

L/Cpl. E. Dwyer, V.C.

An abridged copy of a letter from the late L/Cpl. Edward Dwyer, V.C., dated in France from No. 1 General Hospital, B.E.F., 30.5.15

From: 10523 L Cpl. E. Dwyer,
1st East Surrey Regiment,
C. Landing,
No. 1 General Hospital,
B.E.F.
30.5.15.

To: Mr. H. F. Stoneham, Lieutenant,
1st East Surrey Regiment.

Dear Sir.

Your kind and welcome letter of the 23rd inst. has been forwarded to me. Thank you sincerely, sir, for the congratulations and I will endeavour to make myself worthy of them.

I sincerely hope you will soon be well again, your wound has taken a long time to heal.

Sir, there are only a few of the old signallers left; Ede and Cook, Collins, Hall, Gooch and Ellis; Sweeney, Lee and Smythe are on 14th Bde. Elson, Robbins, Newstead and Hobley are at home in Dover. You are perhaps aware that Press was wounded just after you sir, and he is also on the signallers at Dover.

I quite well remember the day you were wounded, also Sgts. B. and R. Hunt were killed that day; Capt. Bowring was captured and Capt. Hewitt was wounded.

I cannot really describe the events from the Marne to the Aisne, I was like one in a dream. About the beginning of October the Div. was booked for Antwerp, but they were so hard pressed round La Bassee that we were stopped and sent there; an aeroplane raced our train and stopped us, and we went to relieve the French round La Bassee. We lost Sgt. Fairs and Cpl. Cox round there.

The Indians relieved us from there at the end of October and we roamed about from one position to another, until about the middle of November when we went to Messines. Whilst there Colonel Longley was taken from us and promoted Brigadier General. Then of the old officers all we had left was Mr. Roupell, Mr. Darwell, Capt. White, Mr. Clarke; the rest were all new.

Christmas we spent out of the trenches but we were in again for the Old Year out and the New in. We were doing famous there, every

man knew the ground off by heart; and then in February they gradually started shifting us further up the line towards Ypres. From Messines we went to Kemmel, that is where Pte. Smith (he was in your platoon) was killed. He was an Irishman and a good man too. Smith, Elmer and myself were always together. You remember Pte. Sadler, sir, he was killed there and also Ackerman; all the time-serving men were being picked off. If you joined the Regiment again, sir, you would hardly know one man except Elmer. It is very miserable in the Regiment now all the Old Officers and men have gone.

Well sir, we went to Ypres, and well we knew it, but the worst was yet to come. After the taking of Hill 60, the Regiment went up there and the enemy shelled us with their 17-in. guns for three days and nights without a stop; but they could not shift us. It was there that we lost Major Packman; he was the C.O. Mr. Roupell still led "A" Coy. until they were relieved, although he was three times wounded.

There we lost 15 officers, including Capt. Wynter. Mr. Clarke got a dose of gas but I believe he is alright. I do not know who commands the Regiment now; a Capt. Oldman of the Norfolk Regiment had them but he is wounded now. I wish poor Elmer was here, sir. He writes to me and he is so lonely on his own. We used often to sit and have a chat, Elmer, Vasey, Sadler, Mitchell and I, and they nearly always brought your name into the conversation with a few remembrances of the days of the retirement. (i.e. the Retreat from Mons.)

I must really close, sir, I have so many letters to write, trusting you will excuse the scribble.

Your obedient Servant,
EDWARD DWYER,
Lance-Corporal. 10523.

NOVEMBER 1, 1915

Task

Write an obituary for Lance Corporal Edward Dwyer VC for the West London Observer. Make sure you use evidence from a variety of sources.