

By
Belton Park Camp

Grantham

15/1/14

My dear Mother & Father

There is a N.Z. mail leaving here to-morrow & I must write you a few lines. Since last writing you I have been 11 days in the Hospital here with Tonsillitis. I don't know whether it was judgement on me for getting two days extra final leave on the strength of my Tonsils anyhow I am well & strong again & back in Camp. While I was in Hospital I received a N.Z. mail & got 6. Parcels two of which you sent me. One pair of Sox with some foot powder in the parcel. The other parcel was a round tin with Devilled Ham, Luncheon Cheese, Sugar, Milk, Irish Moss, Cocoa, & ^{Cigarettes} Chocolate, all of which ~~was~~ very nice to get in the Hospital. I was well treated

& I am sure the Sisters & Nurses could not have been more kind, but while a fellow is ill & doesn't need any food it is just the thing but as soon as my appetite came back I couldn't get enough to eat & your tin was just the thing & I was highly delighted with it. Lizzie Macaulay sent me a Parcel with cigarettes cigars & sweets in it.

Alice sent me two Parcels one with Tobacco & Soup Tablets in it & another with Handkerchiefs & Tobacco so you see I was well armed in the Hospital & all my Parcels were quite a comfort.

Les wired me while I was there & asked me to go and see him because he was leaving by a boat on Saturday for home, but of course I couldn't get & I wired him to let him know & wishing him good-bye. I wouldn't have minded if I had done my bit & was returning as fit as he is.

but I may have the luck. I will be well in it before this reaches you if I don't get any more sickness. Through going into the Hospital I am struck off the strength of N. 4. company which all my mates are in, but I think I will be put on again as I have only been away 11 days. — This is a horrible climate at this time of year. At the present time there is 6 inches of Snow on the ground & it keeps snowing every day. I think that I mentioned in one of my letters that N. 3. is a fine country & I still think so.

Some of the 18th Reinforcements Machine Gunners are here & I saw Gordon Blackwood who is amongst them & he got a great surprise when he saw me. Gilbert is in Sling. Alice is as very anxious about him because they were over due & she wrote to me & asked if I knew anything about them & as it

happened I had heard that they were
quarantined but didn't know where & I
wrote Alice & told her & she was very
pleased. — I hope Nell gets through
her trouble as well as she did last time,
of course I don't mean twins, but I will
be very anxious to hear about her welfare.

Father's letter arrived but he didn't tell
me much. I think he must be keeping it
secret. Pa's present of two sticks of
Tobacco, ^{arrived safely} I will write & thank him next
mail but you can tell him I received
it alright. Now my dearests I must
close & get this posted. I hope you
are all fit & well & not worrying about
my welfare. h

Shaps of love
from your loving son
Sid

Maragissey
14/2/17.

my dear Father & Mother.

When I was in Edinburgh I wrote you a few lines & promised to write from here although at the time I was wondering if I would ever get to this outlandish place.

I arrived here on Tuesday night after leaving Scotland on Monday night. I didn't let Uncle Will know that I was coming down, so when I arrived at his door at half past eight at night he was quite surprised. Both he & Aunt Mary were delighted to see me & they have made a great fuss of me. They have quite a nice number of very nice friends whom I have met & been made very welcome by. Aunt Mary is an awfully good sort & so is Uncle. This is an awfully nice little place & the climate very nice at present & must be perfect in the Summer. Uncle has a very comfortable little home of which he is very fond. Each morning we stroll down the Township together & have a glass of Beer & do some shopping. I try to do the shouting but get cried down & not allowed to.

Uncle's great friend here is a man named Wills who lives here so as to be away from the London Air Raids. He is an old friend of the Ashwell family, his age is 72 years, & he can't quite remember you Father but you probably know him. He is an awfully decent old chap & any amount of fun

in him. - To-morrow I am leaving here & starting back for France. There is not much joy about going back but it is not so bad as if a fellow's people were here. - I have heard that the Division is being withdrawn for a spell & a probability of us all going to Egypt but it is ~~no~~ more than likely only a rumour. - The Twelfth of Oct was a perfect hell & our boys did get chopped to pieces all through lack of proper Artillery support. I heard that our casualties amounted to 12,000 & I think that it is probably true.

