

# Learner Resource 3 Diary entries

## Oswald Blows

**9 July 1916:**

July 29th, 5.30pm. Well, dear diary, I have to write now that which I would had never occurred, also my thankful deliverance from a living Hell.....

....At 12 o'clock our artillery was silent, & us near the Hun's barbed wire, which we had been told was all destroyed. A few minutes past 12 o'clock the Huns began to shrapnel us well, & machine guns were turned on, & bombs thrown. A few guns only behind us opened fire, & when our line went forward to the wire they were mown down by Enemy machine guns, & when the wire was reached, it was almost intact. Our Guns opened up more at 12.15, & then some played on the barbed wire & amongst our own men, & what with it, the enemies artillery (from front & from each side), bombs, & Machine Guns, men dropped in dozens, many on the wire. It was impossible to get through – the barbed barrier was too thick, & the enemy being in the know, he put up a living hell. Shell holes were filled with dead, dying, & wounded men, & others, & so it was till day-break, no-one retiring until ordered to do so. The boys all fought gamely, & were up against certain death whenever they stood up, & the whole ground was swept with shrapnel.

I was in our H.Q. shell-hole, expecting every minute something would catch us. The Colonel (Collett) and some others were in a sap close by & were caught – the Colonel, & others wounded, & two or three killed. We knew that under the conditions things were a complete failure, & when orders came all that remained of us had to retire – to crawl along to an old trench much battered, & many dead there, both ours and the Hun's. We could not get our wounded in from No-man's land owing to the intense fire. We pushed our way down this long trench helping the walking wounded, & over the top where the trench was levelled & the trench was so full of wounded that any man unwounded who wished to get along had to get along the parapet. As we came back, the Huns followed us with shrapnel – he concentrating much fire but thanks to the misty morning, things might still have been worse. We came to end of trench – no one knew the way & it was a general mix up, yet we could guess the right direction to go in, so we struck over, & into another trench, also much broken & containing many dead – some most gruesome sights, bodies being in all positions & some awfully mangled, & the stench was awful. We followed on along a road (hell-fire corner) & along to a dressing station & helped to carry wounded to place where we slept the evening before. We then had some tea, a roll call (a sorry sight) & then back about two miles near original British front lines, after we had rested & feigned sleep for a while & that is where we are now. Our Bn went in 1,000 strong and now there is few, if any, more than 300. A few of our men left here a short time ago, & tonight are going to try & bring in our wounded – It was impossible to bring anyone in who could not help himself, & many of our men are still there, poor fellows, with all kinds of broken limbs and wounds. The boys stuck to it bravely, & no one thought of retiring until the order, & officers & men alike showed many a glowing deed. Only one or two officers returned.

## Anne Frank

**19 November 1942:**

Dussel has told us a lot about the outside world, which we have missed for so long now. He had very sad news. Countless friends and acquaintances have gone to a terrible fate. Evening after evening the green and grey lorries trundle past. The Germans ring at every door to enquire if there are any Jews living in the house. If there are, then the whole family has to go at once. If they don't find any, they go on to the next house. No one has a chance of evading them unless one goes into hiding. Often they go round with lists, and only ring when they can get a good haul.

In the evenings, when it's dark, I often see rows of good, innocent people accompanied by crying children, walking on and on, bullied and knocked about until they almost drop. No one is spared - old people, babies, expectant mothers, the sick – each and all join in the march of death.



# Learner Resource 3

## Sean Smith

Guardian film-maker and photographer Sean Smith has just spent five weeks in Afghanistan, first with a US helicopter ambulance crew, and then with the US marines. This is his astonishing diary of his time with special forces.

### 2/06/2010

At 8.30am I leave Kandahar US airbase on a flight with the Guardian Angels; these are specially trained US air force helicopter pilots who fly into combat areas to pick up the injured. Accompanying them are the "jumpers", the armed paramedics who will jump out and get the wounded – or the bodies. There's also a gunner who mans the machine guns as the helicopter lands.

They are working 12-hour shifts. Mostly they are watching movies, doing emails. Today there was a class on how to treat burns.

### 3/06/2010

In the morning we pick up a US soldier who has been shot in the face and chest on patrol. We're hit by two rounds of gunfire shot through the underneath of the helicopter. To take out the helicopter when it comes in to pick up the wounded soldier – that's the real prize.

The injured guy was on the verge of passing out and couldn't move his face or say anything because his cheek had been shot away, and his airways were blocked. He survived. Later on, we pick up another soldier who had lost two legs and an arm. He made it too.

### 4/06/2010

Pick up an Afghan lorry driver caught by an IED (improvised explosive device).

### 5/6/2010

Pick up an Afghan soldier who has shot himself in the foot.

### 6/06/2010

We are called out to a soldier who has stepped on a mine. We land, as there is no one shooting at us. He has lost an arm and a leg but still has a pulse. The medics are doing emergency resuscitation. We are only in the air five minutes and they are pumping and pumping and still going at him on the stretcher as he is taken off the copter. He doesn't make it.

### 8/06/2010

I am at Camp Bastion with the British and am trying to fly to Nadi Ali. But the first flight is full. They get me on a Lynx helicopter later for Bastion, with the letters and parcels for the troops.

