

France

17/5/16

My dear Mother & Father

Just received your letter of the 13th March & it is the first for sometime. A few days ago I received four parcels from you containing Tobacco, socks, Loaf Sugar, & Handkerchief, so judging by the number I must have received most of the parcels which you sent me. I wrote you a few days ago & I was probably a bit over the week as I had very little to write about & expected a letter from you at any time & I am answering it now so as to keep up my correspondence. When a mail arrives in N. Z. & you don't get a letter from me, no doubt you can't understand it, but I write once a week & sometimes a bit oftener. There is one thing if the mail is delayed you needn't think anything has gone wrong because you will soon learn what if anything goes wrong.

So Les has arrived home safely again & I can see by your letter that he keeps you thinking. It is a pity you can't let him slide & if he runs wild, let him, & don't worry. No doubt he would have a good time at the different Ports. He wrote

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a page to me from Durban & Albany.

You must have had quite a strenuous time meeting Les's travelling by slow trains & calling up Motor Cars etc. While Philip must have taken quite a keen interest in the home coming. No doubt less would feel a bit embarrassed with all the attention he received. — The news of Polys's enlistment leaves me with a very mixed feelings. I shouldn't think that he will pass the Dr. If he does the life may be the best thing out for him & I can't see how he will ever see any fighting. Anyhow I sincerely hope that he won't. — Just while I remember it I will give you my address again. 5th N. Z. (Divisional) M. G. B. N. Z. E. F. 44th St. P. O. Wallington. — Les is not the only one who is pleased that I went to Walton. I had a good time there. There is a fellow in the same gun team as me. His name is Millburn, he was in the next bed to Les at Walton for some time. He & I always sleep together & share our blankets.

I am very pleased indeed to hear that your bloody Asthma is giving you a spell & I hope it will continue to leave you alone & your health will be all your desire. — The letter which I received yesterday

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was registered & had half a sovereign enclosed. It was very kind of you to send it because it is a handy thing to have. I have got plenty of money & only draw 2/4 a fortnight, & that leaves a fair balance each pay. The only thing which we have to spend money on, is extra food & that runs into about three Francs a week. — It is very pleasing to hear that Nell & the Baby are both doing well. — It is a great compliment to hear his name. You haven't told me what his name is going to be, but I have gathered from your letters that he will be a namesake of mine. I am very anxious to see him.

Mildred Weir would be very amused to hear Constance's opinion of what the Baby is going to grow into. — I know the Gordon McDonald, from Pongara, who died of sickness in England. He was always delicate & a very tall chap. —

I am answering Father's letter now. Les gave me the same impression when I met him at Walton, that he was the same old Les. No doubt he will have a great time & plenty of temptations to resist. It is quite easy to understand, that the fellows drawn in the Ballots, don't like being among the

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winners. — I told you in one of my letters
that Harry Hayhurst was promoted to Captain, but
he told me that it was only temporary, & that there
was a possibility of its being confirmed. —

From what I have heard from the men under him
he is very well liked, but gets his old moods
occasionally. — I have heard of Ted several times
from fellows who have met him in Egypt & they
say he is fairly warm stuff when he gets out.

I met Jack Brunton the other day & he is looking
fit but seems a good deal thinner. He says
that he is fed up & will be glad to get away.

The War News is generally satisfactory but the
Sub-marines are a devil. Your wishing went make
my difference but I wouldn't mind if the war was
over. The Germans bombard our dugouts etc
sometimes & it gets very lively at times & keeps a
fellow ducking. The business has a humorous side
when there is just one odd shell coming about
& fellows duck in all directions & nobody gets hit.

It is nice to know that my Temuka friends
still make kind inquiries about me & I hope
to be back during the next year or two to

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answer for myself. — It is chery to hear that
you expect to live for some time after your recent
indisposition. — I receive a large number of weekly

Papers & the Beetle & they are greatly appreciated
by the boys & myself. — The Bulletin is the best yet.

Sid Grant will probably get a fine hint
from his older brother when he grows a bit.

Andrew will be growing into a fine lad by this
time & will be volunteering for some reinforcement
before this war is over. — I would very much like
to join you in your Short & Sister Suppers.

I would do it just now at the present time.

Father you get to the end of your tether
too quickly. Why don't you write as much as Mother does.

This letter is a great effort & it is only by answering
your letters that I have been able to scrawl all
these lines. The writing is cotton but you will
have to excuse it because I am sitting on a
bagout & writing with the block on my knee.

Best love
from your aff. son
Sid

France.

26/7/16

My dear Mother & Father.

Just a few lines so as to keep up
my usual weekly correspondence with you.

I have answered your last letter & as I have
not much to write about. — I have received
~~another~~ ^{two} Parcels since last writing. Both Chocolate
& very good, ~~too~~, one was from Tess with her love,
so you might tell her that I received it & give
her a kiss from me, for it. — Captain Baghurst
has gone to England for ten days leave & to
see Gilbert who is going back to N.B. with
heart & Lung Trouble which I sincerely hope
is not chronic. The sea trip will do him
good & he is jolly lucky that he never reached
here because it is always getting shelled —
~~behind~~ behind the line with occasional shells,
& although a fellow would be very unlucky
to get hit with one there is always a certain
amount of strain. I don't know how the

(2)

Germans get on because they must get a lot of shells in their country behind the lines.

