

The Gallipoli diary of Julius Leonard Neustadt

3 September - 11 December 1915

P. 3 (The first 2 pages are missing.)

...packs ever so much weightier. Expect to land about dawn tomorrow. Food is good on board. We also get issued with further rations and emergency rations today. We have just passed the island of Crete.

Friday 3rd Sept. 1915

Yesterday was a day of great excitement and I am sorry to say, loss of life. One of our transports (of which there are 4) the Southland which was ahead of us by about 4 hours was torpedoed by a submarine. Fortunately she was not hit in a vital part and all took to the boats though she remained afloat and eventually was able to be escorted into Lemnos Island. About noon we were surprised to see numerous craft plying from a big steamer to a hospital ship and thought they were transferring wounded. The day was perfect and the sea fortunately was dead calm. However on reaching the scene we could see the big boat had been torpedoed and immediately we launched boats to rescue those who were hanging onto rafts etc. Much to my surprise among the rescued was Theo Levy and I'm glad to say he seemed none the worse for his ducking though they say they were on the raft for 4 hours and were thrown into the water twice - once in launching the boat and once the raft capsized. In this manner some lives were lost and amongst them was Brigadier Colonel Linton. We think about 30 were drowned altogether and withal it was very fortunate as there were about 1200 on board and had she sunk right away there doubtless would have been a lot more casualties. The ship I am on seems to be a lucky ship as she passed over the spot where the Lusitania was sunk 6 hours later, was 2 hours ahead of the Royal Edward and was standing by at the sinking of the Majestic. I fixed Theo up with some clothes etc, and we slept along side each one another under the wagon and talked of old times. All the rescued have been taken off again this morning (now we are at Mudros the capital of Lemnos) I think to land for a spell as some of them are shaken up somewhat. We will probably remain on board here for a few days. I posted a line to you yesterday saying I was well. This morning is a beautiful one and most of us have been in swimming over the side of our boat including myself with Colonel Know. It is rumoured there was a torpedo fired at us but missed so we have a lot to be thankful for. Of course there are all kinds of rumours afloat one of which is that one of the transports sunk the submarine - but I don't think this is correct.

Sunday 5th Sept. 7 a.m.

I am writing this lying in a dugout. We are all in a gully protected from rifle fire. Have just had breakfast consisting of some bread and meat which we brought off the Haverford. Well about 4.00 p.m. yesterday we disembarked onto a small fast steamer carrying a couple of guns, arrived at our

landing called "Anzac" at about 10.00 p.m. We then had a nasty time transferring onto tugs and rafts in a choppy sea with our full kit on, while stray shots were landing in the water and an occasional burst of shell lit up the heavens. However we landed safely but the worse was to come - viz. our march up to the dugouts about 1 1/2 miles from the beach up steep tracks with our full packs - which had me quite exhausted as well as most of my comrades.

On our way up our guide was shot through the head and this was our only casualty. We expect to be moved on to the trenches today and they say the Turks are making a big attack tonight. I can stand the rough life alright but what kills me is the excessive weight we have to carry at times. I can tell you our cartridges alone weigh pretty heavy and when you add to this a few clothes, food, rifle, bayonet and tools it makes up about 1 cwt.

We could hear the shots all night just over the hill and they are at it this morning but not as heavily. Most of the firing is done at night I believe.

Tuesday 7th Sept 1915

I am writing this sitting in the trenches in the firing line - Lone Pine position - Piccadilly Post. I have been here since yesterday morning and just now the Turks, who are very clever shots, are firing at our loopholes which we are keeping closed. They are made of steel braced by sandbags and to show yourself in the daytime means a bullet in you. Their trenches are situated about 200yds away on the opposite rise with a ravine between us. Last night about 9.00 p.m. there was what you call a "stunt" and terrific firing was done on both sides - but the trenches are pretty safe - only 3 men were hit by bombs. Had practically no sleep last night. We are to be relieved shortly today for a spell. During my time off, observation which is done by day with a periscope - I have read a story called "Sam Briggs Becomes a Soldier in the Trenches" and I want you to read it - it will interest you very much. It is in the June number of the Strand Magazine 1915. (By R. Marsh.) There is a peculiar coincidence in it. I saw Jack¹ this morning and to give you an instance of what shots the Turks are, Jack had a periscope up observing this morning and a Turk shot at it and missed and Jack signalled to them it was a miss by waving the periscope and immediately he put it up again, they put a shot right through it and broke it to smithereens. I expect we shall be in the trenches some months as the Brigade we are relieving - the first Brigade number 2 Battalion - was here for 5 months. Have not had a wash for two days and not likely to get one except perhaps a sponge on the face - or perhaps a salt water swim - which is risky as they shell the beach. Have also got a fair beard on.

