



**DIARY OF
SGT. THOMAS HENRY SELICK**

SR/8078 4th. Battalion The Royal Fusiliers (The City of London Regiment)



4th.January 1915 to 15th.March 1915

Transcribed from the original diary in the City of London HQ Archives

by J P Kelleher 31st January 2007

DIARY OF THOMAS HENRY SELICK

SR/8078 Serjeant 4th.Bn The Royal Fusiliers (The City of London Regiment)
Sgt Sellick was a Special Reservist re-called to the Colours on 4th.August 1914.
He was born in 1880 at Black Lion Lane Hammersmith London W., and was the son
of Frederick and Elizabeth Sellick. He has two sisters : Susan aged 11 and Florence
aged 7.
He enlisted into the Royal Fusiliers (The City of London Regiment) in
Hammersmith.

4.1.15 – Embarked 6pm SS Honorious. Raining. Moved towater 8.pm Anchored till 8am
5.1.15 – Moved to Rouen. Disembarked 5.30pm
6.1.15 – Marched to Bruyeres Camp, 5 miles, Raining Hard, Roads vile
7.1.15 – In C.C.S. [Casualty Clearing Station]
8.1.15 – 8pm Supply fatigue
9.1.15 – Nothing doing, Gloomy, But no rain
10,11,12,& 13- 1.15. Awaiting Orders. More rain, Mud up to knees
14.1.15 – Standing by. Busy fitting up
19.1.15 – Entrained – arrived Belluix 1.30
20.1.15 – Marched 5½ miles to LOKERE (Locre) Roads awful. Billeted in barns.
21.1.15 – 9.30 Paraded & posted to 'Y' Coy. Wretched day. Inlying piquet 5pm till 5pm 22nd.
Tales of trenches truly awful. Letter from N. with choc[olate ?] very welcome
22.1.15 – No rain
23.1.15 – Orderly – very busy
24.1.15 – Busy day, Parading for trenches at 4.15. March Horrid. Mud knee deep. Carrying full
kit. Everyone we met wishing us luck. Billet In barn ½ mile from firing line. No lights. No fires,
Bitterly cold.
1st journey to firing line. Sand bags. Planks, Barbed wire.
2nd Journey To support with ammunition. Mud waist deep. Cannot describe this journey. Got
back at 4.30am. Break
25.1.15 – Rest by day. Rations etc for the firing line & reserve. Bright moon. 1 killed by sniper,
but couldn't get him. Hard luck for dead man as a Volunteer and married man about 40.
Freezing hard. No fires.
26.1.15 – Into firing line about 9pm, 1 man wounded 9.20. - E1 Trench is supposed to be the
worst of all. It is true, nothing could be worse. 1am – Mud. Fight started by 'Cheshire's' machine
gun on right. Lasted 20 minutes. No damage to us. Still freezing. Trying to keep warm by work.
27.1.15 – Trench a real death trap. Some parts under fire from 3 directions. No head cover.
Cannot do anything. 1 Sgt killed [*Sgt A J Dobson*] 5 men wounded up to now. Become platoon
commander.
E2 – 2 killed 3 wounded. S.A. [South Africa ?] quite a picnic compared to this. Don't know quite
whether I'm not a little bit nervous.
28.1.15 – Getting more used to it now – 1 killed [*Pte J T Stodgell*] 1 wounded going out tonight.
Freezing hard. Hard frost, Brilliant moonlight. If we are caught going out, It will be simple
murder. Fired on Dead and Wounded being carried away. Relieved 8.30 by Norfolk Regt. No
casualties. 4 men frozen feet. 5 miles to march. Billeted in barns at Lokere (Lochre) 12.50. Still
freezing. 4 days nightmare ended.
29.1.15 - Rifle Inspection. Inlying piquet 5pm till 5pm 30th.
30.1.15 – R.B. & I.R.I. 8 mile Route March. Frost broken. More mud.
31.1.15 – Transport Fatigue. 4 days rest. Nearly gonr (?) Letter & Parcel from N.

1.2.15. – Parade for trenches 3.30. E1 – Marched to KEMMEL 4½ Miles. Full kit. Road bad.
Billeted 2 days in cellar [of]all places. Above ground knocked about by shell fire. Sent 250 S.B.
[Sand Bags] of coke, B.W. [Barbed Wire] & Timber. To Firing Line, apparently a lot better than
E1 & not too much mud. Party back 9.50. All quiet
2.1.15 – Occasional shell fire. No damage. 8pm to LINDEN OAK. Barbed wire. 1 wounded by
sniper. Few minutes excitement searching – no result - Wet day. Intensely dark night , no rations.
Artillery at work

3.2.15. – Rations party parades. 5am sniped 3 times – no damage. Artillery fire all day – short intervals. Going into supports tonight. In support trench F3 & 6 – One man wounded. No Hope. Running all night

4.2.15 – Rest & keep out of sight . Aeroplanes busy. Heavy artillery duel all the afternoon. Shells quite close but no damage to us. Hot battle on our left towards La Bassee lasted about 4 Hours. Heavy fire on the R[ight] towards Ypres about half way between us & Lille. I should think more running sun getting war. No casualties

5.2.15 – Same as yesterday – Going out tonight. 4 days Rest ! Heavy shell fire for 5 Hours – Howitzers chiefly, some shrapnel and 6'' falling all around but no damage to us. Some snipers came very close on the way to billets, But luck still holds. No one hit. Billets in huts at Locre, quite the best we've had up to now. March from the trenches, the same weary procession but over at last. 10.30 Relieved by H.A.C. [Honourable Artillery Company (Infantry)] . The shell fire partly destroyed KEMMEL – wounded 5 men of ours, killed 1 woman and 2 children – another victory for German culture.