German Machine Guns played on us at a few hundred yards & they inflicted a great many casualties. The very name of Ypres stinks in our nostrils & I think that it is time we were taken out of it again. - The other day I heard that Harry Hayhurst was going back to France. The Machine Gun Officers in France who know Harry reckon that he has got cold feet & has been (swinging the lead) in England.

With this letter I am enclosing my Pay Book two Photographs one of Harry Bowie & a chap named Hawke from Waimate & I am also enclosing a Message Maps which are given us when in the line. Now my dears I must close with best love from Uncle & Auntie & heaps of love
from your aff son
Sid



Belton Park Camp
Grantham
4/2/14

My dearests Mother & Father

This is Sunday afternoon & I must do my best to catch up to my correspondence as we are due in France within the next two days. I have written to you by every mail so far so I hope you will get the letters which I know you look for, anxiously. Today I received two letters from you & I am awfully sorry Father's Asthma is so bad. In this letter I am enclosing several Photographs & will give you a description of each on the back. - The letter, from A & W not asking for a Photograph of mine, arrived quite safely & I meant one to go to the Head Office at Palmerston North anyhow. I suppose they will have one before this. The long letter which you received from me, will be the one which I wrote as soon as I arrived



in England. You are worrying a great deal too much about my going to the Firing Line.

We never worry about it & when a fellow is amongst his mates he never thinks of what is before him. No doubt it is very rough out in France but a chap has a fair chance of going through or getting slightly wounded which seems to be the best way out.

The Germans are going to get beaten but it will take time & perhaps a long time. —

You must not overwork yourself for the Red Cross & Queen's Carnival. I can quite imagine that the ^{Masque} function for which you were carrying & supervising, would be a success & I would like to try a meal that you had cooked.

There is no doubt that food is going to be short here in England before this Winter is out. — There is Snow on the ground here all the time & sometimes it is very cold.

Andrew must be a bit of a knut now that



he fusses a bit. — ^{G.M.G.} speak quite a lot of hot days. I wish we could try a few of them for a while. Enid was very kind to call & take you to Hae-Hae-Pe-Moana.

Will never drowned the Twins as you thought she might do.

Poor old Roley will be sick about his operation, but the expense need not worry him because he can have what he wants of my money & that might help to pay it off. — You will say that I will need it, but if I get the count out I won't & if disabled the government & as we will see me right & anyhow Roley can take it with the intention of paying it back someday. — I hope the lake arrives safely but it won't be too good if the Tin is not soldered. — If I could only ^{have} been with you for your Boating Day Picnic I would be highly delighted & I feel sure you thought of me & talked of me. — Poor Alf blench came to an untimely



end. — Frisby was ^{MMG} a regular demon to write & I can quite understand his sister getting 21 letters from him. — It was very rotten for the Phil Warnings to have Kite's letter opened by his people especially when he had asked them not to show it to his Mother.

I like the decent little signature (Dee) in your letter of the 12 December. I will now answer your later letter. — All my Parcels seem to arrive alright if they are not too big, but Papers are out of the question & we never receive them.

If I see Ted Webb, Kite, or Sid Phillips your love if I see them. As I wrote last Sunday & gave you all the news I haven't much to add this time so will have to close. One of the photos is of H. Bowie a Corporal he is my best mate & a splendid fellow; add his Photograph, which is not at all good of him, to my collection. Lieutenant Macgregor is a friend of Less & he is our Transport Officer. I introduced myself under Less instructions & he was pleased to meet me. Heaps of love from
Your aff. brother
Sid

France

22/4/17

My dear Mother & Father

Sunday evening & things are very quiet so I am going to drop you a few lines. I thought I would be back in the line before this but fortunately we are still in our billets. Our weather is improving rapidly but is a long way from hot yet. — I have spent the afternoon with Bod Anness & Norman Wallace. They are camped a few hundred yards from us. In one of my letters I think I told you that I had heard that Norman Wallace was killed. Well, it is quite a mistake, but he was slightly wounded in the arm & leg ~~but~~ & is alright again & quite cheerful. Anness is looking well & tells plenty of funny anecdotes of his experiences with shells etc. The news which we have been receiving lately has been very good & gives one the impression that there is a push somewhere in the distance, although there is no doubt that the fighting will be desperate.