I am wondering how Poley is getting on in camp & if he will ever see any fighting here. I hope not because it is bad enough to have mates getting knocked out & wondering how they are getting on, without having a brother. Of course his life won't be so bad as Infantry because he never gets in a trench & has a comfortable dug-out in the ~~the~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~ where they always get their meals cooked ~~as~~ to have a hot meal. — The other day I received a letter from Aunt Mary & she told me that Uncle Will is quite well again. They were expecting a letter from Father but I don't know how they got on. — I come from England has started in the Army so if I have a bit of luck I might get to see them in a few months. The worst of going down to see them is that it is so far & takes up a good deal of time travelling. Well ~~the~~ to me that she saw the Aeroplanes ~~German~~

flying over London the day they dropped bombs there.

She said that they are very dangerous things & hoped that I wasn't near any of them, but I think that his big shells are a good deal worse & bombing raids ~~at~~ behind the lines is a common game & puts the wind up a fellow when the Planes are over the top of the camp. — I have heard that

Pete Waring has gone to flighty & is likely to get to N. I. shortly, & I hope he will.

~~Now~~ this is only a few lines but I will probably have more news in a few days & will write them more fully, ~~but~~ I'm afraid I will have to close now with heaps of love

from your affectionate son

Ed

France

29/7/16.

My dear Mother & Father

I wrote you a few lines four days ago & said I would write again as soon as possible, so I will carry on now. Yesterday the W.B. mail arrived here yesterday & I got quite a budget from you. We were up in the line for a couple of days & we go in again & stay for some days, but our sector is fairly quiet as there is no bad fighting above us & below us there is great artillery fighting. I think Italy is in for a bad time. — Yesterday I received three parcels from you, this block, envelopes & a tin of Sardines in one, a tin with Sugar, a tin of Cheese & a tin of potted meat in it, & the third had, Tobaccos, cigarettes, Papers, preserved Ginger, a cake of Soap, a tin of concentrated Tea Tablets, a bottle of Horlicks Milk Tablets & a few envelopes, so you see I had quite a run with the mail.

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I was pleased to hear that you had received three letters from me & I wish you could get one every morning. — Polyz seems to be getting on well & if he keeps the job he is on he ought to be well set for the war. The training must be doing him a lot of good when he feels like running the last mile of the march to Papauai & back, because it is a good step. You will have quite a lot of correspondence to keep up now that Polyz is with the Reinforcement. I'll bet you will often say cuss words about all the writing you will be doing. Now I suggest that you should write to us turn about, each of you write to us every other mail. Polyz writes very cheerfully & I think he will enjoy himself all the way until he gets tired of this show which I hope he won't see too much of. — We are having a very wet day today & thunder & lightning at intervals. I have just received a tin of

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Chocolate from Bang lower little girl.

She has gone away from here with bad feet, I think I told you, She wrote to me the other day & told me that they are going to operate on his corns & then he thinks he will be back with the company. I am pleased that he is coming back because he is my best mate, but all the same I would be pleased to see him get home to his wife & children.

Ives & Bill Bart would be very indignant about losing all the skins which they had shot. They must be keen to go out & run through the Passocks on a wet day after home.

— It is satisfactory to hear Colonel Boulder speak so well of Les's services on Gallipoli's as for his remarks about Les's young looking mother it only proves what a good judge he is.

You have a terrible number of visitors & I can't imagine you feeling lonely in fact I should think you find it a nice change to be by yourselves.

(4)

I can quite imagine the collection Polyz would have in his trunk. If he gets over here he will want a special boat to take back souvenirs. You will notice Polyz's final leave very short & then the time before he sails will pass like a day. — Gilbert Hayhurst is lucky getting back to N. Z. but I don't think that it would be any good sending him over here for the winter at any rate. Henry is lucky getting to Brighton to see Gilbert off because it is only about three months since he was away on leave last time.

Rene must be quite exercised in her mind about the speaking likeness (it is the first time that I have heard the expression) for Dave. — Maggie Bain seems to like being with you & Les will be pleased that you have taken to her. He has not exactly done all he might have to deserve your hospitality extended &

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to him, but I suppose as long as he behaves decently you are as always quite ready to receive him with open arms. She may have a very good influence on him because I don't think she will stand him playing the fool. — I received Gwen Taylor's letter & was quite surprised to hear from her. She thanked me for the photograph which I left her. I didn't remember leaving her one, but I suppose as usual you were the thoughtful one I am grateful to you. — So Mr Ferguson still visits you. He is a great old dad & his remark about Phil's annual stand in Dunedin is very like him. Does he still sit & smoke cigarettes until midnight.

An asphalt path in front of the house will be a great improvement especially in wet weather.

Things in N.Z. don't seem to be running as smoothly as they might be.

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There is a certain section of the Russian people who seem to be very much apposed to the carrying on of the war, but no doubt there is a great German influence at the bottom of the whole thing.