Thursday 9 Sept. 1915

We were relieved from the trenches Tuesday and retired to dug-outs behind the hill where I had a shave and a bit of a clean up and enjoyed a good sleep. Yesterday morning we were taken to the

trenches again and I formed one of the supports - that is just behind the firing line. In the afternoon I was on fatigue carrying four gallon tins of water up from the beach also food up to the men in the trenches. Last night there was pretty heavy shelling and bombing and two or three of our boys were wounded, and one shell - a seventy five pounder - landed a little too close to my position to be comfortable.

Friday 10 Sept. 1915

Am still in the firing line - last night there was another display and the bullets came like hail. There were no casualties - but the rattle rather kept me awake and where I was sleeping they were missing by about a foot over my head with the flash and report of bombs occasionally. We are to be relieved today till Sunday. There is plenty of animal life in the trenches. Fortunately all the variety have not worried me too much yet. The food is only fair - bacon, tea, bread and jam - for breakfast - tea and biscuits for lunch and stew for dinner. Have fired a lot of shots - but one never sees a Turk, though we keep up fire at their trenches. We do two hours watching and four off in the trenches continuously for forty-eight hours and don't get much sleep and there is very little room to move about or for dug-outs. So we look forward to relief after this but then there are always fatigues. We know absolutely nothing of what is going on and are worse off for war news of any kind than we ever were.

I believe yesterday was Rosh Hashona and wish you all a very happy new year. Also I missed to note Lou's² birthday on the sixth and he has all my good wishes.

Sunday 12 Sept. 1915

Had a spell on Saturday except for a couple of fatigues. Also took the opportunity of having a dip - though it was a very stoney beach - still it was refreshing and there were no shells about. Also took the opportunity of doing a little washing in the briny which is not too satisfactory. Last night we were on guard on a new sap and today we are in the trenches again. The parson - the Rev. Bladen handed out cigarettes all around to our platoon this morning. Tried to find out if there was a Rabbi here - but do not thong there is one. I believe the nineteenth is Yom Kippur though I don't think I will be justified in fasting on the food we get here. Still, I will try and make a little difference in that day. I would like to be with you all over the holidays - and wish you all well over them. Things are quiet as usual in the day time in the trenches though lively at night. Last night there were a few casualties - and a couple of machine guns were smashed up by shells. I forgot to mention that Malcolm, an old tent mate - was layed out by sand bags falling on him the first day in the trenches and I believe crushed his leg and he has been taken to Egypt to hospital. He was very unlucky and was always saying he would be the first to go.

Wednesday 15 Sept. 1915

Well we have put in another two days in the trenches and I have come out of it without mishap. Every day there are three or four casualties in our company. Nothing sensational happened except we had a little rain and everyone was busy making dug outs for themselves. I am afraid we are in for a very bad time in the trenches in wet weather as I don't think they will hold. We came out yesterday morning all very tired and after breakfast of one slice of bacon and cold tea - had a good clean up and felt quite A1 again. In the afternoon we went for a swim and had to carry water back afterwards. This morning it has set in a steady rain and things don't look too pleasant - though at present I am in a nice little sheltered dug-out. Last night I saw two of our chaps severely wounded by a shell from the seventy five and it upsets me a bit. When the shells begin to fly every one makes for the nearest dug-out. Jack Levy has left our Company and is now attached to Headquarters as Warrant Officer in the Ordinance. He did not, I think, get on too well with Captain R., our new Company Commander. Jack is trying to get me a job in the same department as it would be nicer to be together.

Friday 17 Sept. 1915

My position has somewhat changed since my last entry. I am now in the Ordinance Department with Jack and am acting as a Sergeant. So far it is a very easy job. All my work is to keep the accounts of clothes and equipment for the Brigade - though a little later when they want the winter clothing there will be more doing. This job is more in my line. I have a decent little dug-out near HQ. and Jack and I mess together. It will keep me in touch with things and one never knows what it may lead to. Was delighted to receive all the letters this mail.

