

Appendix Five

Charles Henry "Harry" Nicholls

Charles Henry "Harry" Nicholls was born on 6th February 1897 to William Wood Nicholls and Catherine Lyon Nicholls (nee Paddle) at Port Macquarie. He was killed at Pozieres, Belgium on 12th September 1916. He is buried at 127 Railway Dugouts Burial Ground, Zillebeke, Belgium. Harry bought a diary in France to record his experiences and it is reproduced below courtesy of Anne Keena, a relative.

The first daily entry in Harry's diary is for 19 March 1916 and the last date of entry is 10 September 1916.

MARS (March)

- 19** Dimanche (Sunday) Inspected at Serapeum Camp by the Prince of Wales and his staff. Band played the King and a march while they rode past.
- 20** Lectured and inspected by our Battalion CO. Commanding Officer Major Stephens.
- 21** Left Serapeum Camp at 3.30pm and bivouacked at Railway Station till lam. Then entrained for Alexandria.
- 22** Entrained at Serapeum Railway Station at lam for Alexandria arriving there at 10am. Embarked on board the Cunard Liner Ivernia for France.
- 23** Allotted our life boats in case of accident. Had to wear our life belts all day. Inoculated second time. Lights out every night at seven.
- 24** Alarm sounded and all hands had to fall in at their boat posts.
- 25** Passed Malta on the left.
- 26** Passed Sardinia and Corsica. Water very calm. (Sunday)
- 27** Arrived at Toulon and lay in the harbour till 6am 28th. Three other transports in the harbour.
- 28** Left Toulon at 6am for Marseilles arriving there at 10.30am after a fairly rough trip ad being sick once. Drew near to wharf 1pm. Disembarked at 4.30pm and marched through the streets to the town. Entrained at 7.30pm
- 29** Passed through some beautiful villages. Stopped at Lyons and supplied with hot water for dinner by French nurses.
- 30** Stopped at Versailles a town just out of Paris for tea. Saw the Eiffel Tower of Paris.
- 31** Arrived at Renescure after trip of 58 hours in the train. Allotted our billets. The bandsmen billeted on a farm.

AVRIL (April)

- 1** Had a look around the village with some mates.
- 2** Played the hymns for church parade in the morning and at a concert by the men of A Company at night.
- 3** Alarm given and we all had to get out of bed at 9.30pm and were marched down to the village and had to stand to arms for an hour.
- 4** Very cold and windy very much like as if it was going to snow. Played a programme in village square in the afternoon.
- 5** Practiced some fresh marches in the morning and wrote letters in the afternoon.