The Photograph which you received was one taken in Grantham, before the Company left for France. I paid for one & left your address for the Photograph to be forwarded to. I never mentioned it because I forgot as I was doubtful about it ever being forwarded, but I am pleased that it arrived alright. Stanley Parker is in it.

The Shortbread which you sent me arrived in splendid order just as if it had only taken a week to come.

You had hard luck with the bar breaking down at Blandeloye, but I suppose there wasn't much really the matter.

The Tadpole has had a very good life of it considering she is six years old.

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I never done a days work, but her good time has probably ended if Les is going to break her into harness.

You speak of handing Duck into my dug-out; well if you did it would give me a bigger shock than a shell because we are used to shells but not ducks. — I am still of the same

opinion about Warner Pearce, & think that he is not very anxious to get back here if he saw any fighting. There are thousands of braver men than him here & they would stand a good smack to get out. You speak of it being sad to see boys of 20 & under coming away.

I think the same as you do & also about old men. — Tom Latta had bad luck being killed going to the races, but if they will take the risk of racing they are apt to have an accident. — Father my old collier God bless you, you know I

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^{you} have since getting three pages from my one
"What Ohi"? especially after all the
addresses you have written on my behalf.
It is awfully good of you to do all
these things. Mother is the one who beats
me because every mail as regularly as
clock work along comes one or two letters
of about six pages a time & just the
thing with all the news.

If Les gets with A. W. he will be well
off because if they get them a good deal
because they are a good firm. Always look
after a good man, but play the fool out
goes the saying. Your friend Sam Brown
has done better out of butter fat than we
did although we had the worst of it.

I am more than satisfied with my
home mail so Father dear you need not
worry, but I like to get a line from you.
Now I must wind up.

Love
from your affectionate son
- Dick -

Albany
6/8/16.

My dear Mother & Father

I wrote you a letter on the Boat & didn't mention names, but we are here now & this letter might get through without being censored. We arrived here yesterday morning & will be here until to night.

I am having my 28th Birthday in Albany & I never thought I would be twelve months ago. This is a nice little town very clean & a nice situation. We are finding it warm. The people here are very kind to us, giving us morning & afternoon tea & holding dances.

I was at a dance last night & it was a very enjoyable turnout. The dancing is very much the same as N.Z. Our next Port of call is Durban I believe, but it might be Capetown. — We have had lovely weather the last few days & I only hope it will keep fine because the fellows are all more cheerful. — I am writing ~~them~~ this letter in an Soldiers Institute where Paper & everything is given free to the Troops. — The War News seems to be pretty good according to the Australian Papers. Everybody says it will be over before we get there. "I don't suppose it matters much."

I am beginning to look forward to meeting Les. Now my dearests with these few lines & my other letter I think you have got all the news. Lots of love from
Tell young Riley to drop me a line. Your affectionate Son
Sid.

No. 21762.

Port Bhalmers.

On Board Mokora

My dear Father.

21/7/16

Just a few lines before we sail.
We are due to leave here this afternoon
at five o'clock. We have had a great
time in the South here & feel a bit
sorry to leave it, but I suppose we
have to go sometime. Mother suggested
that I should ring you up the other
night but you know we've said
good bye & I am not anxious to
keep on saying because it doesn't
get any easier from practice. The
weather has been horrible down here
drizzling all the time. Mother, Nell
& Lauchie were on the Wharf here
yesterday when we marched on to
the Boat. It was hard to part but
if I come back I will have had a
great trip & will tell you of a Mercat's
hole. I am very comfortable the Boat
is very clean & just been done up.

I will give you all the news I can,
I don't know how I can let you
know, which Ports we call because
the Cruiser will only scratch them
out. — You could hardly credit the
Trust & Sells, & take that was put on
the Train between Ah-bi & Demudis.

Lauchie gave me a Bananas Sea-Pit
& Tobacco Duck & a Pound of Tobacco
& Nell gave me a very nice Walnut Watch.
All them are very useful presents.

Mother landed the Tucker Box I think
because there are a lot of cases for
the different Troops & I think
mine is amongst them, anyhow
I will let you know when I write
again. I am just going to wire
to Mother & tell her that we leave
at five, so I must close now with
hugs of love from your affectionate
son *Si-d*

21762. K^o

At Sea

17/9/16

My dearest Mother & Father.

It is time I tried to write you a few more lines. I don't know what I am going to write about but no doubt will think of something as I go along. — I am still in my job & get along very well. — I met the Nurses on this Boat the other day & one of them is Nurse Mitchell, a daughter of Thomas Mitchell who used to be on the Seadown. I was at school with her brother in Tamar for two years. She often comes along & has a yarn to me when I am working in the Saloon. Nell & Lauchie met her when they were on their Honeymoon.