6.2.15 – Back on duty from 5pm till 5pm. Rifles Inspection 11.30 otherwise rest. More rain just as we are getting rid of some of this mud. Germans again shelled KEMMEL. Can see the flames. Don't know any details.

7.2.15 – Parade 9.20 – 4 miles walk to for a hot bath. Splendid !. Inlying piquet 5pm till 5pm. Nothing to record. Very little artillery fire today. Rough windy night.

8.2.15 – Parade – Rifle Inspection – 10.30 C.O's speech commending Company's work. Rain from 11 till 4. Draft In – we want them badly. More rain during night.

9.2.15 – Trenches tonight – K2 Right of Line – Terrible conditions – German Trenches 150 yards off. Working all night improving our position. The H.A.C. left us a decent job.

10.2.15 – 2 men wounded at 9.20 – the usual time. By working all night, cover now quite good. Cannot do anything with the bottom – over 2 feet of water in places. Heavy shell fire – lasted about 5 hours- no damage. Airship presented us with a few souvenirs. Again no damage. Rain nearly all night. Thank heaven we go out tonight. Relieved 7.30 by X Coy. Billet in barn close by H2. Draw rations and stand by all night. Nothing doing

11.2.15 - Rest by day – not allowed outside on any account. Parade and carry a load of water up to K2. 71 planks, 30 stakes. In my party, distance about 1½ miles. Got back about 12.50, mud up to neck. No casualties. Some very close though. More rain.

12.2.15 – Quiet day. Relieved at 8 by H.A.C.. Hear that Kemmel has again been heavily shelled by German artillery. Too dark to see any of the effects. Several casualties – No [number] unknown. Billets at Locre, in farm. Very cold and uncomfortable. More rain.

16.2.15 Sunday – quiet day – R&B Inspection only. Artillery duel started about 7.45pm, lasted all night.

15.2.15 – News this morning – Germans took Trenches last night – Re-taken by Lincoln's & 5th Fus [iliers] about 4.30am. 27th Brigade standing by to attack – 9th Brigade act as support – standing by to move at any moment. Artillery still in action at 3 o'clock. 8 o'clock still standing by. Artillery fire at intervals. Heavy snow storm this afternoon.

16.2.15 – Still waiting – everyone on hooks – but don't think we will be wanted now. 9 o'clock paraded & marched to WESTOUTRE for hot bath and change of under clothing. Back, and more waiting. Brought down a German aeroplane about 11 o'clock. Only occasional artillery fire.

17.2.15 – All quiet - all manner of rumours. Short orders – Fall In at 1.30 – Destin [ation] unknown. Arrive YPRES 6 o'clock – lay down in dark. Raining hard. Still waiting – Emergency rations issued 2.am 18th.

18.2.15 – Fall In – March Off – To trenches 4am – In support trenches 6.20. Heavy artillery & shrapnel fire all day (3rd.Middx came out) . 7.20 relieved by 5th Fus[iliers] . No casualties. Shelled on way to billet – no one hurt.

19.2.15 – Standing By – R.B. & I.R. Inst. 11am

20.2.15 – Nothing doing – spent 2 hours looking round town of YPRES Cathedral and Town Hall & Very big building, a mass of ruins, in fact not a house has escaped aeroplanes. Very action dropped bomb on railway st[ation] afterwards shelling the town for about 2 hours, don't know how many casualties. Bought 4 candles – 1/- : Tin milk 1/-

21.2.15 – Quiet day – the usual artillery duel & aeroplane Reconnaissance . Going into support tonight. 2 days rations issued. Rations cannot be got in the firing line. Example of rapid marching - 2 miles in 3 hours. Into trenches about 9.o'clock. Plenty of water – 3Ft in places – 1 man killed – digging all night but cannot make any improvement. Surrounded by dead men of all nations. Volunteers to bury them tonight.

22.1.15 – Retiring 4.30am quite a quiet day. In trench 6.30pm more digging till 11am. Carrying defences to ‘R’ Trench till 3 o’clock. Condition of country and trenches indescribable – 2 journeys and no one hit – am more than lucky. Regt’s losses for 24 hours – 22 killed – 44 wounded. Retired from position 4.30am

23.2.15 – Shelled during day but no damage. Our stay here is quite long enough. Freezing hard all the time. Relieved by 5NF 11.20. Into billets about 1 o’clock

24.2.15 – Standing by. Day quiet with the exception of a few shells dropping uncomfortably close.