The Germans seem to have made up their minds to sink all the Hospital Ships that they get hold of, but that is nothing for them when they boil down their own dead soldiers & get explosives out of the bodies & feed pigs with the remainder. Fellows who have seen the German prisoners, just recently captured reckon that they are awfully fed up with the war, & I don't wonder because what they have to put up with from British Artillery is simply hell.

Yesterday I received a Tin of Ginger biscuits from you ~~you~~ they arrived in splendid order & today I got a tin of chocolate which was also in good order. It is very nice & kind of you to send all the nice parcels & I can tell you that they are greatly appreciated. I know that they are an awful bother & I can just hear Father saying, another d- parcel, but never mind old dad Thanks very much, for your part of the work. Not forgetting dear Mother's goodness in making the purchases & packing & putting them in the little perambulator, ready for transport.

I am in very good health & feeding well.

There is expectations of things doing here so I suppose we will all be in it, & you will have the news before this reaches you. Having a good go at the Huns with a Machine Gun won't be bad after all the rotten things they have done; I have not discovered who sent me the cake from England yet but I wrote & told Nellie how I was placed & thanked her for it if she had been so kind, but she wrote back & said that she was sorry that it was not her.

Her little kiddies write to me now & again & send little paintings & one was entitled "The little Grey Home in the West." If I get back to England I will have a good time.

I have got £5 8/- saved up in my pay book already & have only been over here about 10 weeks so if all goes well for some months & then we get back to Blighty I ought to have plenty to draw. Now my dears I must wind up

With heaps of love

from your affectionate son.

Sid

Belgium
25/3/17

My dear Nell & Lauchie

You will be thinking that it is time I wrote you a letter. Anyhow I will try & scribble you a few lines & don't you forget to write. I haven't had a line from you since shortly after landing in England. My Christmas Luck Box which you helped to fill up has not arrived yet but I am still living in hopes. All small parcels arrive quite safely but large ones seem to take too much handling consequently they don't arrive. Yesterday I got a tin of shortbread from Mother & a tin with Tobacco, Skim & Cheese in it, & also some newspapers. We get enough food to eat but it is very ordinary consisting of Belly Beef, Biscuits & Stew mostly. Bread, Marmarine & Jam are issued occasionally but in small quantities. We have been fortunate so far inasmuch as we are able to buy Bread & any tinned ~~meat~~ stuff we want. — My section has been back in camp behind the line for

over a week now, but we expect to go up at any hour of the night or day. During the last few days things have leveled up round here & the shells are dropping all round the show. Last night a few shells fell on a road & killed 16 men & wounded ten who will mostly likely succumb owing to the very bad wounds which they have received.

Mother wrote & told me that you were expecting another young Grant to visit you about the end of February. I hope sincerely hope the the arrival has eventuated as was expected. Andrew & Constance will be highly delighted to have a small playmate. I should like to have heard their comments.

My last news of Roleys health of his operation was quite good & I hope he has continued to progress favourably—Mother seemed to be worrying about him being called up for service, but if he is I don't think he will ever see any fighting because surely the next six months will decide this thing one way or

the other. — The soldering life over here is a lot better than in any training camp but of course the real firing line keeps one thinking & wondering how close each shell is going to land, & is inclined to put the wind up a fellow. I have seen very little of it yet but I suppose my turn is coming to see plenty..

Les will have arrived home long before this & will no doubt have related some thrilling accounts. — The accounts of all the dry weather you have been having don't give one the impression that the harvest would be as good as it might have been. From the stock sale accounts in the papers the prices seem to be very high so I expect your fat stock cheque will be fairly good this year. — I hope to be back in time for some of those Spring Green's & Raley's Fireworks next Christmas, but anytime will do me. I have been hut orderly today so I have had a quiet time but all the fellows have just come back of a Route March. I must close now.