There are a lot of fellows on this Boat with a rash & they are isolated for Measles but I doubt if they

really have got Measles. Stanley Parker
has quite recovered from his sea-
sickness but has got the so-called
Measles. I just finished the last
of my ~~Box~~^{Box} yesterday & threw
it overboard. Norman Wallace
helped me finish it & said he was
sorry it was the last. I am
in the Pink & not finding the journey
tiresome. I wrote to you from our
last Port of call & hope you received
the letters alright. We have not
seen land for a good many days
now & have not seen any deep sea
Monsters except some Whales in the
distance. I was vaccinated about
ten days^{ago} & I have not felt any
ill effects & I thought it had not
taken but the Doctor says that
it has taken so I suppose that
must be right. While I am
writing this the Engines have stopped
for a few hours to enable the Engineers

to fix up some leakage in the condensing boiler. It is a perfect day and inclined to be hot but I suppose we can expect to get it warm now— You would notice that the envelopes, which I enclosed my last letters in, were a bit fragile well, I put the envelopes which you gave me in Demidov away in my kit bag & forgot where they were but will remember this time.

The hold which I sleep in gets very stuffy at nights now & I often think of your remarks in Demidov about how you couldn't stand it.

I expect we will be sleeping up on deck soon. We have had a great trip so far since leaving our last Port. I shall have to leave this now & see if I can't get more to write about from our next Port. Hoping you are all well & happy. I am

Your loving Son



WESLEY HALL,

DURBAN, NATAL

Sept 23 1916.

My dear Mother & Father

I posted you a letter on the Boat but it will be censored so I am dropping you this line to let you know that we have arrived here safely. This is a great place & we are all having a good time. The Rickshaws are great & you can guess that we make it lively when we have a race. I am enclosing a Photograph of myself Annis & Bain taken in a Rickshaw Annis is sitting in the middle. I am also enclosing a Postcard which I am sure will appeal to Father. The Photograph was taken & fixed in three minutes so it may not last but I hope it will. The horns on the Zulu are not just donned for the occasion but they all wear the most hideous headgear. The Marama (hospital Ship) is in here with 500 wounded Australians & N. Zealanders, so there are plenty of troops about. The Hotels here are all out of bounds & no Troops can get a drink so all the fellows are going about sympathising with each other. This is a great place for blacks & they do all the work.

We expect to call at Dargisburg so will drop a line from there if I get a chance. There was one death on the Marama, from German poisoning. I will close this now with two of love from your affluence son Ed

21762

I posted Kelly & bond
& a silver leaf from a Post.
J. L. O. O.
W. J. W. O. O.
At Sea.
10/10/16.

My dear Mother & Father.

We have not reached
the end of our journey yet.
The weather has been perfect
& the Sea has not been rough
since a day or two from N. Z.
It was a bit hot crossing the
Equator but nothing compared
with the red Sea Route. I am
still in my job as Officer's Mess
Room orderly & it is very hot at
times in the Pantry because
there is a big Steam Press for
keeping the Meals hot while
they are being served. — We
have picked up our other Transports
& are all together with an escort.

There are thousands of flying
fish about here & they are funny
looking fish with wings. One
flew on board the other night.

a Norman Wallace found it
& gave it away to a fellow to get
it stuffed. — We had some sports
crossing the Line & got 4. Company
secured seven first Prizant
of Eleven the Officers (Military)
& Captain of the Ship gave ten
Pounds in Prize Money. The Events
our fellows were were. Three
different weights Boxing, Quoit
Tug of War. Sazy Stick &
Wheel barrow race. There wasn't
any Neptune performance
because one fellow in the Main
Body got killed so they
thought it might be dangerous.

I went along the other afternoon
& had Tea with the two Nurses,
& they were very kind & chatty.
We expect to reach a Port
in a few days but we won't get
any leave because it is a
foreign Place. — The health

of the Troops has been very good
& they are all looking very well.
There was one death on the Asarima
but I don't know for certain
what he died of I was told
that it was Measles followed
by pneumonia. — Nearly

all the Troops sleep on deck, now
that we are in the hot weather.
& it is nice & calm on deck at night.

— When we reach our destination
I will write Les & try to get him
to ~~go~~ with me & visit Uncle
Will. There is a rumour that we
get some days leave when we
reach our journey's end, I will
have \$10 when I ~~see~~ get off
the Boat so I won't be broke
& sending to you for money.

Not being able to mention names
of Places seems to make this
Epistle very uninteresting but
I suppose I will be able to give

you a fuller account of our
trip later. I have shifted
out of the Hold I was sleeping
in & have got into a cabin with
eight Timore & Ashburton fellows
& it is a much better place.

The food I get is just as good
as ever. ^{my mother} we get Ice cream now
& plenty of Ice Water & Lime Juice.

I was very nearly on the Mat
at one of the Ports. The C. C. was
calling the Roll & I had answered
my name & thought I had finished
so like an Ashwell I was being
interrupted by the crowd on the Wharf
so I stuck my head out a Port hole
& was talking to some people &
never heard the Officer speak to
me so he had a crime sheet
against me but I explained
the position to him afterwards, & he
never had me up, so I have still got
a clean sheet. Best love from your
affectionate son. Dad

At Sea

23/10/16

My dear Mother & Father

Just a few lines before
we finish our long weary journey
we expect to arrive in England
tomorrow & we will be well pleased
to get ashore again. It is now
nearly a month since we left
Lapetown & we have not been
allowed ashore since. I gave you
full particulars at Dakar & I wrote
again at Dakar which is a French
Port (Naval Base) North West of Africa.
We lay in the Harbour there for two
days & it was blazing hot & the water
on the Boat was not fit to drink
so we did not enjoy ourselves & were very
anxious to get ashore but it was
no good our Officers did all they could
for us to get leave but the Shore
authorities wouldn't allow it.
I might tell you that I am going

to get this letter posted ashore in
England so as it won't be censored.

