark time" on a tarpaulin sheet and creeping under its shelter passed quite a good night. Those not so lucky, were about wet through with the heavy dew and of course cold with moving quickly with no shelter. When travelling by this method, it is quite as well to know that you do not roll about very much in your sleep.

We arrived at Sidi Bishr about 7 miles west of Alexandria, at 11.15am on the 9th April [2001.88.107] and remained here for about six weeks while waiting for the convoy to take us to France. (This is the camp in which I met Mr. Preston of Seaton Ross, on Sunday June 25th 1916).

[Pencil notes at this point in text – "boiled eggs (hard)" and "man at machine gun", the latter referring to image 2001.88.112, which shows machine gun practice at Sidi Bishr, "cards" refers to image 2001.88.108 and "crown & anchor" to another card game scene in the camp – 2001.88.109].

This view shows the rocks at Sid Bishr, our camp being almost on the beach. We had fine bathing and then at night, we rode donkeys to the train terminus, about half-a-mile away and went into Alexandria by tram car [2001.88.110]. We were well supplied with canteens and fruit stalls and had not at all a bad time. One of my tent mates frequently came back from town in quite a happy frame of mind and of course rode a donkey from the tram terminus each night. On occasions however, he was not satisfied with this, but even wanted the donkey to put him to bed, at any rate, he did his best to make it carry him over the legs of we unfortunates who had turned in a bit earlier and who slept nearer the open tent doorway. And this reminds me of one occasion on which a donkey was tied to the tent pole of a certain person's tent one night in Palestine – there's no need to tell you the result.

This is a native coastguard, who of course wanted me to present him with his likeness immediately after I had made the exposure. Camels on the beach carrying sand for concrete work at a prisoner-of-war camp nearby. This was one of the first snaps I took in Egypt in June 1916.

This cart would be quite useful for reaching some of the farms in this country in the winter months. It is built for sandy ground but is of no use in the soft desert sand.

Ramleh tram terminus [2001.88.111] – the scene of many a rough and tumble to board the last car.

To obtain this snap I had to pretend to be looking out to sea – this is part of the sea wall – but my camera was pointing under my arm, and when I thought the ladies were in position, I pressed the trigger with the result shown.

Consul's Square, Alexandria, with the statue of Mohammed Ali. The Bourse, or Exchange is at the end of the square to the left. Ah, there's a garry standing near the statue, let's engage it to take us out to Nouzha Gardens. What a treat to get out again into the real country – after all there's a delightful fascination in these truly eastern country scenes – the little hamlets nestling at the foot of the tall palm trees on the bank of an irrigation canal. But we soon get back to the signs of greater civilisation. This is the railway bridge over the Mahmoudieh canal. Then by its side is the native ferry bringing across the villagers and their hand carts etc.

Now let us see what Nouzha Gardens have in store for us. Why one would think we were at Scarborough – not Alexandria. Here again an enormous amount of labour must be expended in order to keep the gardens in this beautiful condition. Here is a view of the small lake with my friend sitting nearby. It is difficult to realize the pleasure such a scene as this gave us after we had been on the dreary desert for almost three long years.

Our next picture shows us the things which most of you try to avoid – BIG BILLS. Here is the keeper holding up a fish which the pelicans – or rather the lucky pelican catches in its mouth. However, it is getting late so we must scurry back to our garry and drive back to Alexandria and thence to our tents at Sidi Bishr.

At last it came to our turn to leave this interesting old country which we had many a time thought to be next door to the place to which none of us hope to go – no, not HULL. But we are sorry to leave it – we have some very happy memories of it, but also some very sad ones. Closest friends who came into Egypt with us will never return – and we miss them.