With best love to you all from your loving brother
Give all the kiddies a kiss for me. — S. C. L.

I also received some
envelopes in a Parcel
two days ago

France

26/5/17

My dear Mathias Father

The other day I received
a Parcel with a lovely pair of Sox in it
& also a Pencil for writing letters with,
but it was not a success & I will
try & press harder with the indelible Ink.
It was too soft. Two days ago I

received two Parcels one was a very nice
bake; ¹⁰² Mince, Sir Hennings, Sir Charlotte
Peppered Ham, Shortbread & condensed milk.

All of which was very very greatly
appreciated more especially as I had been
running a temperature of 102. for a couple of
days. There was an epidemic running through
the Troops just now & I managed to
catch it. It only lasts for a few days & is
just like bad Influenza. — Polay has
been to see me again lately & seems to
be keeping pretty well. He is still guarding
the Ammunition dumps & seems to regard it

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it as an easy job & much better than
working with the Mules. I have had a
good long rest out of the line again & will
be going in shortly again. I heard
that Harry Lewis had arrived in Lima
so I expect he will have been out to
see you by the time this reaches you.
Give him my kind regards when you
see, as I feel sure you will.

Sometime ago I think I told you
that I had seen ~~John~~ Thomas who was
looking well & an enthusiastic Officer, well,
the other night he was on Patrol with
several other Infantry Chaps in AB Mansland
& they were all caught by the Germans
& have not been heard of since. I sincerely
hope that he will be a prisoner of war
& come through alright. During the few
days I was ill I was in a tent with
several others & our O. C. bought butter
& milk to feed us up with & it was
awfully good of him.

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Now I have written two pages & for
shames sake I must write the third
so as you will think I have made
an effort, but goodness knows what I
am going to write about. Since Walter
Evans said good bye to me I have
often wondered if he went to N. J. because
there was quite a big crowd of them
kept back when the offensive started & I
thought it quite possible that he was
one of them. — The other day I received
a letter from Aunt Mary & she told
me that Uncle Will was too busy in his
garden for writing so she has to keep up
the correspondence. He is a great boy for his
Ducks & garden & I'll bet it looks *off* jolly
well now. Now I must go for some
exercise as I have been lying round all day
so will close this short epistle.

Very best love
from your aff. son
Sid

France

12/6/19

My dear Mother & Father.

It is nearly a week ago since I wrote you a few lines, it was a very short epistle but I was in a great hurry as we were going into the big battle which has been fought & the New Zealanders took a prominent part in one phase & did very well. Our Machine Gun company went in on a Thursday & came out on Sunday. I feel as if I have lived for years since I last wrote to you. It is a great sensation to sit under a heavy bombardment & as it was the heaviest that the War has brought on, you can take it that it was something terrible & then we had to carry our loads through the German Barrage of fire & our fellows started to drop all over the place & the dead Germans were lying dead & wounded all along the track which we had to travel. It was my first sight of a dead man but the effect on me was very small, in fact I hardly noticed it.

but the poor fellows who were wounded badly made me feel rather sick. When there are so many wounded lying about & the stretcher bearers can't get them out makes the worst sight of the lot.

I did all the bandaging & burying of our particular gun team. One poor chap got his leg smashed & the point of his shoulder badly shot away. I bandaged him up & he had to lay in the trench for hours before we could get a stretcher & then two of our team carried him to the dressing station under a murderous shell fire. You often hear of fellows getting decorations, but when you once see the troops going up to the line under fire, stretcher bearers carrying out wounded & the calm way in which the wounded suffer the most terrible mutilation & dozens of other things men put up with, you feel that they all earn it. So Our company was under German shell fire for four days, when I say under shell fire I mean that his shooting was absolutely directed at our position & we were lucky to miss. We were all very pleased to get out