We came straight from it. 3 to
Allanby & the other two Boats went
to Freemantle. It was 14 days to
Allanby. We never sighted the other
Boats until we got to Durban 15 days
later. Durban is a grand place &
we all had a good time there. I
went to the Zoo there with Bevis & Annie.
The last afternoon we were there & a fellow
came along & invited us up to his place
for tea. ~~we~~ of course we were only too
glad of the opportunity to go to a
Private House for a meal. It was a
very nice home & he had a nice wife
& two very nice little girls & they
treated us very nicely indeed, in
fact he produced a bottle of Wine
120 years old & drank our health
& we helped him & as it was the only ^{drink}
we'd had in Durban we greatly appreciated
it. We pulled out from there on

the Sunday & there was quite a
lot of people there to see us off,
& they bought Oranges off the Higgins
& threw them on to the Boat to
us. We arrived in Lapetown 3 days
later & had quite a lot of leave there
but it is very Dutch & I think very
sympathetic with Germany. We
Marched through the town & never got
a cheer. The Hotels were open there
every day until we had been in the
Town about half an hour & then the
Police would come along & order them
to be closed so we never had a
very rowdy time & very little
drunkenness. The reason of all the
strictness on the Liquor is because
the Australians caused a Riot
in each place after they had
got a bit drunk. In Durban
the Boats lay out in the Stream
while the Troops were being
collected. After out of their Riots

We sailed from Capetown to
Dakar another 15 days trip & we
had a fellow fall down one of the
hatches about 35 ft & broke his leg & had
to put him off at Dakar. One or two
of our fellows went ashore with him
& had a look around the town
& they reckoned that it would
never do to allow 2 or 3 thousand
fellows ashore there because the
People were very liberal & there
was plenty of wine & beer & the
Tropical gardens with very light
chairs & tables about would probably
be smashed up if the fellows got
sowdy. We had an escort (British
battleship) from Capetown to Dakar
& then we got an Auxiliary cruiser to
bring us up to here & she left us
to-day & we are expecting to pick
up a destroyer flotilla anytime.
At dinner time to-day we passed
five tremendously big Whales.

My address
21762
H. Belton Park
Grantham
England



Belton Park
Grantham
2/11/12

My dear Mother & Father

I have been told that a Mail closes tonight at six o'clock so I will just drop you a few lines to wish you a happy Christmas. I have transferred from the Infantry to the Machine Gun Corps & have been shifted to a camp here in Grantham for two months training as I want to see France until January. We get a bit more consideration in a Corps like this than we do in a big crowd like the Infantry. There is a good crowd of our fellows joined the Machine Gun Corps. Harry Baxter, Billy Bain from Seaclown & Jack Bonnell, Stanley Parker & Jim Brown from Blancheboye so I have a few mates. We are very near the town & get plenty of leave. We left Slings Camp yesterday morning & entrained at Bedford Station for Watford & marched through London to Kings Cross Station, & then we entrained for Grantham & got here at five o'clock at night & had to march four or five miles to the camp & we were glad to get here.



They gave us a good sleep in this morning & it made a change after sling camps were they drove us from half past five in the morning until half past eight at night to get us ready for the front in ten days. Srgt Major Small is in sling camps young Shinty (Srgt Major) Ian Aspinall is there as a permanently unfit but looking very well & fat. He says he never wants to go back to the front. — Our fellows have been murdered in France during the last couple of Months & the casualty lists would make your hair stand on end. I have not met any returned men who want to go back to the front & they all describe the fighting as terrible.

Alice Dickens sent me a photograph & I can't keep it so I will send it home to you to put with my collection. I haven't had any word from Les regarding his operations so I wrote to him today asking him to let me know how he is getting on.

We get four days leave from here when we finish our training so I may get down to see Uncle Will then as our other leave was too short. Now my dears I will have to close to catch the Mail I hope you are all in perfect health. Best love from your loving son
 Sid

I have not heard from Les since the operation.

My Address.

1962.

Belton Park Camp

St 3 W G 6

Grantham
Lincolnshire
England



Belton Park Camp

Grantham

8/11/16

My dearest Mother & Father

I can't quite remember when I wrote to you last but I know it was quite recently & I haven't much to write about but will just let you know I am quite cheerful. There is a mail on Friday & I will catch it with this letter. I went into Grantham last Saturday & had a look at the place & I don't think much of it. The streets are narrower & the buildings high so it is cold & damp at this time of year. There are thousands of soldiers about here all being instructed in Machine Gun work.

They don't tucker us as well in England & they did in N. Z. & I would like to be home with you & have a nice breakfast of Bacon & Eggs in the kitchen oh it would be lovely.