- 6** Played programme in village square in the afternoon. Was paid our first pay while in France £1.8.8 or 40 franc.
- 7** Every man in the Battalion had to join his ranks and we were marched about 2 miles to a big paddock. Had to go through a dummy trench full of gas with our helmets. A Tommy Officer gave us a lecture on gas and how to use our helmets.
- 8** Practice in the morning. Half Holiday. Wrote some postcards. Daily routine. German Fokker plane came down in the village and the driver taken prisoner. Came down thro' running out of oil. Word came through that another had come down in the next village.
- 9** Received orders to be ready to move off at 7 am on the 10th inst. Supposed to be going to the trenches. Two taubs(?) flew over the village. Played programme in the village in the afternoon.
- 10** Left Renescure village at 7am arriving at our new billet at 1pm after a march of 16 miles. We were very tired and foot sore .Passed through a lot of villages. Billet on a farm on the outskirts of the village of Merris.
- 11** Had a hot shower bath at Divisional showers and a change of under clothing. Walked to the village of Meteren and had a look around. A heavy bombardment started about 4.30pm not very far away from here.
- 12** Woke up at 5.30am and had to be ready to march onto the parade ground. Fallen in on parade ground and inspected by General Walker. It rained nearly all day. Received letter from England.
- 13** Went for a short route march in the morning. Weather a little warmer. Received letter from Edie
- 14** It rained in the morning. Went for a short route march and sleet began to fall on our return journey. Joyce Paddle's birthday.
- 15** Sleet still falling. Went for a long route march with D and C Companies and the Captain shouted a drink for each bandsman (22 in all) when we came back for our good playing.
- 16** Church parade in the morning. Generals Birdwood and Maxwell and their staff were on parade. Played a programme at Battalion Headquarters in the afternoon. Weather getting warrner. Received letters from L Mander, Rita and Maude.
- 17** Still raining and very cold. Issued with our steel helmets. A rumour going round that we are off to the trenches on the morrow.
- 18** Left Merris at 11.30am arriving at our next billet about six miles nearer the firing line at 2.30pm after a pretty rough march through water and slosh. Paid 5 francs or 317 . Billet in the outskirts of Saily.
- 19** Left Saily for the trenches. Entered trenches about 8pm. On duty from 9pm till stand to. The trenches are very sloppy. Relieved the Pantanks (?) (an English regiment.)
- 20** Had to stand to from 4am till 5am. Germans very quiet with their rifles. Two German tanks flying over the trenches
- 21** On duty all night and on look out duty with three mates working one hour shifts. Still raining and the ground very sloppy. Watched as duel between French and German aeroplanes and anti-aircraft guns. One German plane brought down.
- 22** Stood to from 4am to 5am. Still raining and very cold. Germans firing a few ins-bangs but no damage done. Received letter from Rita.
- 23** Weather very warm. Left firing trench and went into the supports for four days spells or light duties. Put on guard for the four days. Having a good time. Part of firing line which we occupy is called Laves River Post. Piece of aluminium dropped near my dug out.
- 24** Usual daily routine guard duties. Watched the Germans shelling a couple of cottages at the back of our lines and a couple of airships.
- 25** Continued guard duties. Germans shelled our communications trenches. Watched our aeroplanes manoeuvring over the enemies lines. Terrible rifle fire going on between our men and enemy during the night.
- 26** Continued guard duties. Germans shelling our lines with trench mortars. Warned to keep our gas helmets as the Germans were making a gas attack on our left flank. Received letters from Auntie Hilda and Ethel Grahame

27 Guard duties as usual. Very heavy artillery duel between our gunners and the enemies from 10.30pm to 1.30pm. We were called out of bed and had to stand for the hour. A lot of shrapnel and pieces of shell dropped about my dugout.

28 Weather continuing very warm. Enemies fire very quiet all day. Watched enemy firing at our aeroplanes and some of the shrapnel and pieces of shell fell over my dugout.

29 Weather still very warm. Very heavy rifle fire on our right flank early in the morning. Still on guard duties. Received letters from Thelma A Roper (?), Daisy Kean and Rita's photos. Letter from Rita.

30 Guard duties. Watched the German's trying to bring down three of our planes. Three of the planes flew off across the German lines towards Germany. Came back into firing line in the evening. Received letters Vera, 2 home, Rita, Bill, Ruby Denham, 2 Thelma, E Hollis.

MAI (May)

1 On look out duty watching enemies trenches. Things very quiet.

2 Our guns opened up on enemy for a bombardment but enemy would not reply. Our aeroplanes manoeuvring round on the lookout for enemy gun positions.

3 Relieved from trenches by 4th Battalion. Sent back into reserve billets. Put on guard over Tommy's gun supports very good job. Fourteen Tree is the name of guard post.

4 Enemies aeroplanes flying round on the lookout for our big guns. Driven off by anti aircraft guns. Was told by a Tommy that the gun we are guarding put a German Field Battery out of action. Noise enough to deafen one when the gun fires.

5 Day very sultry. Germans shelled the battery we are guarding, but no damage done to guns. The farm houses nearby blown to bits and road blown up. Our battery opened up on Germans in afternoon. Very heavy bombardment on our left flank. Germans attacked under gas.

6 Things very quiet along the line. Had a walk around the town of Bac-Saint-Maur.

7 Days still warm. Gun removed to another part of line. A few aeroplanes flying over head. Things very quiet along the line.

8 Weather wet and cold. Strong wind blowing from the west. Too windy for aeroplanes. Paid 20 francs or 14/-.

9 Still raining and very cold. A few aeroplanes flying about.

10 Relieved from guard duty by men from B Company. Sent with some more men to dig a new communication trench near firing line in the night. Got back to billet after 12pm. Received letter from Richard.