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There were hundreds of Germans who gave themselves up surrendered. The German wounded were lying in shell holes all round our position. One who was close to us was a mere boy. We fed him for two days until he was carried out. He couldn't talk English so we were not able to get any conversation out of him. — Although a fellow feels very bitter against them, but when you see a mere boy badly wounded it makes you feel sorry, because they look so sorrowful, & they are made to fight, but when any of the prisoners give any cheek or sneer at our fellows they generally get bayoneted or shot, & it is good enough for them. — I am a better soldier than I thought I would be. When I got amongst the shells I never felt at all frightened although I thought I would shiver badly. I was more afraid that the sight, of men getting killed & wounded near me, would upset me than the shells but it was a great surprise to me when I came through so well. — I don't know when we go in again but I don't suppose it will be long after

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we have a few days spell. When I came back from the battle position for a rest, ~~they~~ were still under fire but we had dug-outs & our head-quarters stuff had that tea ready for us & I got several Whisky Presses, two Bulletins, a tin of Tobacco & a pair of lovely Sox with a tin of boccia wrapped up in them.

The Sox were the most welcome thing I have seen for a long time & the boccia made a big Dixie full & all the fellows who were left in our section all had some of it & it enjoyed it immensely.

You will see the account of the battles in which the 43rd took part & how successful they were so it is no good my trying to give you a detailed account of the Battle. Anyhow I can't mention any names of places, which is awful not because it will always be put in the Papers. Before the bombardment opened there were mines exploded under the German positions & it was a wonderful sight & the ground shook like it does with a Tremendous earthquake. There must have been hundreds of Germans buried alive & they must have been absolutely demoralised

I received two letters from you the other day before the big battle & I was pleased that they bore such a cheerful tone. If I had heard that Les was playing the fool & that Father's health was bad I should have felt sort of sick, but luckily things were going well. I will now start & answer your two letters. No doubt you will feel a bit lonely since Will & the family have departed. Andrew must have been trying to sweeten you up, after killing the fold Lark, when he brought the hen & chicks. Les seems to be making himself generally amiable & getting quite a deal of interest taken in him. I wonder Les didn't go & see Colonel Bowler when he is so anxious to see him. Harold Waring couldn't feel very flattered with Tom Gunnison's speech & the general bearing towards him when he was leaving Melford.

Les would not enjoy himself with old Phil because he is such an old guesser. I received the half sovereign which you so kindly enclosed & it was very nice to get it although I have still got plenty of money & am drawing very little.

We can't even buy a nice glass of Beer so there is nothing to spend money on except an occasional meal of eggs & an odd bottle of champagne.

We are entitled to draw 40 Francs every pay-day but I only draw 10f so I am getting quite economical — I am rather sorry I can get any apples from you but I hope to get them next season. I like the thin sex & the Tobacco which you send is quite the best. — I wish I was at home to help you eat the dinner which you stopped writing to go & get ready. — I forgot to tell you that all the Ternuka fellows in the company came through alright. Before we started to advance Fritz sent over Tear Shell Gas & it was awful it made our eyes saw & run with water, besides feeling very fed up.

I am pleased to hear that young Sid Grant is growing well. Father's letter won't take much answering because if I did think of anything to say you must have kept it secret, but I am awfully pleased to have a few lines from you.

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I am in the pink of condition & if I can only keep clear of Fritz's shells & bullets I will come back to you all. I know I can stand the Physical & Mental strain now so I am easier in my mind about it. It is all a tremendous strain.

Now I will answer your letter which was written on Easter Monday. You still seem to put a lot of work into your garden. Alex Webb is about the only fellow, except James Guild, whom I have been looking for & have not seen. You tell Mrs Coombs that she is not to be envious of my Rose Garden & then when I get back I will gather a bunch for her. — Donald & L. J. Grant will be social pests if they go on increasing their land holdings, but it will be handy for the kiddies going to school. — It certainly is a surprise for me to hear that Les has become engaged to Maggie Bain, but she is a nice little girl & will make him a good wife anyhow I wish them all the best of good luck. No doubt Alice Beattie is an awful fool.

