

From the memoir of: **LIEUTENANT KEN. S. KINGSMILL**

Information supplied by the son of

LIEUTENANT KEN. S. KINGSMILL

Lieut Kingsmill enlistment on the: 22 September 1914 and returned to Australia on the: 12 April 1919

Dear Peter

My father, Lieut Ken S Kingsmill, spent the years from 1914 to 1919 in the Australian Artillery in Egypt, at Gallipoli, and on the Western Front.

He kept a diary (not all of which has survived) and he wrote almost weekly to his parents. In the early 1960s he used this material to write a memoir. In recent months I have been getting the letters and the memoir into suitable digital form in order to ensure their preservation. It has been an interesting task, particularly when, from time to time, some mention in the texts has caused me to turn to the Internet to look for further information.

I noticed that, in 1917, there were five mentions of Lieutenant Doughty, and when I looked to see if I might identify him further I was delighted to find your memorial website.

Just in case it is information that you may not have had from other sources I am sending you, below, the five extracts from my father's memoir in which Lieut Doughty is mentioned. I hope that, so many years having passed, you will not find them too hard to read.

Incidentally, your website mentions that Lieut Doughty's last diary was not found among his effects. As I understand it, the writing of diaries was forbidden to all Australian troops. If that was so, his diary might have been removed by a colleague in order to avoid possible trouble.

Alternatively, it could have been confiscated by someone in authority because it was it was written in defiance of orders.

Best regards,

Donald Kingsmill

Canberra

With grateful thanks from the Kivell, Ward and Doughty families.

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LIEUTENANT KEN. S. KINGSMILL

Enlistment date: 22 September 1914 - Returned to Australia: 12 April 1919

From the memoir:

[13 July 1917]

We established our wagon lines at Ghyvelde which is 6½ miles east of Dunkerque and about two miles from the sea. The Royal Naval Air Service (as it was then known) had its aerodromes all along the coast at Bray Dunes near here and the officers often came and dined with us and we with them. Some of our chaps went up with them on occasion and had a look at our targets from the air. It was raining all day on 14 July when Major Crisp and Lieutenant Doughty went up to reconnoitre the gun positions. They returned at 10.30 p.m.

[15 July 1917]

Had heavy rain throughout the night but it fined up a bit on Sunday, 15 July. At 6.30 p.m. Major Crisp, Lieutenant Doughty, Roberts and I, together with the right section, left for the gun positions about fifteen miles away. Went through Nieuport and arrived at the battery position at midnight. After unloading I brought the wagons back to Coxyde Bains for more ammunition, finally getting back to the wagon lines at 6.10 a.m. on 16 July.

[20-23 July 1917]

I might mention that, with the exception of the Heavy Batteries, we were the only Australians up in this direction and we had English and Scottish Regiments in front of us. Taubes were busy on 20 July and the Hun shelled heavily a couple of hundred yards behind us.

His planes were busy again on 21 July and they were so low we were firing at them with rifles. Our heavies were successful in blowing up a couple of his dumps too. Major Crisp went on leave; Roberts went down to wagon lines and Hely came to battery. At about 10.30 p.m. 'Fritz' opened up with 77 mm for about an hour and later put down a barrage of gas shell in Nieuport, There were from 1500 to 2000 casualties in this town itself and I got a slight touch of gas (for the second time) myself. We had an S.O.S. at 11.30 p.m. and went on until 2.30 a.m. on Monday, 23 July. Then again at 3.10 a.m. until after 4 a.m. About 3.30 a.m., when things slackened a little, I went over to the control pit to see if any news had been received as to what was going on and, as I came round one side, Lieutenant Doughty came round the other and we met at the entrance to the pit. He put his hand behind me and said "Go on, hop in 'Kingie'", which I did. He fell in behind me. A premature from one of the 12th Brigade guns just behind us had sent a splinter in his back and out his stomach. We got a stretcher, cut down the gas curtain, and sent him off to the dressing station. He was a fine man and a very well-liked Officer.

This left only Hely and myself at the battery. I managed to get some sleep at 6 a.m. on 23 July but was up again at 10.30 a.m. and went to Pelican Bridge to see about some decauville line and barges for bringing up ammunition. Had news that Doughty was doing well and Roberts came up for lunch. Was busy all night at Pelican Dump with ammunition which I brought up the canal on barges. 'Fritz' was shelling the bridges about 50 yards from our guns and, at 10.30 p.m., I got caught (with Lieutenant Hamilton, Royal Artillery) in a barrage of 77 mm gas shell and

had to shelter for a while in some trenches near the bridge. Fogg rejoined the battery. Got to bed at 4.30 a.m. on 25 July and up again at 9 a.m. Rainy and dull all day and we got word that Doughty had died at the 15th Corps Dressing Station.

[7 August 1917]

Rode over to Bray Dunes on Sunday, 5 August and round La Panne looking for new wagon lines on 6 August. Rode into Bray Dunes again on 7 August, then on to Coxyde Military Cemetery where I planted a small wooden cross on Lieutenant Doughty's grave and got back to wagon lines at 10.45 p.m.

[On the following day, 8 August 1917, Ken's eldest brother, Major H.F. Kingsmill D.S.O., was killed near Ypres.]