11 On duty with Pioneers putting duck boards down in new support trenches from 7am till 4pm. Made to walk about 3 miles from the billet.

12 Still on the duck board fatigue for a couple of hours. Shifted from old billet to a guard billet.

13 On fatigue work filling sand bags for dressing station behind firing lines. Weather very wet and cold. Received parcel from L Bones 1212116

14 Weather finer and warmer. On fatigue with pioneer surveyor surveying a section of the trenches. Saw Cpl H Price (?) Received letter from Thelma

15 On fatigue building dug out for dressing station. Weather very wet and ground sloppy

16 Still on dug out fatigue. Germans fired a lot of shells at one of our batteries and our aeroplanes.

17 Had a day off to-day. Weather lovely and warm. Rumour going round that we are going back to Saily tomorrow for a month's spell. Third Brigade taking our place in firing line. Received letters 2 home, ?, 2 Edie, Thelma, Phyllis, Claude, Preston.

18 Removed from reserves back into drill billets for drill and a spell. Received papers home, Edie and Rita.

19 Had drill for four hours. A few aeroplanes flying about. Lectured on how to talk when we are in the village.

- 20** Weather very warm. Given a lecture on the use of gas helmets. Paid 20 francs or 14l-. Received letters from Rita and Edie Welch.
- 21** Weather very hot. The men are having a bit of a jollification and have painted some of their faces with the soot off the field kitchen. Received letter from Claude.
- 22** Weather very hot. On fatigue digging trench for cable wires from 8.30pm 21't until 4am 22"d. Saw Jim Badge (Budge?). Had a walk round Saily with him. Received letters from Rita, Aunty Edie and Aunty Bess.
- 23** Sent to relieve a man on guard at the Tree Post. Saw a fight between two game cocks. English officer driving along in car stopped and had look at it too.
- 24** Empire Day. On daily routine of guard duties. Weather very warm in morning but dull and cold in the afternoon. Rained a little during the night. Tank machine manoeuvring round well behind our firing line our anti aircraft guns fired on it but failed to bring it down.
- 25** Still raining and cold. Still on guard duties. Things seem very quiet in the firing line.
- 26** Weather very dull. Very heavy bombardment going on the left towards Armentieres. A few aeroplanes flying round.
- 27** A bit of strafing going on with our guns. Weather a little brighter. Received letters Rita, Lucy W, Rene W and Mabel.
- 28** Nothing to state.
- 29** Very dull and inclined to be cold. Watch the trail trip of the new aeroplane. Raided during the night. Cleaned dirt from along duck boards of trench.
- 30** Still dull and cold. Very heavy bombardment on our sector of the trenches now occupied by 3'd Brigade. Received letter from Rita.:
- 31** Weather very warm. Went to YMCA at Bac St Maur and met Jack Mills. Rumour reported that 2"d Brigade lost a lot of men in previous nights attack.

JUIN (June)

- 1** The Battalion inspected by Mr W Hughes but I was unable to go as I was on duty. Watched a couple of our aeroplanes chasing a couple of tanks. But tanks too fast for ours. One of our observation balloons broke away and the wind carried it away across the German lines. Received parcel from Rita.
- 2** Germans putting a lot of big shells into the village of Tilverbaix (?) and nearby.
- 3** (nothing written)
- 4** Germans shelled the road and billets not far from here. Heard rumour that there has been a big naval battle in North Sea and 20 of our ships sunk. Heavy bombardment on our right flank during the night.
- 5** Weather very cloudy, windy and exceptionally cold. Got full account of North Sea battle in paper. Rained during the night.
- 6** Still raining and very cold. Very little artillery fire on our sector of line. Staff Officer inspected our post. Received parcel from Richard.
- 7** Weather very dull and cold. Paid 20 francs and then went over to canteen and YMCA to get some requisites. Received letters Edie, Roy, Claude, Mabel A and A Atkinson, E Welch, Rita, Olie (?), Mrs Staples, Aunty ??
- 8** Weather still dull. Went to Bac St Maur for a walk saw J Badge. Saw the account of Lord Kitchener's death in paper. Filled the day in writing letters. Received letters mother, Rev Wilson, Claude and Thelma.
- 9** Rumoured that we are going into the trenches again tomorrow. A pair of planes flying over head. Received parcel from Mrs Teare.
- 10** Left 14 Tree Post relieved by 8th Battalion. Left Saily for firing line at 8pm got to post at 11pm. Rained nearly all night. Received letter from Lena, Rita, Richard, Maude, D Orchard, E Hollis, L Bones, Papers from Edie and parcel Renie W.

