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[Papers Past Home](#) [Introduction](#) [Search](#) [Browse](#)[Papers Past](#) > [Poverty Bay Herald](#) > [28 April 1915](#) > [Page 8](#) > [CANADIAN CONTINGENT.](#)

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[▶ About this newspaper](#)[▶ View computer-generated text](#)[◀ List of search results ▶](#)

CANADIAN CONTINGENT. AN AUCKLANDER'S LETTER

(Special to Herald.)

AUCKLAND, this day.

In view of the fact that the Canadians have during the past few days been holding their own against the Germans, the letter of Lance-Corporal E. Ogilvie, an Auckland, to his relatives in the city, is all the more interesting. Lance-Corporal Ogilvie went to the United States before the war, in order to study for the optical profession, but at the commencement of hostilities enlisted at Quebec with the first Canadian contingent, and left for Salisbury Plain after undergoing training for some weeks. He arrived at the front in February.

"My regiment has just come out of the trenches," he writes, "and is having a three days' rest. We are in the firing line for three days, and then rest for another three. We have tasted the real thing, but so far there has been no very serious fighting, and the casualties have been light. Just now the artillery is doing all the fighting, and we have been under shell fire all the time, but as soon as the advance commences we will have some hand-to-hand fighting. I am weathering the hardships very well, and am feeling no ill-effects, although the weather has been bad. Snow, rain, and ice are plentiful, and when we were relieved we were covered with mud from head to foot. The trenches are very uncomfortable, some of them being merely muddy

ditches, but we are working hard and building boobies (shelters) out of sand-bags to sleep in. Last Sunday was the first I have spent fighting, somewhat different from the way I usually spend the Sabbath. The first night in the trenches I was doing sentry go, and saw two Germans working in their trench. I took a steady aim, and one fell, and you cannot imagine the pang I felt at shooting a man. I soon recovered, and quickly reloading fired before the other got under cover. I think I got him, too. He dropped. During my three days and nights in the trenches I had only two 'hours' sleep, and that in snatches of a few minutes at a time." One has plenty of time for thought, and my mind is always at home. The impression here is that the war cannot last much longer, so it may not be long before the suspense is all over."

Under a later date the writer says: "We are holding a position and waiting for the advance to start, which will take place very soon now. We are billeted in a deserted village two miles in the rear of the trenches, but I would sooner be in the firing line, because the Germans are shelling us with shrapnel. Just a couple of hours ago a shell burst in a house about thirty yards away from my billet. There are a few civilians here, and it happened that a poor young mother with three children was living in the shelled house. She was cooking the breakfast, and the children were playing in the yard, when the shell burst, blowing off the top of the mother's head.

"The shells keep dropping around, but we have to take our chance with the rest. In the trenches we have the rifle fire to contend with. The bullets fly past us and into the trenches. Already we have lost some men. I have had some very narrow escapes; but God is good, and has spared me from harm so far."

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