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Imagine old Phil asking about Les & his Uniform
my word he does ask some peculiar questions. I
am wondering how Bob Jimmy got on through
this Messines Battle. The Infantry's casualties
were not as heavy as were expected. I will
do all I can to write at every opportunity & give you
the latest news. You will see that I have made a
better effort this time & I hope you will be interested in
all I have had to say. — We lost our Officer (Lieut. Paston)
he was a very good Officer & treated us very well & we had
plenty of confidence in him. It was the worst blow
we had during the battle & we all felt very sick over
it. He told me the night before that he wouldn't care
if he was killed.

Now I must wind up with heaps of love
From your loving sons
Sid

I had a letter from Aunt Mary Today & she wished me
to give their love to you when I wrote.
Uncle Will has had trouble with his
Eyes again but is getting better again.

France
19/6/17.

My dear Mother & Father

Another week has passed & nothing
of importance has happened. I am feeling very fit
again after the strenuous time of last week. We have
be out of the line since & have had a very easy time.

The weather here has been very hot lately & we
have started getting up earlier & not parading in the
afternoon - it is much better. When there is so much
traffie on the roads the dust & heat is terrible.

I have seen the two Cartwright boys this week
& they are still going strong. Alex Wilk went away
to England about three weeks ^{ago} with a weak heart
& I missed him. Bert Cartwright told me that he
was a Sergeant in the Brigade Ammunition Column.

I am wondering how James Guild got through the
Battle. He has been looking for me but I have not
managed to see him yet. I heard that he was going
over with the attacking troops. It is to be hoped that
he came through alright. We lost our Officer in the

Battle, & we all felt very sick about it because he was a fine fellow & very brave, which always gave us confidence. I thought that the Samuka fellows had been lucky but since talking to the Infantry I think that they fared very badly. Cyril Lambrother, who was Agent for A. & W. at Pongasca before I went there, was very badly wounded & I am wondering if he is getting on alright.

A fellow who came over on the same Blight as Billy Spillane, told us that Billy had been picked out in Sling as a drill instructor so he is lucky but I suppose he will be like all the rest & want to come & see what it is like over here. —

I cannot understand you not getting my letters especially as you haven't had one from France & I wrote early in February but they may turn up yet.

The Miners in N. Z. are certainly a lot of wastrels & I think this would be a good place for them. If they were sent over here they would wish that they had stuck to the mines. — I am answering your letter which was written on the 23rd of April. I received the mail a couple of days after I wrote to you last.

I also received a letter from Nell & was very pleased to hear from her. Whenever they write they always say that Mother gives me all the news. Luckily it is true or I think I might have to wait for the news.

Lauchie & Nell made you a very nice present but I am quite sure you deserve it all & it shows that they are grateful for your great kindness to them. Young Sid is evidently a great boy & you tell them not to call him Sidely, because it is not much a corruption of a good name. I hope Percy will like the camp life.

The Parcel which Nell & yourself ^{has not arrived} sent me, but it will probably turn up about as parcels generally arrive later than letters. — It is very hard to see any ending to this bloody war, but we always live in hopes of a sudden ending. — Maggie Beam wrote to me & seemed anxious that you had approved of the engagement. — I expect you will burn your photograph when you see it, but I hope you will send me one.

How my dears I must close hoping you are all in the best of health. Best love from

C. V. Welch,
2nd Lt.

Your affectionate sons
Ed.

France.

5/8/17

My dear Mother & Father.

Last night I received a very nice bake & it ~~was~~ is just the thing & is greatly appreciated by the Gun Team. As we are up in the line, it is all the more, if possible, appreciated. My parcels seem to be coming along alright as I received a pair of Sox from Mrs Fairbrother, of Pongaroa, no doubt you will remember I was best man for them before he came to the war. Poor Fairbrother was very badly smashed during the recent advance & I believe that he will get back to it. 3.

I also received another Parcel from you with Cheese, Tea Tablets & Tobacco in it, so you can see that I am doing alright. At present we are living in a dug-out which was taken from the Germans, & it is a solid affair &

gives one an idea why it is so hard to blow them out of their positions.