However, on May 24th, we entrained once more at Sidi Bishr in cattle trucks, and were taken almost alongside the transport Caledonia at Gabari Docks [2001.88.113]. The picture shows men of the Lincoln Yeomanry embarking, while we are lying in the shade waiting our turn. This is the after poop deck of which you will hear more. In the foreground is a fellow Sergeant from Hull [2001.88.114?]. Notice the camouflage on the vessel's sides. Close up astern was the huge Australian liner the Indarra. The name of this boat with several of our convoy is now seen regularly in the lists of P & O sailings to Colombo in the daily papers. Now it comes to our turn, we pick up our kits and march aboard. Here is the Indarra. While we were usually on the starboard side of the convoy, the Indarra was on the port side. [2001.88.115]. Almost directly after all were on board, these two vessels moved out into the middle of the huge harbour of Alexandria. For two days we remained here, much of the time being spent in boat drill etc.

Group in bows of Caledonia [2001.88.116].

The decks were much too crowded to allow of parades and for this we were truly thankful.

At 3pm on May 26th 1918, the first boat drew anchor, the others following at intervals of five minutes. Until we passed through the minefields, about 15 miles from land, we sailed in line ahead. But after passing out of the narrow channel left clear of mines, we opened out in line abreast, with escorting Japanese destroyers, minesweepers and aircraft, including one small airship, all around and above us.

At midnight of our first night at sea, a bright moonlight night, we were roused from our peaceful slumbers by those unwelcome words “BOAT STATIONS.” Blessing everyone and these practice alarms, we tumbled out of our hammocks, and without hurry worked our way on deck. All was excitement – those men who preferred to sleep on deck had heard the dull thud of a torpedo strike the bows of the middle boat of the convoy – the LEASHOWE CASTLE – had seen her fall back in a sinking condition with only two small destroyers to help those on board. But the convoy put on even more speed. The Leashowe Castle carried the Bucks, Berks, Warwicks and South Notts. Yeomanry and details – she remained afloat for about an hour, during which time the whole of the troops and crew should have been saved. But the Lascar crew acted in the same manner as later in the wreck of the “Egypt” and as the result over 100 lives were lost.

I only slept on deck the remainder of that night. During the following day we were joined by two more vessels and two destroyers from Port Said. The picture [2001.88.117] shows the Kaiser-i-Hind convoy the morning after the disaster, in line abreast. At times it was almost possible to shout from one boat to the other. On May 29th we passed to the north of Malta, and owing to the danger in this part, the escort to our six troopships was increased to twelve destroyers, six submarine chasers and two seaplanes. The extra escort left us during the night.

The next night, I happened to be in charge of the ship’s sentries, and was consequently sleeping on the after poop deck which I have previously pointed out. As day began to break on June 1st we could just discern something dark through the haze but as the sun rose we were more than glad to find ourselves under the shelter of the mountain surrounding Marseilles. It was a great relief when we passed safely through the booms protecting the harbour. After trailing us around Marseilles for some hours, we found ourselves back again at our starting point, and then we had to commence a ten mile march to Murros camp. After being on board and not being used to “frogging it” we were very thankful to reach this camp.

Once again we had opportunities of bathing in the Mediterranean but at the opposite corner to that at which we had previously been. More than nine weeks mail were awaiting us – there were forty-nine letters and nine newspapers for me. What a treat it was to have news from home only three or four days old. Why we seemed nearly there. It seemed marvellous to us receiving them so quickly after being used to having them from three weeks to a month old.

After about a week at this camp, we again entrained – this time in the covered trucks of which you have all heard – for a three days journey with thirty-five men per truck to Etaples (ETAPS). After a short time we were fitted out with motor-lorries, trained quickly as machine gunners and used as a mobile column to be pushed in where any help was needed.

On July 27th 1918, I left Wormhoudt for my first leave home after going overseas – my previous leave having ended on August 9th 1915 – almost exactly three years earlier.

Cease fire orders [See slides 2001.88.118 & 119].

KAISER-I-HIND CONVOY

Kaiser-i-Hind

Leashowe Castle (Sunk)

Cambria

Indarra

Malwa

Ormonde

Caledonia

[The text of the lecture concludes at this point]