

Timaru Herald. 16 August 1915 (page 9) [03/05/2016]

SOLDIERS' LETTERS

THE WILLIAMS BROTHERS.

Mr Williams has also received a short letter from another son, written from the North Sea, where he is on one of H.M.S. patrol boats. After being twice turned down by military examiners in the North Island, for dental reasons, he worked his passage Home, and joined the Royal Navy. A considerable portion of the letter is "censored out," but he says he is well and fit, and happy to be doing his bit. He speaks of two previous letters, written seemingly when training ashore, but which probably the censor has detained as they have not come to hand.

Timaru Herald. 11 February 1916 (page 16) [05/04/2015]

ROLL OF HONOUR CASUALTIES AT THE FRONTS. HOSPITAL REPORTS.

Mr F. Williams, of Jackson Street, has been advised by the Defence Department that his son, Private W. W. Williams, who left New Zealand with the main body, has been invalided Home from England by the Arawa, due at Wellington on the 7th of March. He has also received word from another son, who went Home at the outbreak of war and entered the Navy, that his ship has been put out of commission, and that he has now enlisted in the Connaught Rangers, and is at present stationed at Galway, Ireland.

Timaru Herald. 25 August 1916 (page 8) [05/04/2015]

SOLDIERS' LETTERS.

PRIVATE EDGAR WILLIAMS.

Mr F. Williams, of Jackson Street, has received a short letter from his fifth son, Edgar, dated July 17th, written at the Lord Derby Hospital, Warrington. He was wounded on the 12th at Mametz, France. The wounded soldier after being twice rejected in New Zealand when the war broke out, proceeded to England, and

after some previous experience volunteered from the Connaught Rangers for what is known as the Suicide Battalion (all machine guns), with which he was serving as a driver in the ammunition section when wounded. As he says the censor won't let them say much, but they'd been having a very lively time, a taste of hell if ever there was one. He describes himself as doing well, though a bit jumpy from "shell shock," and hopes soon to be able to rejoin. His letter was the first intimation his parents received of his mishap. From the chaplain he finds that he is the only colonial out of the 3000 wounded men in the hospital.

Timaru Herald. 16 August 1915 (page 8) [14/09/2015]

SOLDIERS' LETTERS

THE WILLIAMS BROTHERS.

Private W. Williams, of the mounted field ambulance, writing on June 9th to his parents, of Jackson Street, Timaru, says: — Just a card to say all is well with us. We are again shifting to-day, where to we don't know. I have had no mail since three days prior to leaving Egypt. We get no writing materials; and have little time for writing letters. We have seen great sights, and have travelled about a great deal since we left Egypt. My health has never been better, and you have no cause to worry about me. For the past week we have been aboard a Cunard liner bringing 1500 wounded; and have had great quarters and meals, but now we have again touched civilisation we have to leave her, may be to go on shore, may be to return to where we came from.

Malta, June 12th. — We arrived here on the 9th, and will have to move on again any day. We are continually on the move, and have never yet been stationary at any one place for more than a few days at a time, and a few days in a civilised place is very welcome to us. So far we have not been in action, but have witnessed heavy bombardments, and have had the enemy's rifle fire landing around us. There is very little I can tell you on account of the censorship. Malta is the cleanest and prettiest town I've ever been in, and things in general are cheap, and up-to-date. The whole place has an air of prosperity about it. Everybody is well dressed, and it would be a hard job to find a girl who is not only well dressed but also good looking.

Yesterday when up town we met a detachment of New Zealand nurses passing through to ----- where they are going for duty; there were no Christchurch or Timaru nurses among them. They gave us all their latest Home news. We are in barracks here and are being well done by, but at night the fleas bite blazes out of us.

June 15th. — More wounded arrived here yesterday—a few New Zealanders among them.

H.M.T. Massilia, Alexandra [sic], June 21st.—Must write this on a succession of cards as it is impossible to obtain any paper aboard, and we can get absolutely no leave to go ashore. We left Malta on Tuesday, and arrived here two days ago, and to-morrow we leave again for the Dardanelles, though it is improbable that we shall land there. We were landed there three weeks ago, but were packed back again straight away, as they have at present all the ambulance they require. All told we have been at the Dardanelles four times. Our past duty has been taking on and attending wounded aboard various boats, and cruising round various small islands in the Dardanelles region. On one occasion we had a rather narrow escape from a high explosive shell supposed to have been fired by the Goeben. Yesterday we received our first mail for over two months - fortunately a late one dated May 10th and 12th. I got eight letters: its like fresh life to hear from you all again. Aboard this boat we have had a pretty rough time as far as food and quarters go, and our complaints have been the means of getting the acting-chief steward into very hot water. The Maoris made a big demonstration, and were quietened by the promise of decent meals, but today's are no better. Our own officers are in no way to blame, and it is only out of respect to them that we are not causing trouble. There is no cause for such treatment; if there was we would cheerfully take what was given to us. One of our officers said the other day: "A pig would turn up its nose at the tucker you boys are getting"; but 'nuf said. We are all fit and well, and suffering from nothing worse than empty stomachs.

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