Lately we have had nothing else but wet miserable weather & the trenches are a sea of mud & water, & the worst of it all is that it has temporarily checked the big operations which had just commenced on the front, but as it seems like clearing up now & there is a couple of months of Autumn to run, we may be able to make an impression on Fritz. —

Harry Hayhurst sent me a nice cake from England a few days ago & I received it as I was coming to the line so I brought it up & eat it when I felt hungry & couldn't get anything else to eat, of course it was better than anything else, but I kept it in case of emergency when rations didn't come up or else something unforeseen happened. — The other morning Cain saw Arthur Smith along the trench & was yarning to him but I never saw him, although I would

have liked to. — The other night I saw poor Jimmy going into the line & he seemed quite cheerful & is looking very well.

At present there a tremendous number of shells flying about but I have had the good luck to miss them so far & am always hoping that my luck will hold good.

My health is as good as gold, although for three days & nights we were all wet to the skin & mud from head to foot, & it reminded me of the many times that you have shaken me up for not changing my wet clothes, & telling me that I would suffer for it in time. I suppose the same thing still applies but unfortunately it cannot be helped. We get dry socks sent up to us whenever we send down a wet or dirty pair. One of our Reinforcement fellows, who has joined up recently, is a good cook & does the cooking for our team instead of the chap, we had before, who is batman for a officer & cooks for the whole section at times. Now my dears I must close with heaps of love.

from your affectionate son
Sid.

France

25/8/14.

My dear Mother & Father

Another N. J. mail has arrived & I was lucky enough to receive five letters although it is only about a week since I received eight. The other day I received a Parcel with Tobacco, cigarette Papers, & Borel. The Tobacco is the right sort & is the best you can send & I look forward to receiving it as it is the only pipe Tobacco which I get worth smoking. - I'll get an issue of Tobacco every week & also cigarettes but the Tobacco is generally poor quality & of the cigarette cut. - I am writing this letter in the same dug-out as I wrote my first letter to you, from the line, so you can see that we have been in this particular sector for a considerable time. - Last time we were in the line it was wet and muddy all the time but it is grand weather this time & it makes things much more agreeable

(2)

I was rather pleased to receive the Photograph of Roly & his mates who certainly look to be very hard doers, but perhaps not as hard as they look. Roly's general rig out is rather neat & he looks well & I was just thinking how different he will look plastered with mud & his buttons all green & his hat as shabby as ours all get after a few months of this life. Of course you will take it from this that I think there is very little doubt that he will see plenty of service. I expect everybody tells him that it will all be over before he gets here, the same as they told me twelve months ago. — I had a letter from Maggie Bain today & she stirred me up for not writing, but was very cheerful & I like getting letters from her because of their cheerful tone, & I have answered every one of her letters so far. — It is very evident that some of the Bain girls do not love Irene. — There is a little girl Smith, from Milford, who writes

(3)

me quite an interesting letter now & again.

I wrote to her once & I suppose will have to repeat the performance. J. Mc Hays from

Pongroa wrote to me by last mail & gave me a slight stir up for not writing regularly

so you see I am generally in the soup, but will get out again. — H. H. H. has not rejoined

the company yet so I conclude that he must be fairly sick. Gilbert will be home long before

this reaches you, so his mother will have his company now & that will cheer her up a good bit

& it is a good job. Remember me to him when you see him, also to Mrs Hayhurst & tell

her that I have still got the pipe which you gave me when I was going to camp after final leave.

In the parcel, which I got from you the other day, there was a nice pipe.

You seem to be retaining my letters in notation now & I am pleased that you are.

I know that you write every week because I have not missed a letter hardly. The mail which was sunk going to N. J. is not the

(4)

one in which I gave you an account of the Messines Battle. I was afraid that it might be. — I think I received the hourly bulletin letter which was written at the time of Sid's appearance. Denis Aspinall was camped quite closely to us the other week & he came along & saw me every night. He was looking very well & seemed quite cheerful. He had some State Express cigarettes which Enid had sent him & he gave me two or three. — I hope I get my ~~batting~~ ~~bat~~ straight, but the only thing is that I might forget how old I am getting, if I don't receive anything. My hair has departed rapidly since coming over here & I don't think the Steel Helmet does it any good.