We don't do much drill here but when we are drilling they give us a good gallop. The gun drill is all quick & lively & any movements are all



done at the double. At the front our section
is about as good as any although I believe it
is a bit fairly lively. One thing I regret about
joining this force that is having all my best
mates behind. I tried very hard to get some of them
to come with me but they said they were tired
of training & would sooner go & get smacked up
(wounded or killed) they want any longer. — I
received the Mercat Brand of Tobacco but I
haven't started smoking it yet because I have
some of the Tobacco which Lachie gave me in
Dunedin. I got the Box which you sent me &
Kell loved it. I have written to Kell & thanked
her for them. The N. F. Troops get a good
hearing in England. We find the Customs in the
towns here & the dialects are like gibberish to us.
& our slang is a quite new to the people here.
I was talking to a fellow about shouting a drink
& he couldn't make it out at all. We couldn't
get a meal at the Inns here & when we asked
for a meal they told us they were only Beer houses.

Yours of love
from your loving son
Sid

21/6/16

N. J. M. G. B.

Belton Park Camps

Grantham

England

W. G. P. O. Wellington

Belton Park Camps

Grantham

20/11/16

My dear Mother & Father

I have just been told that there is a N.J. mail which closes tomorrow in London so I will endeavour to write you a few lines.

I am still in this camp & just becoming an expert machine gunner. Of course father will realise that a fellow with brilliant intellect like mine couldn't help learning anything like a machine gun very rapidly.

You can all have England for me N.J. is good enough for me. We had snow here on Saturday & it was very cold. It is always raining here & we do most of our gun work in the huts. The Officers here are a fine lot of fellows & treat us as men should be treated. They are mostly returned fellows & know their business. We were out throwing hand grenades the other day & a lot of our fellows were a bit nervous about it because there has been a good few accidents lately through fellows getting nervous & letting go the safety spring & dropping the grenade which explodes within five seconds after being released they are dangerous little devils. I took good care to get mine well away in good time.

Les has answered my letter at last & he told me that he had had a bad time with the operation & which was

successful. I wrote to Uncle Will & he had had a letter from Les telling him all about the operation & Uncle answered my letter & told me exactly what Les told him. Uncle said that he was going to write to you & tell you that we ~~were~~ had got as far as corresponding with one another. Les told me that Aunt Nellie died last Sunday 12th inst. I am awfully disappointed at not seeing her. Uncle Will told me that she was gradually failing but was quite peaceful & not in any pain whatever.

I wrote to Cousin Nellie yesterday & I told her that I would see her when I get my leave of four days which will be granted to us when we finish our course of training here. Our two shillings a day is not what you might call a handsome salary & makes a fellow very economical. Everything here is very dear consequently a fellow doesn't lead a fast life. I had nine pounds when I went to London for two days leave & I spent seven of them thinking it would be my last leave before going to France but I have regretted it since, especially since we are getting our four days but I will have a fiver by that if I can economise enough. We are well equipped here with clothing & blankets (7). You would laugh if you could only see me making a good tea out of Bread Margarine (haven't seen Butter since landing in Hampshire) & Plum Jam. - Harry Lawie has asked me to go to Burton-on-Trent with him this week end to see a Cousin of his who is a Doctor there.

but I think I will be a case of W.S.F.

I have often heard of the misery in England & I have seen a little of it here. Every time we have a meal there is a dozen little ragged urchins come round the dining hall & collect all the scraps of bread which we leave.

Our N.I. camps are a long way ahead of these camps in every way especially the food which is not to be compared.

Leo told me in his letter that he had been told that all the mounted men in England had to go back to Egypt & join their respective units. I don't think he is looking forward to the prospect but he will be a long time before he is fit to go. How is conscription getting on in New Zealand? Bill Massey said in one of his speeches here in England that he didn't think it would ever be enforced.

You tell Riley that it is not much of a game & to keep out of it as long as possible. They keep sending men back to the firing line as long as he can manage to get there no matter how often he has been wounded. There is a lot of returned fellows here & they & training to go back & they don't like it & they are hard cases.

Give my love to Nell Lachie ~~the son~~ Joss & Andrew
I hope you a both keeping well & that Father's Asthma
is keeping away

Sheaps of love
from your loving son
Sid.

I have still got some envelopes
which you gave me in Denecliv.

21762. N. J. M. L. b
Belton Park Camp
Grantham, England.
M.C. by P.O. Wellington

N. J. M. L. b
Belton Park Camp
Grantham
29/11/16

My dear Mother & Father

I am trying to write you a few lines
to catch the Pantouner mail which leaves London on the
1st Dec, because I know you will see that there is a mail
in & if there isn't a letter you will be wondering why.

There is not much news because I have only been out
of the camp once since I arrived here a month ago.

Grantham is not much of a place & it always costs
a few shillings & I am saving up for my Christmas
leave which I am going to spend with Cousin Kelly
in New Eltham. Uncle Will sent me her address
& I wrote to her & she answered my letter very suddenly
& invited me to make her place my home during my
leave I get in England. If Les can get leave at the
same time as I do we are going to Kelly's place together.
When she wrote to me she said that it would give her
great pleasure to have us both there together. We are getting
on with our Machine Gun training & start target shooting
next Monday. The latest news we have had about going
to France is that we don't go until the end of January,
& I hope it is true because I am not anxious for any
more frozen trenches than necessary.