- 11** Still raining but cleared off later in the day. Had a look at German trenches about 300 yds from our own. We shelled the German parapets with our trench mortars.
- 12** Still raining and fairly cold. Raiding party went out from D Company to German lines and captured six prisoners and a machine gun and killed a good many. Rita's Birthday.
- 13** Still raining and very cold. Had to stand to from 12pm till 8am while raiding party was out. Our artillery bombed Fritz's parapets to pieces. Received papers from Edie and Rita.
- 14** Transferred from A Company to Scouts Platoon and attached to D Company. Weather a bit finer. Received Sydney Herald from Rita.
- 15** Weather cleared up and warmer. A party went out on patrol from A Company and met a German Patrol which bombed them wounding some.
- 16** Sun shining brightly first time since we came in. Gas alarm sounded during the night and we all had to stand to. Heavy bombardment on our left flank.
- 17** Weather still fine and warm. Watched a duel between three enemy planes and three of ours. Two enemy planes supposed to be brought down inside their own lines and one behind our trenches. on patrol work in no man's land during the night. Received letter Maude.
- 18** Went down the line to 2 Battalion to see the boys but they were away. Payed 20 francs. Heavy bombardment all night.
- 19** Weather very dull and cold again very much like rain. A lot of strafing going on with the artillery.
- 20** Weather fine and warm. Saw a big fire in church at Armentieres caused by an enemy shell. Church burnt to the ground.
- 21** Weather still fine. Saw Jim Badge (Budge?) and had a good yarn with him. A lot of aircraft manoeuvring about and enemy fired a lot of shots at our planes. Took reports to headquarters.
- 22** Watched another fight between two of our planes and a tank. Pulled out of bed about midnight for gas alarm and had to put gas helmet on.
- 23** Heavy storm in the afternoon. A lot of strafing going on with the artillery. A shell burst in a dugout and wounded three men. Received letters t home, 2 Rita, Claude, Thelma, Lucy, Edie, Bessie.
- 24** Heavy artillery duel all afternoon. Relieved from trenches by 4th Battalion. Saw A Andrews and M Way in Fleurbeaux after I got to my new billet. Had a stroll round the village.
- 25** Had a look round he town with one of my mates. Went on fatigue laying cables in the night. Heavy bombardment going on nearly all the time we were there. Arrived home at 2am.
- 26** Slept till 9.30am and had breakfast about 10am. Our officer inspected our gas helmets in the afternoon and gave us a short lecture.
- 27** Trained nearly all day. Our CO gave us a lecture on gas and carefulness of speech when talking to strangers. Inspection of rifles and rations
- 28** The enemy shelled the billet of B Company and caused a number of casualties. Had a yam with A Andrews. Heavy artillery action during the night.
- 29** Weather finer. Watched a fight between two of the scouts. Went on fatigue at night at 'Convent Wall' putting up barbwire fence for entanglements and had to come home early on account of bombardment.
- 30** Went to Bac St Maur for a bath. On fatigue putting out barbwire entanglements at night. Heavy artillery fire all the time we were working. Fritz spotted us and turned a machine gun on us but no one was hurt.

JUILLET (July)

- 1** A lot of aeroplanes flying about. On gas guard at night. Heavy bombardment on our right. Warned to go away with bandsmen to practice some new marches but did not go
- 2** Fritz put a shell into our billet about 3am and we all had to get out as quickly as possible but no more shells followed.
- 3** Fritz shelled our billet again about 3 am and we had to get out, one shell hit the road nearly

opposite our billet and wounded 3 of the scouts and killed one. Ordered to get our gear ready to proceed to Sailly. Left Fleurbaix at 12pm and proceeded to our new billet about 1 mile out of Sailly.

4 Had a good feed of cherries fresh off the trees. Had a walk round with two mates and had a look at the countryside.

5 Had a kit inspection and rifle drill in the morning and a route march in the afternoon. Received letters home, 2 Rita, Charlie.