Monday 20 Sept. 1915

Still in Ordinance - nothing much to do. Last night Theo Levy and Goog Bluestein came up and we played solo for a little while. This seems quite a change after the strenuous life I have been leading and ought to be a good rest. Have had the d... diarrhoea again - a very prevalent complaint here and it is very hard to get rid of it.

Wednesday 22 Sept. 1915

Am still suffering a little from diarrhoea which is a very chronic complaint here, one can do very little for it. Had a good feed of rice today for lunch - in the hope that this will do some good. Weather is still perfect and work very easy - in fact it is rather a lazy life at present. Had a nice lot of letters this mail - and wrote a lot to everyone. War conditions just the same - there has been no fighting except for artillery duels occasionally - though it was rumoured there are a fair number of warships about. I am afraid we are here for the winter.

Friday 24 Sept. 1915

Nothing very fresh. My appointment as a Sergeant came out in Div. Routine Orders yesterday as from 17th instance so everything I think is alright now. Weather still beautiful though beginning to get cold at nights. Diarrhoea better after dosing - though Jack has it pretty bad.

Tuesday 26 Sept. 1915

Still fit - weather perfect. Have met a M (?) Moore - on Mining Standard Melbourne - who is at present on a few days sick leave. He comes and rests at my dug-out daily - and has meals with me.

Tuesday 28 Sept. 1915

Well, issue of egg for breakfast this morning - cigarettes from Jim Joseph to hand yesterday - gala day. Had a sponge bath in a tin this morning.

Thursday 30 Sept. 1915

Played German whilst with Jack last night - afterwards supper of bread and raw onion and rum. Everything quiet - weather beautiful. Good news from Kitchener of Allies victory in the west.

Tuesday 5 Oct. 1915

First - weather beautiful. Second - Promotion as Sergeant confirmed as from 17-9-15 and Pay Book fixed. Yesterday morning very heavy shelling about 10.00 a.m. - the heaviest in this part since we have been here. Shrapnel, bombs, 75' etc were coming from all directions - was huddled up in dugout waiting for next to burst - terrific din - pieces hitting the top of the dugout incessantly and an occasional shower of dirt when one burst near. There were 3 casualties. Bit of a bungle Sunday night. Some Turks sent message that they would surrender and it was arranged that we would not fire while they were coming across. They left their trenches and pretended to come to our lines whilst others erected big barb-wire entanglements in front of their own trenches. After a while our officers tumbled to the joke and the order was given to fire by one section - though a secret machine gun through some bungling was also ordered to fire which gave away its position hence presumably the shell fire yesterday morning. Our aeroplanes are very active and as soon as they go up, enemy's gunfire virtually ceases.

Met Bill Davis who is in Ordinance at the beach yesterday and has a chat with him. Had a very enjoyable swim with Jack on Sunday afternoon though "Beachy" was letting go occasionally but our little monitor opened up and kept her quiet. The little monitor fires a shell 14 in. weighing about 1 1/2 tons. Had a nice lot of letters yesterday - also received some gifts - chocolate, figs, biscuits, sardines and oatmeal - a very acceptable little lot. Our office dugout fell in the other day whilst I was in it writing. Fortunately the rafters caught and only gave me a slight knock. Had to get a new office fixed up which made some work. Jack and I sometimes play cards at night - at others we have a visitor or two. Generally retire about 9. We are not allowed lights now - though in the office we can have one occasionally.

Saturday 9 Oct. 1915

The Turks got a few of our chaps this morning. One fellow walking around a gully near here was sniped through the leg. A lot of others were hit by their shells, one of them landing in the A.M.C. tent - there are guns in the hill behind this tent so I don't think the shot was intentional. Have been working on my dug-out - but it is hard to get proper materials for same. Had a basin bath this morning. It rained a good deal last night - though Jack's dug-out where I am sleeping at present is pretty waterproof. Nice and fine today.

Julius Bloom³ came over to see me yesterday - he looks well - though working pretty hard and is suffering a bit from prickly heat and diarrhoea. He had tea with me and said it was a nice change for him. Fixed him up with a razor and a tin of jam. He told me Bertie Keesing⁴ (?) had gone back crook.