25.2.15 Quiet day. R.B. & A.S. Every [one ?].... getting done up, 2 days too much training. Wet and intensely cold.

26.2.15 – The usual rush into N Trench relieved NF who became out like a lot of mud men. Rather surprised at them till I got into the trench. An experience I shall never forget. Got in about 10am. Filled in trench and got away about 4 o’clock – waist deep in mud. Freezing hard and a bright moon.

27.2.15 – Supposed to be relieved tonight but got to stay because No 11 got badly hit last night. Worked hard all night to get warm put N. into good condition – nearly shell proof – relieved by NF about 10. Billeted at ROSSENDALE [Rosendale Chateau] about 11.10 - 1½ miles from firing line so mus’nt look by day. Rosendale is a magnificent place but utterly wrecked by the Hun. Lost one man this time. Weather still very cold.

28.2.15 – Day quiet – fatigues by night – finished 11 o’clock. Standing by. Cold, windy

1.3.15 - Going into P2 tonight – into trenches 9.40pm. Not too bad – Bright night. 1 man hit. Working all night as this place has a bad name for infilade fire. Heavy artillery duel on right lasted 2 hours – fear they got the working party of 12 Regt (I). Trenches on R&L shelled during afternoon – casualties not known – shelled at intervals during day. 3 men killed 2 wounded 8-10.am, a good thing as worked all last night - our defences badly weakened by German Trench Mortars – 1 man killed – 7 wounded 5pm – man R.S.F. (Royal Scots Fusiliers) brought in lost. Early this morning sent in with one man to D.S. [Dressing Station] feeling very sick – most of my best men gone including my two mates. Defences not up. Cannot do much. Hope the NF bring up some sandbags with them. Patch up wall as well as possible

2.3.15. – Nothing worth mention. The usual artillery duels. No casualties Relieved by NF about 10.30 they lost 2 coming in. All out without loss. CSM Bates shot through stomach, died next day [*this casualty not traced in records*].

Billeted 2 miles E of YPRES [Ouderdom]. We are out for 6 days rest. Paraded 7 o’clock to march to rest camp – we are told it is about 4 miles. Bad march – night as black as your hat. Arrive 11.15. It must have been nearly 4 miles. Had to come along railway line as the roads are full of troops on the march. Plenty of old cars on the road – look familiar.

5.3.15- A days rest.

6.3.15 – Pay out – mail in – No letters – miss my two pals – Send letters away.

7.3.15 – Visit POPERINGHE – about 5 miles. This place not been damaged if the Germans have been here. It must have been a flying visit. Had a good tea

8 - 9 .3.15 – Complimented by the General through our Colonel for work done by Regt’ especially ‘Y’ Coy. Regt’s loss for 10 days – 162.

Very weak now – rest has done us a lot of good.

10.3.15 – Nothing doing – weather fine & getting quite mild.

11.3.15 – Inspection – 30 minutes physical drill (sic) - Parade 4.30 to march to YPRES about 5 miles about 6.30 – Billeted in Belgian Infantry Barracks. In support to NF ready to move at a moments notice. But nothing doing

12.3.15 – Parade 6.15pm under Lt Goddard to take a load of defences to No 34 Trench, hell of a way, finish about 11.30 & return safe about 11.30. No casualties. Trenches appear to be in a splendid condition compared to our last time.

13.3.15 – Quiet day – Parade to join ‘Z’ Company in 34 Trench in firing line at 6.30. News comes along No 43 Trench R.S.F. has been sapped and blown up. So stand by till 7.45. Joined by reinforcements – No Casualties in 43 Trench – so usual relief will take place. Long journey but take over all right about 11.30pm – a dark night all right.

14.3.15 – Stand to 5am to 6pm . Firing Line - another complicated - but quite the best I’ve been in so far . 34 was originally a German one – they are certainly good at their work. 2 men wounded about 12.30, a chance shot I believe. Occasional artillery fire from both sides – shells drop uncomfortably close. 3pm Heavy artillery duel in progress – anything may happen now.

3.30 One dugout blown in 1 mans leg crushed. Firing still going on – several trenches lostRelieved by NF go back to barn and stand by to reinforce firing line. Bombardment lasted all night

15.3.15 Still here but everything uncertain. Firing Line . Very quiet. Occasional shots between the art.....DIARY ENDS ABRUPTLY

Sgt Thomas Henry Sellick Died of Wounds on 18th.March 1915 and was buried in The Bedford House Cemetery: Enclosure No.2 IV. A Row A Grave 33



DOBSON, SR/592 SGT. ALBERT JAMES

Born Newington Surrey / Enlisted Hounslow / Lived Kennington

DIED 27-1-1915



YPRES – MEMIN GATE MEMORIAL

STODGELL, 6997 PTE. JOHN THOMAS

Born Bedfont Middlesex/ Enlisted & Lived Hounslow

DIED 28-1-1915

Son of James Edward & Pleasant Jane Stodgell (nee Hibbard)
His brother James Edward was also killed.



**WULVERGHEM-LINDENHOEK ROAD
MILITARY CEMETERY**