

onto the parade ground the Sgt. Major gave my boots one look and in the real British Sgt. Majors voice which one can hear for miles asked who the hell gave me permission to come on parade improperly dressed. "See me after the parade". It was a blessing in disguise as I found later when seeing him after the parade. I took a chance and said "Sir my two friends and I have fought on two fronts already in this war and this drilling, right turn by numbers etc. we learned years ago. We have come over here from South Africa as volunteers". He then became sympathetic and said this drill was necessary for the new recruits but that until we were moved he would be glad of our assistance in taking small squads to instruct them in marching etc. After that we had many a chat about our doings on the other fronts. He was one of the original British Expeditionary Force that went to France in 1914. This reminds me of Charlie Upham, the New Zealand Double VC who I became very friendly with in POW camps as he was a POW. He joined up as a Private but was later commissioned but while being tested for his knowledge of drill - for he was never a parade ground soldier - he was given a squad to drill, "Now march them to the end of the field and back" said the drill instructor. Well as they got to the end of the field Upham forgot to give them halt or about turn. The instructor said "Mr Upham say something to your squad even if it is only goodbye". Charlie being a farmer and a horseman knew how to stop a horse but could not think of "Halt" and so shouted "Ho Ha". This is a true story. This man turned out a fighter as the two VCs indicate.

From Farnborough we were moved to Hastings where we were billeted in private houses and boarding houses. We were lucky and comfortable in a private hotel run by a Mrs Finlater. We were now issued with the double breasted tunic - known as a maternity jacket - and slacks and side caps on which we had white hat bands to indicate that we were cadets. It was a very smart turn out and we were sometimes mistaken for officers and saluted by other ranks. Here we attended lectures for about a fortnight and were then transferred to a suburb, St. Leonards, where we were put into unoccupied houses. For meals we were marched to a central hall about half a mile away and were very well fed. Owing to my previous service I was made a Cadet Flight Sgt. And carried a red lanyard to indicate the rank and had the duty of marching our squad to the Hall for meals and to the empty local swimming bath where we received lectures on elementary aspects of flying.

It was August-September and there was already early falls of snow and it used to be quite fun going out on long runs for exercise in the snow. Anyway, we were very fit and I can remember that we did run for miles in formation - in fours - in shorts and vests. I did really enjoy this and we never seemed to get puffed.

It was while we were at Hastings in the Private Boarding House that my Uncle Frank Mooney and his wife Aunt Mary came to see me and invited me to go and spend any leave I had with them at Honiton in Devonshire. After about six weeks I was transferred to Reading to be put through my final six weeks course before being commissioned if I passed.

The other two were transferred to the balloon section as they had not passed well enough in their exam. They too were later commissioned in that branch of the Air Force.

At Reading we were lectured in the construction of a plane, the engine, bombing, signalling. All most interesting. I must say before going there I hadn't the faintest idea of how a four stroke petrol engine worked. To learn about bombing we sat in a chair on a platform and below us there revolved a canvas sheet on which was painted houses, wood etc. and as these passed under you the object was to pull a lever which released a dart to hit your target. Guess or by God method. Today of course they have instruments which make bomb dropping very easy. We had to learn to Morse Code and signal at four words a minute. Now on the planes they had a wireless set but for signalling there was an aerial which was dropped over the side. One had to remember to pull in your aerial before landing. Today one would look on our instruments etc. as Heath Robinson affairs. The engines we were instructed on were Gnomw, Hispano etc. and these

machines/