Saturday 16 Oct. 1915

Nothing of much importance has happened the last week. This morning at 4.00 a.m. there was a demonstration on our part and woke both Jack and self up, and today just as we were having lunch the Turks gave us a very lively half hour. Julius Bloom was over yesterday and had lunch with us - also a bath and I indulged in the same luxury - which brought out a slight rash. I think I must have put too much Lysol in the water. Received mail - also letters and papers from J.D.M.

Tuesday 19 Oct. 1915

This morning another artillery duel took place just at breakfast time. A hail of shrapnel hit the roof of our dug-out - one pellet penetrating after hitting a beam hit Jack on the leg but did not hurt him. Just spoiled our breakfast. One of our friends in the signallers was hit in the ankle (name Stockdale) and was taken to hospital. One man killed and another man wounded. These duels are becoming regular at mealtimes - a very inconvenient hour.

Friday 22 Oct. 1915

It has been very cold and wet.

Saturday 23 Oct. 1915

Still pretty cold but rain has stopped. Have had a slight touch of rheumatism or cold on the kidneys. Better today - think rum did me good - also aspirin. Had interesting chat with Capt. Willis 21st Q.M. who won D.C.M. in South Africa served in Egypt and India and was 3 yrs in Aden. Julius Bloom was over Tuesday, is well. He said Turks and Australians were interchanging friendly notes and salutations one morning above parapet - one chap interpreting in French. Turks sent over cigarettes and a note saying "Although they were at war with the Australian - yet they were friends. They wanted some bully beef as they liked it (which was thrown over to them.) Also asked us not to throw the cricket balls (bombs) as they did not like them. They signed themselves, "Your comrades in arms, the Turks."

At this point (Courtney's Post) the trenches are only about 10 or 15 yds. Apart.

Have been playing drafts with Jack a fair bit lately - he is 15 ahead at present. No shelling from the Turks the last 5 days. We heard Bulgaria had joined against us.

Tuesday 26 Oct. 1915

Had a bath yesterday also Jack. Syd Malcolm was over to see me and stayed to lunch. He is quite A1 again after 6 weeks in Egypt. Weather better.

Friday 29 Oct. 1915

An unfortunate accident occurred today in our Brigade. We blew up a sap and in going in about an hour later about 20 were gassed. Already about 10 stretchers have passed bearing victims and it is to be hoped that most will recover. There are 2 deaths reported, a lieutenant Thom and a Lt. Bowra, the latter from Perth and knows the Mayers. A very decent chap who often had a chat with us and it was under his supervision our dugout was built. Lt. Col. Elliott was among the number but it is expected he will recover. They were mostly engineers. Official 4 deaths - 20 affected. There were several instances of great bravery in the rescue, Major Newcombe especially is mentioned in the report as also a private.

Monday 1 Nov. 1915

Have not been too good the last few days. Pains in the limbs and a slight temperature. Think have had a touch of influenza. Got some quinine from the doctor and am much better today. Had a letter from Syl Brown, Egypt. Weather warm.

Friday 5 Nov. 1915

One of the saddest days. This morning, Harold Herman⁵ broke the news of the death of Julius Bloom. He was over with us yesterday and spent a pleasant day, and it appears immediately he returned to his trenches the Turks blew up a sap and killed him outright. We buried him this morning at Anzac.

Last night there was an attack on our right and we gained some trenches.

Monday 8 Nov. 1915

Have a bit of a cold on me. Some pretty close shelling yesterday. Weather a little cooler. No letters from mother for over 3 weeks.

Tuesday 9 Nov. 1915

Sent following cable home at the weekend "Sympathy Blooms - everyone well. Love Julius"

Wednesday 10 Nov. 1915

Washing day. Cold a little better.

Thursday 11 Nov. 1915

Kitchener reported at Embros. About 200 weekly leave the Peninsular sick. Cold much better. Rumours of gas to be used by Turks who are supposed to be reinforced by Germans.

Sunday 14 Nov. 1915

Have had bad abdominal pains and diarrhoea and was sent to hospital today. On ticket - "Diarrhoea and abdominal pains. Run down. Apical systolic murmur."