6 Drill and bathing parade in the morning. Went for a route march about 6 miles in the afternoon. Marched through Dalleuil and around the outskirts of Estaires.

7 Bomb practice and bayonet drill in the morning. Went for another route march through Dalleul and back through Estaires. Received letter from Maude.

8 Inspected by our Colonel in the afternoon and were told that we were leaving the billet early next morning.

9 Left our billet at 7.30 and joined the battalion about Sam and marched about 8 miles arriving

at our old billets that we were in before we went to the trenches.

10 Left billet at Outerstune at 9.30pm and proceeded to railway station at Bailnet. Left station at 12.30 for unknown. Arrived at Flenvillers-Candas station at 6.30am. Left station at 8am and proceeded to a village about 8 miles arriving at 12 noon. Village Domaft

11 Arrived at village of Domart at 12pm. Had good rest ready for next day.

12 Left billet and marched about 8 miles to our next village. Had to climb a large hill and when

at the top had a good view of the countryside village Vigna Court(?)

13 Left village about 2pm and proceeded to next village about 12 miles off. Passed through three small villages on the route. Village Allenville(?)

14 Bayonet exercise and squad drill in the morning. Met Mick Coombes with Norm Way in the afternoon. Paid 20 francs or 14/-

15 Bayonet drill in morning. Ordered to stand by in case we had to move off in the afternoon. Mess orderly for the day and had to draw water out of a well about two hundred feet deep for the cooks. Received letters home, Rita, and Edie.

16 Left billets at 10.15am and proceeded to Warby-Ballion a village about 8 miles nearer the fring line.

17 Went for a route march in the morning and had to stand by ready to move off at half hours notice.

18 Had to stand by all the morning. Had physical exercises in the afternoon. Saw three German prisoners going along the street under escort.

19 Came into the trenches at night. A lot of heavy strafing with the artillery while we were coming in. Received letter from home

20 On fatigue carting water and rations. Dug a dugout for myself. Very heavy bombarding at night. Ona Keena's birthday.

21 On fatigue carrying bombs and flare lights ready for advance. More heavy artillery duels. Watched a duel in the air between two of our planes and two of the enemies. One of the enemies brought down. Our planes also set one of the enemies balloons on fire.

22 General advance. Scouts and bombers went over the parapet and advanced to an unoccupied trench and cleaned it out. Bombardment started about 2pm and the advance followed.

23 Scouts and bombers lined out into shell holes and dug a sap about one hundred yds from German front line. Heavy shelling all night. Watched 5 of our chaps capture 4 Germans in a cellar.

24 Germans shelled our trench all day. Had to retire out of it late in the afternoon but went back later on.

25 Captured a trench with bombs and machine guns. Took a lot of prisoners and left a lot of Germans killed in the trench. I was wounded in the right arm and right buttock late in the afternoon. Was driven in motor car to different dressing stations and then taken to No 3 clearing station.

26 Wounds cleaned and dressed in the morning. Left clearing station by train at about 12.30pm and arrived at Etaples about 7pm. Entered No 1 Canadian Hospital. Bob Campbell in the same ward as I am.

27 Nothing to report

28 (nothing written)

29 Marked for convalescent camp. Weather very hot and sultry.

30 Was inspected by Doctor. Went to church in the evening with the Sister of the ward I was in.

31 Left No 1 Hospital for convalescent camp about two miles away. Weather very hot. Went to a concert in YMCA hut at night.

AOUT (August)

1 Went to Base to get some pay but did not get any. Met Vic Kenny whilst there. He had just come from England.

2 Inspected by Dr of conv camp and had wound dressed. Went to the orchestral recital in YMCA hut at night.

3 Went down to the Australian training camp to find some of the boys but had to no luck. Went to concert in YMCA hut at night.

4 Inspected by Dr and marked for Oasa. Met some boys from Camden Haven in YMCA hut.

5 On ration fatigue in the morning had to go to railway station to load ration wagons. Left convalescent camp for Base, arrived at Base at 6.30pm and met Bob Burns Sgt Major of B Company 1st Depot Battalion.