The other night I was lying peacefully in bed about nine o'clock & the lights suddenly went out & some officers came round & told us not to light any lights because there was a Zeppelin raid on. Well we all slept peacefully until morning & never heard any Zepps but we saw by the papers that two had been brought down about 30 miles from our camps. A German Aeroplane flew over London about mid-day yesterday & dropped bombs & got away alright but was brought down by the French somewhere in France.

You will have read about it in the Papers long before this, so I won't give you any more details.

Stanley Parker has wired home for ten pounds & he expects it any day now but he regretted sending for so much so I told him I would take a Limer from him & get you to refund it to his Father. Anyhow I have not got it yet & will let you know when I do. The weather here has been a good deal better lately. I am hoping to get my Christmas truck box safely. In fact I don't think I ever thought so much about anything except ~~some~~ food. You can't realize how often I have thought of the times you used to say, to us fellows (Les & I) when we turned our noses up at good food, "The day might come when you will be glad of that." Well it has come & I could do with some of those good meals which I used to say all sorts of things about. Your letter written on the 9th Oct. arrived here a few days ago & I was lucky enough to get five M. J. letters & there was only 3 or 4

fellows in the boat got N. 3 mail. — You don't want to worry about my welfare yet because I will be quite safe for some time yet, & you will hear all in good time if anything serious happens to me. You speak of Les's operation in your last letter but I think I told you it was successful any how Les will have told you all about it. — You would be pleased to have Spertus back with you because she would be good company for you. Imagine young Tess front remembering what I call her. I only hope I will get back to further her education. N. 3 is the best place in the world & I can tell you we all realize it now. Mrs Robertson's little girls wrote to me & told me that they had a Photograph of mine. I have not received any parcels since the Mercat Solaceo which you sent me. Several letters which I have had spoke of Papers & Parcels which were posted to me but I haven't received any of them yet. None of the fellows are getting parcels which have been sent. — I wrote to Alice Shaw & she replied & from the tone of her letter she seemed very anxious about Gilbert's wife & since he sailed.

Billy Spellane has done the best thing he can do I think. Now my dearests I must close hoping you are both well.

Heaps of love
from your loving sons

Sid.

P.S. Give my love to Mrs Hayhurst & tell her that the Paper which she gave me after final leave is still doing good service. (Sid)



91762
No. 4. Service Coy
W. 3. M. H. Co
Belton Park Camp

Leamington

My dear Mother & Father

11/12/16

I am still in England & we were told to-day that we don't go to France until the middle of January. Our Officer is a returned man & has won the Military Cross for bravery & he says that France is not so bad as some people make it out to be. The time a gun team spent in in the trenches is 24 hours at a stretch & we are supplied with Gum Boots & dig socks every time we go into the trenches. Speaking of socks reminds me that I received 2 pairs of socks last week & they are just the thing. I haven't got a pair of pants with a tear in them & haven't had since I first went to camp in W. 3.

When I last counted my socks I had eighteen pairs & I gave 6 pairs away (thin ones & some which had shrunk) I have 14 pairs now & I am going to give Stan Parker 2 or 3 pair because he is short.

On Saturday afternoon I went to Leamington for the afternoon it is only 24 miles away & trains run very regularly. It is a great place & you never saw



so many girls in a place in your life. There are thousands of them & the proportion is 10 women to every man.

There were three of us & we met these very nice girls & had a very pleasant dinner. We took them to afternoon tea & then to the theatre in the evening. The play was entitled Senia an Egyptian piece & it was very good.

I write to cousin Nellie occasionally & she answers my letters very regularly, but I don't think she is looking forward to her husband being called up next month. She told me that she has three children aged 3 1/2, 4 1/2 & 9 1/2 yrs & she says that she has her hands full with them.

Les's leg does not seem to be healing as quickly as it might do, he is about half his time in bed & the other half he knocks about. When Raake & Jim & I went to Hutton to see a friend of theirs & they saw Les & they reckoned he was very cheerful. — We are getting more to eat here now than we were a while ago. The seventeenth Bt's arrived in Sleng a few weeks ago & there was one of them up here the other day & he said that there was a big mob of them trying to get transferred out of the Infantry. I am wondering how poor Jimmy is getting on. All the 16th Infantry have been upon the front line trenches for about 3 weeks



I am glad I never went with them although we have the worst of the winter to go through over there after we land there.

This letter was started last night & today I have received a letter from Fred & read yours of the 23rd Oct arrived amongst. You will have received my letter from London by this time & your mind will be easy about my seatings.

Bill Messy & Joe Ward are coming here to meet us to see the Troops & the band. Alice Dennis wrote & told me that she had received my Photograph & was very pleased with it, of course she would be. Miss Farrow, Miss Murray, & Lauchie all spoke of the Photograph & said they flattered me, that's a nice thing to say. Miss Farrow & Miss Murray I must have parted the Photographs in the back. I am posting a Photograph of Alice & you & not with my collection. She sent it over here to me & it will only get spoilt. — I am glad your strawberry is a promising well. I'm sorry I wasn't here with you to have Strawberries & cream etc, what?

