

Having reached "B" Company's headquarters (a trench sandwiched between several similar trenches) we dump our load (which is immediately seized upon by a long suffering working party) and clatter westward on the home stretch, sincerely hoping that Fritz won't hear the rattle of the empty limber and hand over a salvo to speed the parting guest.

The moon is now obscured, and the gentle rain, so good for the crops and rheumatism, is our constant companion for the remainder of the night. So endeth "Your night up the line"—till next time.

SAPPER G. PELLY.

“Postie.”

To the uninitiated, handling the unit's mail may seem merely an ideal method of fritting the idle hours away. Undoubtedly there is a general impression that it is a cinch of a job—a view not shared by those who have tried it. It is a grievous thing to shatter such a beautiful illusion, but, in the interests of veracity, let me draw aside the curtain. Say the morning's despatch is made up at 9.30, this will mean starting out from your billet the wrong side of 8.30, because the various "points" are naturally scattered.

First, you will clear the letter box at the Signal Office, walk across to the Paymaster's Office, then down to the horse lines, where a quite imposing wall box will yield up its store. You "face up" the correspondence, separating the field cards, green envelopes and ordinaries, the latter to be placed in the Orderly Room to be censored. There you also collect the letters censored from the previous day.

You will probably have registered mail, which is never allowed out of your sight, from the time of acceptance until an official certificate is obtained. A pleasant little "hike" brings you to the Field Post Office, the round trip having occupied about an hour.

The inward mail rarely runs to schedule, but any time from 9.30 onwards the mail truck may arrive.

The number of sacks of mail varies, six or seven being about the average, though a Canadian mail may run to eleven or occasionally more. It will take about an hour and a half to sort. Every bag, whether parcel or letter, is turned inside out to insure that nothing is left inside.

Usually, rather more than a third of the parcels and second class matter will have to be re-directed, the former being entered on "X" lists (I rather pride myself upon introducing this system out here), an excellent and very necessary check on returns.

Having disposed of the "direct" bags, you will get another bunch of assorted mail, which has been dealt with by the postal staff, and finally the registers, which must be carefully entered up in your receipt book. You are now ready to commence your morning's round.

After a hasty dinner (alas! how often overdue) you repeat your earlier performances, and despatch another mail.

From 3.30 to 4.30 the "cross country" mail is due. This will vary considerably in volume, generally speaking the greater the number of reinforcements arriving, the heavier the cross post mail.

There are many other little duties to fill in the time. Postal Orders to buy or cash, linemen going to outlandish stations necessitating careful investigation as to the best means of circulating their mail, keeping track of the men who are constantly going out or coming in from different sections.

The distribution of daily papers to the best advantage, too, is quite an art; one paper and one "record" being allotted per twenty-five men, some tall juggling

is necessary, considering the number of small parties involved, but whoever goes shy, be assured it will not be the fellows "up forward."

Of course, you get severely bawled at when sufficient letters are not forthcoming. "Blame the postman" seems to be the universal slogan, but there are also times when you experience the rare and refreshing delight of human gratitude—to paraphrase Mr. Punch:—

A man may have a rasping voice,
Which sets your nerves a quake.
But, oh! its music when he says,
"Hey, have a slice er cake."

Experience suggests a fair analogy in civilian life would be a non-money order office employing two auxiliary postmen, from which it will be seen that the position is unsuited to a tired person with a disinclination for work.

On Being Fed Up.

I feel fed up! Why, I don't know. Can one always account for that fed up feeling that suddenly takes possession when the day's work is done? Anyway, I shall go on being fed up. The mood suits me—and if any well-disposed person tries to cheer me up by attempting to start a pleasant conversation, I shall grunt in a non-committal sort of way. If anyone slaps me on the back in a familiar manner with a "Cheer up, old fellow," I shall be distinctly rude to that person—as if anyone has the right to make me jolly when I wish to be otherwise!

Life in the Army can be very trying at times: when one is of humble rank, and in receipt of humble pay, it can be more so. But I do not care. I shall go on wearing the same old clothes, and the same old boots, until the former hang in shreds on my ration-fed carcass, and the latter expose the detail of my pedal extremities. But this, by the way—

My work for the day is done. The intricacies and deceitfulness of my daily life in the Army leave me morose. I hie me to a local pierrot entertainment, but I refuse to be entertained, and endeavour to find fault with the artistes. They sit on the stage smiling at one another—but I *know* they are all fed up. They sing the same old songs, and say the same silly things night after night for weeks on end. But they smile at each other, because they are paid to do so—not because they like it. Inwardly they are sniggering at one another, and thinking how much better each could do the other's part, and I become almost cheerful as I reflect on this. And then the comedian for the thousandth time perpetrates the alleged joke, "Marry in Hastings, and repent at St. Leonards." Girlish giggles greet this remark—(especially from the comedian's accomplice on the stage)—and I become more depressed than ever. A corpulent contralto offers a sentimental song, accompanied by absurd movements, and I shiver. A thin soubrette sings rag-times—and I am quite ready to die. As I wander forth into the night I ask myself: "Why must these things be?"

On my way home from the show I am startled by a hideous noise proceeding from the direction of the railway station. Any fears I may entertain are dispelled, when I am told that it is only our band playing in a draft. Much relieved, but still fed up, I continue my way homeward, not forgetting to call at the club. I stroll in, and try to appear blasé, throwing myself into a chair with an air of utter abandon. I call for the solitary waiter—an untidy specimen of humanity with shock hair—and he, too, looks fed up. He bangs a