Wednesday 17 Nov. 1915

On board Indian and British Hospital ship S.S. Syria now lying at Mudros harbour - Lemnos. Last night after spending a couple of not very enjoyable days in 1st Australian Casualty and Clearing Hospital at the beach and was transhipped to this hospital ship - which is very comfortable. After allotting us beds and giving us boorch (borscht?) and bread and butter we all had a bath and our clothes were fumigated. Had a fairly comfortable night and feel much better this morning.

There is a nice little nurse here to look after us - and she gets plenty of work. Had a good breakfast this morning of porridge, fried cod, bread and butter and tea. It seems like paradise after the wilderness. Received a nice budget of letters before I left, also one from Jack who I think felt my leaving.

Thursday 18 Nov. 1915

Had a rotten night last night - got some medicine this morning, first since I came aboard. The medical attention except for wounded cases has not been good - though it seems better this morning. The doctor (Indian) has just been around. The cause is they are very overcrowded and are getting rid of a lot of cases here today.

Friday 19 Nov. 1915

Left Lemnos yesterday afternoon and are now on the road to Alexandria. Up on deck this morning for a while and am picking up again. She is a great little ship - one of the P and O Line.

Very calm and a perfect day.

Saturday 20 Nov. 1915

Another nice day. Feeling pretty fair. We are setting up subscription for nurse on deck. Subscription for nurse not allowed.

Sunday 21 Nov. 1915

Arrived Alexandria yesterday afternoon. Stayed on board overnight and this morning at 10.00 went straight into hospital train arriving at Heliopolis about 3.00 pm and was admitted to Palace hospital where I met Frank Davis - looking well. Treatment on hospital ship and train all that could be desired.

Thursday 25 Nov. 1915

Still in hospital - not allowed up yet though feeling much better. Alias (?) Coppell, Alias Alexander, and Raphael came to see me yesterday. Also got gifts of sweets, biscuits, handkerchief and envelopes from Red Cross.

Wednesday 1 Dec. 1915

Getting very much stronger - al up every day now and loaf about the gardens. Was in Cairo on Monday - saw Leo Lipman and heard re Harold Herman's rumoured death from wounds received. Also saw Ordinance and am endeavouring to get a position in Egypt for a few months. Heard Ernie Victorsen was sick here. Cabled home and received a reply yesterday - delighted. Mrs. Knox over again and is cabling mother. Wrote home - J.D. Marks and Jack. Syl Browne was down last night and comes frequently to see me. Getting leave again tomorrow and going to Cairo. Pay book fixed as Sergeant and made allotment M.N. as from 17-9-15 of 5/1d. per day and pay book left with office.

Friday 3 Dec. 1915

Pretty right again. Cabled yesterday "About again only require nourishing same address present possibility position Egypt temporarily." Went to Cairo yesterday. Before doing so saw Ernie Victorsen and Billie Coppel - the latter I arranged to meet for tea in Cairo - and we are going out Saturday together if possible. Got pay book and everything fixed. Saw Leo and took him to lunch with me. Had shave, haircut etc. Tried to see Dr. G. but was not in. In morning called on Nathan and he invited me up anytime and was very nice. He is going to put in a word for me with Lt. Dunstan and there is a fair chance of my getting a position here for a few months.

Saturday 11 Dec. 1915

Discharged from hospital. Job came Records Dept. - Intermediate Base.

The End

Active Service Diary of J.L. Neustadt A. Coy. 23rd Batt. A.I.F.^o

(Private)

Dedicated to my mother

¹ Jack was probably Jack Levy, Julius' cousin. He was the son of Lou Levy (Adelaide Neustadt's brother)

² Lou referred to here is his brother Lewis Jacque born on 6th Sept. 1893

³ Julius Bloom, first cousin, son of Eveline Neustadt and John Bloom, Harold Maurice Bloom's elder brother

⁴ Bertie Keesing was the son of John Bloom's sister Hannah. John Bloom married Eveline Neustadt, Julius Neustadt's aunt. So Harold Bloom's first cousin on his father's side.

⁵ Harold Herman was the son of close friends of John Bloom. He died of wounds on 20 November 1915, and was buried at sea. He is commemorated on the Lone Pine Memorial.

⁶ Julius Leonard Neustadt (service no. 1142). Enlisted 5 May 1915, returned to Australia 12 November 1917.