

## Edith Elizabeth Appleton Diaries - Volume 2 (25 July 1915 to 25 April 1916)

### July 1915

**July 25th.** Just back from 10 perfect days leave & feeling disinclined for work. Owing to a little accident on my part at Boulogne on the way home. I have had a little too much time – they expected me back on Friday night – sent a car to Hazebrouck for me. Next day thought for sure I should come – sent the car again – put 4 hot bottles in my bed & a jar of roses on my table & finally when I did come – no car – cold hot bottles & faded flowers -- & a very frosty visit from the Sister in charge – however they will understand in time how innocent of it all I am!

The R. C. Padre stole a chair & table for his tent & was so proud of them he took every one to see how comfortable his tent was. While he was away asking one Sister to come, some M. O. slid in -- & slung the chair up to the roof – hid the table, so when the Padre found they had vanished, he started throwing stones at the only M. O. in sight – meanwhile the real culprits sneaked in & filled his boots with water -- poor Padre was nearly winded with so much exertion, but ran off & filled everything he could find in their tent with water.

Taubes have been over and round us all day. The one that was over yesterday was brought down at Pop [*Poperinge*]. & the two G. Officers taken to No. 10 C.C.S [*Casualty Clearing Station*]. Our craft has been in hot pursuit, one returned tonight with 25 shrapnel holes in it. I have got charge of the Acute Surgical ward – so have had quite a busy day. 4 cases for op. 1 death, & a fairish number of admissions.

**[July] 27th** Do not like big ward as much as being all over the place. 3 Zepps were reported from Ypres tonight being heavily shelled. We saw shells bursting over one of our own machines, which was having difficulty in getting back owing to a 50 mile an hour wind that was blowing. There is a rumour that we are to be moved to Arras. Taubes over again.

**[July] 28th** Quiet day. Off duty for first time since leave. Went into town to see Miss Congleton.

**[July] 29th** Taking in day, only took 15, some bad, 3 for op. One a very sad case – a man with his leg pulped so much that it had to be amputated. He was suffering badly from shock & nothing seemed to touch him. This evening I gave him some strong coffee & he just roused up enough to say he must go home to his wife and boy then “Will you pray for me & my wife & boy”! poor fellow – I suppose he has a glimmer of a chance. Robert has volunteered for listening post duty & is now Officer in charge of his Brigade – good boy he is doing well & I do hope may be kept safe. I expect his Mother is anxious about him.

**[July] 30th** Fairly busy day. The man who had his leg off is still alive – a shade better, but does not yet know he has lost his leg. One man had a bullet taken out in the ward. Went in between the ribs slid round & was taken out of the wall of the stomach. Heavy firing all day & this evening. Off in afternoon, walked – alone to Mt Noir & wrote letters. Our aeroplanes were being fired at, hope not hit.

**[July] 31st** 6.00 am Rudely awakened by shots being fired at a Taube right over us, it is a loathsome way of being called – it feels as if the place is being shelled. Had the 1/2 day off duty, having evacuated 2 of my 6 cases. I called for Miss Congleton & took tea on to Mt Noir. Sat in a lonely spot overlooking Ypres -- & had it. She got the R. R. C. for the Neuve Chappelle business & was telling me odd bits about it. The whole staff, Orderlies & all were worn out, the Mortuary Corporal included – one afternoon he came to Miss C. & asked her to help him “sort them out” & when she got there he threw off blanket after blanket from the poor dead things – who had been brought down in such numbers that some tickets were off. He said “Did you ever see ‘im before -- & did you ever see ‘im”. His one job was to sort out R.C.s -- & Church of England – so that each Padre might bury his own. Then he found a fresh difficulty –

over one – whom he thought was an Officer – but had nothing to mark him – “And ‘ow am I to bury ‘im – as a’ Officer – or man”. Sister said – “Surely they all get buried the same.” “No, they don’t.” said the bewildered Cpl. “Men is hammered – Officers is screwed.” Poor Sister who was worn out as well as every one else – suddenly went hysterical -- & laughed & laughed -- & the more she told herself it was tragic – not funny – the funnier it all looked -- & the little white faced corporal with hair on end just gazed helplessly at her -- & everything. That is one of the truest pictures of over work & under sleep -- & perhaps it shocks you – but I have lived through much the same -- & it is dead true. Taubes over us all morning off & on. Someone said they were taking the range of the aerodrome. Hope not. We saw a most beautiful grotto to the V. Mary like a telescope of three caves leading out of each other beautifully cut into the stone. Stone roof & walls & floor decorated with flowers – palms -- & statues.

*[\[Click here for a photo of Miss Jessie Congleton\]](#)*

*[http://www.drprojects.org.uk/Edie/Vol2/html/Vol2Text1\\_MatronCongleton.asp](http://www.drprojects.org.uk/Edie/Vol2/html/Vol2Text1_MatronCongleton.asp)*