6 Paid 20 francs by adjutant of 1st Depot Battalion. On fatigue moving tents.

7 Details fallen into line and the officer asked for volunteers to join the Battalion. I was one to volunteer. Inspected by Dr and passed fit.

8 Joined depot lines in the morning and issued with all shortages. Listened to a lecture given by Secretary of Royal Army Temperance Association. Watched aeroplane land in the Bull Ring and went down and had a good look at it and watched it rise.

9 Watched a dirigible flying over the channel. Went to the hospital to see a mate in the afternoon.

10 Went to the Bull Ring for bomb and first aid instructions. On ration fatigue in the afternoon.

11 On fatigue all the morning. Went to rifle range for instructions in the afternoon and had to march about six miles.

12 Drill in the morning. Went for a steam bath with my mates in the afternoon. Weather very hot.

13 Went on church parade in the morning. Went to church and communion at night.

14 Had a tooth pulled by the camp dentist. Paid 40 francs £1.8.8.

15 Went to Bull Ring for drill but came back to camp early with three mates.

16 Went to Bull Ring for drill. On fatigue during the afternoon carrying rations. Went to concert in the evening given in aid of the Depot Band.

17 More drill in the Ring all the morning. Went to concert in the YMCA at night.

18 Drill all the morning.

19 Drill in the morning. YMCA sports in the afternoon. I made one of the team in the tug of war. Artillery team won the pull.

20 Drill in the Bull Ring in the morning. Went to Church and communion in the evening. Received card from Aunt Nancy.

21 More drill in Bull Ring. Went to Mr Lorell's lecture on the war in the evening.

22 Drill as usual. The YMCA finished off their sports from Saturday afternoon.

23 Instructed by SM that we are to proceed to Battalion on the morrow. Went to lantern lecture in YMCA tent.

24 Inspected by Dr and Camp Adjut in the morning. Left camp about 2pm and proceed to train. Left Etaples station about 3pm for Battalion.

25 Arrived at No 3 Clearing Station about 2pm after a very tedious trip. Marched from station to Talmas camp about five miles distant. Left camp at 6.30pm after having tea and marched to Donllans to Batt.

26 Arrived at Donllans about 2am. Entrained with Battn and proceeded to our next camp arriving there about 1 1.30am.

27 Went to church in the morning. On in lying picket from 5pm till 6am. Received letters from Edie and Lucy.

28 Drill parade for about four hours. A lot of our aeroplanes scouting round and two or three observation balloons up one near our billets. Saw M Way and he told me some of the boys were killed. Received letters from Roy and Bess. Received parcel of socks from Lucy.

29 Drill in the morning. Went for a bath to the Canadian baths in the afternoon. It rained nearly all night. Gas alarm given about eleven pm.

30 Raining all the morning. No parade but we had to clean our ammunition and examine our helmets.

31 Orders issued for us to get ready to proceed to the trenches. Saw J Badge and M Way in afternoon. Came into trenches at night. Trenches very muddy. On duty till next morning.

SEPTEMBRE (September)

1 On day look out duty. On fatigue cleaning out trenches in afternoon. On post at night with three mates. Germans sent a few trench mortar bombs over.

2 On day lookout duty again. Things very quiet this morning. A bit of strafing going on in the afternoon. Received letters from Rita and Lena.

3 Fritz putting over a few trench mortar bombs. Rained nearly all night and very cold. Received letter from mother.

4 Still raining and very cold. A bit of strafing going on between our guns and Fritz's. Heard a mine blown up on our right flank. was told that v Kenny was killed.

5 Weather finer but still cold. Things very quiet during the morning. More trench mortars flying about in the afternoon. Received letters from Aunty Bess and E Hollis.

6 Beautiful fine day. Relieved from firing line by ? Btn. Marched back to second support trenches. Very comfortable dugouts. Received letters 2 home, 2 Rita, Richard, Lilly and Vera.

7 Had a cosy time all day. Went on fatigue to firing line with timber for mine at night. Got back about 12.30

8 Slept in till 9am' Weather beautiful and clear and warm. On fatigue in advanced sap at firing line. Arrived back to dugout about 4.30am. Received letters from Lena, A Ettie., Mabel, Lucy, Rita 2 Thelma and 3 Maude.