I hope your Grassy ^{the calf} ~~the calf~~ will do well with you. Frank would only stave it or spoil it somehow or other.

It is a good job that my old pipe came in handy for old Hooper. He must be fairly hand up poor old beggar.

The Macaulays would be pleased that Jimmy's send off



was a great success. Jack Lippard would be a long way
better if he came to the war especially after all the time
he has been playing Soldiers. I against Me actually send
me a Christmas card, the only one I have received.

So John Holwell has been on a visit to Lomeka again
& giving away all the news. — I'm a letter from
Mrs. Mary, Purganca, she told me that Lomeka Johnson
had been thrown out of a photo bar & had his arm
smashed badly. — Andrew & Constance must be fairly
busy with cards especially amongst the faculty. They
must be regular Admirals. I never write from Lomeka
except a Post Card which I sent to Relief. From Durban
I wrote two letters & sent you a Photograph of myself
Bain & Annie taken in a Rickshaw. — I've never told
me about James Guild going to see him, at Waller.

Now my dearest I must close this letter as I have no
more news. It was going to be two pages but it has
come to four. I am in perfect health & have only
been a bit off colour one day last week, send a waving W.B.

Very best love
from your loving son,
— Sid

P.S. Any Photos which you have you might
send to Nell because I am sure she treasures them.
She can't hear too much about you & she
thinks Mother is a wonder (she is quite right)
^{W.C.}

The Haven
Bereta Road
New Eltham

Saturday 23/12/16.

My dear Mother & Father.

You will look at the heading of
this letter & wonder where I have got to now.

I am having my Christmas & Expedt Force Leave
combined making six days in all. We left camp last
Wednesday & have to return by midnight on Tuesday.
It is our last leave before going to France on the
20th January. I am staying with Harold Beckett
& Nell & have been here since Wednesday night. Tomorrow
I am going to see Les & may stay with him until my
leave is up. Nell & Harold are real good sorts & very
kind & they seemed very pleased to see me. Nell is very hard
of hearing & I find it hard to talk to her, she is very interested
in us all & treasures Photographs etc, very much, which
she has got of us. She has only one Photograph & that is
of Les & I standing by the farm stable. Harold has got
Father's letter which he wrote from Dunedin describing
his voyage over to N.Z. & he is very proud of it. I read
it to day & one expression in it amused me & that was
where you described losing sight of the Great Bear constellation
& sighting the Southern Cross which you described as very
Tripot & I just thought how often I have heard you use

the expression. Their three kiddies are very nice little ones their ages are 9 yrs Bessie, 6 yrs Irene, & 4 yrs Ronald. Irene is an affectionate kiddie & has taken a fancy to me. I gave Nell 10/- to buy them some toys for Christmas, she didn't want to take it but I insisted as I thought it a fair thing. Nell is very thin & seems to worry a good deal about everything but I think it is hardly worth while. — Yesterday

I went to London & renewed my acquaintance with the little town. I picked up an Australian Soldier who was walking round London by himself like I was, so I thought I would make his acquaintance & he was a fine fellow. He was just out of the trenches in France for ten days leave & was holding about twenty pounds which he was cutting out before going back to France & he wouldn't let me pay for anything although I said all sorts of things to him. We went to Westminster Abbey together & got a guide who showed us all round & explained everything, there is no doubt that it is a wonderful place & has a great history. My Australian friend paid the guide 1/- & he would insist on two meals for which he paid & then we went to the Hippodrome & he bought two 5/- seats for a play called Flying Colours & we enjoyed it very much. After the Play I left him because I had to meet Harold & come home with him. He gave me his France address & his Australian address, which I am enclosing ~~in~~ with this letter & want you to keep it until I

return home, of course I may not get back but I am hoping.
He was a fine looking young fellow & works in an Australian
Bank. — I am going to see Les to morrow & will probably.

Les wrote & told me that he is undergoing another operation
after New Year because Dr Unwin thinks there is still some
of his clothing in the wound. By Jove he is having a rotten
time of it. — The weather in this country would give
anybody the hump, it is always dull & raining or snowing,
the other day we had 3 inches in camp & we did some great
snowballing. — Most of my mates have gone to Scotland
for their leave & I guess it will be cold enough up there.

When I was in N.Z. I heard all sorts of yarns about
how mean the authorities were over here with clothing,
but I think they are most liberal & will give us anything
we ask for. — There is great talk of Peace over here on
account of the Germans wanting peace on their terms & all the
English papers are most indignant & so are the Boards
so I don't think that there is any chance until next summer.

All the fellows who come over from France reckon the ~~the~~
Germans are well on the defensive & it is only a matter of time
before they give in. — I expect you will all be spending
Christmas Eve in town to night & I would like to be with
you & then I could get some Peanuts for your stockings.

My health is very good & I am quite happy & feel that my
chances are pretty good. Now I must close with heaps of love
& wishing you all have a happy New Year.

Very fondest love from (Sid)