

Dvr. T. B. Griffin 2989323

R.A.S.C. 87 L of C

Sub Area.

M.E.F.

10. 1. 42

Dear everyone,

Here is an attempt to explain my movements these last few months. As you will no doubt have guessed, I was in Northern Syria, but I will start at the beginning and where I left off in my last letter.

I left Haifa in the late February of last year, it was then getting Spring and the country they call the Transjordan was really beautiful. I was in the train and it was crowded with all kinds of people and all getting in the way. There were lots of Arabs among them and as usual amongst the old Arabs he is always in the way and making all sorts of mistakes with his baggage, which he usually has in huge bundles. He is not used to this mode of travelling and I suppose has not changed much in centuries. He thinks in the speed of a camel.

The trains are not the comfortable ones we have at home and being humble soldiers of course, we had to share the third class, which consists of bare board seats but one can get used to all sorts of discomforts and we made our elves comfortable. The track runs right through the Lebanon Hills and it is so winding and tortuous that you might pass the same spot after a ride of about half an hour. We crossed the River Jordan and we saw lots of troops bathing.

Except for a few scattered villages and with the cries of Arab children shouting "backsheesh", we saw the old city of Damascus in the evening sun, a most impressive sight.

Although I only stayed the night, I was able to glimpse at it the next morning. The new part of the city is very French, but the old city is on a hill and it appears to be stuck on the side of the hill. I could always visualise the Apostles walking along the narrow tracks. I only wish I could have stayed longer, one senses the true mystery of the East.

We left in the afternoon for the North of Syria, where I have spent a number of months. I have visited all the well known places of interest, Beirut and Aleppo, which is well known for its Citadel. Gordon will most likely know more of its history than myself. There is also in Aleppo the most marvellous bazaar I have ever seen in this part of the world, they are miles long. It is also a nice clean town and one finds the French an influence very great. It is there I attended the Cathedral, a snap of which you see.

At Hama one sees the largest water wheels built by the Romans and used for irrigation. At one sees the remains of the Crusader. It is simply covered in ruins of them and I have slept in the same fields as the Crusader and Richard Coeur de Lion and the thought gave me a great amount of comfort. I

It is nice to know that Englishmen have been before you and especially the Crusading English men because he had great reputation of courage and chivalry and it's strange but I think the people of these parts, expect the same of him now, I'm afraid we have not much left, but I have a belief in him, and who knows, perhaps we may make the grade one day.

I have also been on the borders of Turkey and I think I have been inside. I have had a few runs along the coast road to Haifa and always stop at the little cemetery which is made up of the chaps I first saw my active service with. There are about eighty including my first C.O. It is very nice and simple and a few people put flowers there. Every time I see it I feel very sad and my mind goes back to the marches we were on together and the songs we used to sing, all of them in the bloom of life. I shall never forget them, they had great courage. It is very terrible war. I shall try and get a snap of it, I know you would like to have one.

As you can gather I have had a quiet time these last few months but one can never tell and I don't suppose my soldiering days are over, but I have a strong belief in prayer and I know all your prayers are for me. I can assure you from personal experience, that a power sometimes guides us and when one looks back, if we were left to ourselves we would not be alive.

Forgive me if I write a sad letter, that is if you consider my telling you about my friends who are dead, sad, which I know will affect you but when I think about that part of the world, I cannot help but mention it..

I am in good spirits and form and you have nothing at all to worry about me. My thoughts are always for you and I hope you think the snaps are good.

With deepest affection for you all,

Tommy