9 Slept nearly all day. Paid 40 francs £1.8.8. Came into support trenches to relieve Nos 1 and 2 Platoons. Received letters from A Ettie, Claude and Rita

10 Things very quiet in front line. Canadians blew up a mine in no-man's land. Saw J Badge (Budge?) and had a yarn with him.

THIS WAS THE LAST ENTRY IN HIS DIARY. HARRY WAS KILLED IN THE TRENCHES ON 12 SEPTEMBER 1916 AND IS BURIED AT YPRES, BELGIUM

2nd Battn. A.Coy.
A.I.F.

NICHOLLS
C.H. Pte. 2884

"Killed in Action 12-9-16"

A shell struck the dugout where Nicholls and others were resting, at Mont Sorrell - Ypres Salient. on September 12th 1916. I assisted to dig them out. Nicholls was then dead. I saw his body taken away for burial and saw his grave in a small Military Cemetery situated between Woodcote Farm and the railway dugout. Nicholls was a cornet player in the 2nd Battalion Band. 6ft fair, age 24-25.

Informant:- Cpl. Mc Donald. N.4248. 3 A.A.H.
2nd Battn. A.Coy.
Beach Street.

Coggee Coggee.
SYDNEY. N.S.W.

Ward 19.
London.
12-9-19.
J.E.A.

S.



Harry Nicholls 13th January, 1915



'Roseveare'
57 Gordon Street,
Port Macquarie



9th Reinforcements. 2nd Battalion. A.I.F. Liverpool, August 1915.

STANDING- (Left to Right) T.J. Drinkwater, J. Watts, C.H. Nicholls, T Brown

FRONT ROW- (Kneeling) W.D. Macansh, C.D.W. Wray

Harry Nicholls' father hand carved this frame after his son's death to mount this group photo. It is understood that this is the last photo of Harry that was taken which made it so special for his father. The detail in the carving is so delicate and painstakingly done and shows the deep love and grief that his father felt.

(Image of frame courtesy of Anne Keena)



Birth: unknown
Death: Sep. 12, 1916

Inscription:
Australian Infantry, A.I.F.

Note: 2854

Burial:
[Railway Dugouts Cemetery](#)
Ieper (Ypres), Belgium
Plot: Sp. Mem. A. 19.

Created by: [International Wargraves ...](#)
Record added: Nov 13, 2005
Find A Grave Memorial# 12325453



This is a transcript of the last known letter written home by Harry Nicholls just 15 days before his death.

*Mrs W O Keena
'Fern Hill'
Ballengarra
Wilson River NSW*

28th August, 1916

I received your welcome letter last night with one from L Welch and I got Roy's and Bessie's this morning, so you see I read yours first as you wished I would. I am very sorry to hear of poor Grandpa's death and I am sorry dear Mother did not get down to Sydney in time to see him before he died. It is nearly time Aunty Rose had a holiday and it ought to do her good is she can stop in Port for a couple of months . I am glad the boys had such a good time while they were down home, I suppose I will see a big difference in them when I get back. I suppose dad has plenty of news to read in the papers now as things have been pretty lively of late. I suppose you have heard ere this that I was wounded at Pozieres (which place I guess you have heard a lot about) but thanks to the care of the Nurses in the No1 Canadian Hospital my wounds are alright again and I am back with my Battalion. Glad to hear you got PO's alright. I have not received Lena's letter or papers yet. I suppose you will hear before you get this that Mick Coombes was killed in action. I saw him a couple of days before we went into the trenches. You asked me about Roy Dransfield in one of your letters. Well I only found out the other day that he was in this Batt and has been wounded. The chap that told me about him said that he was a splendid fellow and very religious so his people need not worry about him going astray. I met the son of the manager of the mill down near the wharf the other day, he is in this Battalion too. Joe Borger is back in the Battalion again and looks real well after his spell. The days are beginning to get short again here and it is getting cold of a night time. I had a card from Aunt Nancy a couple of days ago, she seems to be getting on well again. Well Edie I think this about all this time so I will ring off hoping to hear from you again soon. With love to all from your ever loving brother and uncle Harry XXXXXX

PS the extra kisses for the boys .