I have not seen anything of Sid Phillips although I have kept a look out for him, but if he is in a trench mortar battery that is probably why I haven't seen him. — Sid had hard luck with his girl but she evidently didn't think very

(5)
of him. — Les's behaviour is very satisfactory
& I hope it will continue satisfactorily.

Polcy must have a great time in
Wellington. No doubt Polcy & makes nice
friends & I don't think you have any
need for anxiety although he is young.
People get an impression that this life
is one of continual temptation, but I have
not found it so. — All the things which
you send are very nice, & I don't know that I
can improve things by making suggestions. A
tooth brush is a very nice & very acceptable
because I can't buy a good one here.

I am pleased to hear that Mary Swamy
has recovered. Now they have the phone on
you will have several more calls everyday.

Sid has evidently not cultivated a great
thirst yet. Now I must close with
lots of love from

Your affectionate son

Sid

France.

3/9/17.

My dear Mother & Father

To-day (Sunday) I have received quite a large assortment of mail including five Weekly Presses, a dozen Temuka Leaders, one Bulletin, & two Parcels, one of which got wet but was practically unharmed except for some sugar which was fairly wet & the rest, tinned meat, cheese, soap, Borden's Marmite, cocoa, condensed milk, shaving cream & throat Salts, all were in good order. I have not opened the second tin which is soldered down. Yesterday I received two Bulletins & a Temuka Leader.

We are well back now in rest Billets & we don't see Aeroplanes nor hear the guns so it is fairly peaceful.

We are a long way from any town of importance so we cannot waste our substance in riotous living, & there is nothing

(2)

of the I.D.W.I. style about our present food supply, although we get enough for a soldier. - I had a letter from Uncle Will to-day & he is going crook about Les not dropping him a line, In one of my letters I told him that we were granted a certain percentage of Paris leave but I was not trying to get it on account of my English leave coming off shortly & I hadn't enough money to run the both, & in his letter to-day he has offered me some financial assistance to go to Paris but of course I am writing him at once & telling him that the shortage is only on account of my anxiety to have a good sum to go to England with. At present I have thirteen pounds in my pay-book & it will be two months at least before my turn comes for leave so I will have a good part of £30 for my leave.

I notice in the Leaders which I have just received that Tom Gunnison is

(3)

still a prominent member of the Patriotic Society & I think he must have said all he can about what the boys are doing at the front. — H. H. H. has not returned to the company yet & I am wondering if he will manage a trip to A. J. with his complaint whatever it is. He told me that he was well fed up so I don't suppose he will try very hard to get back. —

I have just opened my second Parcel & it is a tin of my nice Biscuits so I will be all set for afternoon tea today. It was posted on the 24th May so it has been a long time on the road. I am looking forward to my birthday cake & when I saw the parcels for me today I thought it had arrived. I never mentioned anything about my insurance to you but no doubt you will have fixed it up alright.

Now this is about finish so I must close

With best love
from your affectionate son
Fred.

France
7/9/17

My dear Mother & Father

I have just managed to borrow this small writing Tablet to write you a few lines. We were in another big scrap a few days ago & no doubt you will know all about it by this time & be feeling a bit anxious about my welfare.

My very good luck has stood to me this time again. We gave old Fritz a good stir up & beat him badly. The Troops had hardly gone over the top when hundreds of German prisoners started coming in & they seemed very pleased to be getting through with their lives.

I was passed a good many of them & they were a very young looking lot, more boys of sixteen

(2)
amongst them. Before our guns
opened up the barrage the German
guns gave our front line a good
strapping preparatory to making an
attack, but when our Troops went
over, the Germans who were massed
for the attack, threw up their arms
& never showed fight at all. The
Artillery is the trouble & of course
inflicts a good number of casualties,
but must be a small item compared
with the effect of our Artillery on
the German Troops as far as our
company was concerned this Battle
was far easier than Messines, but
the ground which has been taken
from Fritz is absolutely nothing
but shell holes & one wonders how
they ever exist under such tremendous
shell fire. No doubt you have
read of the German Pill Boxes

(3)

which are built of Reinforced concrete & they have machine guns inside with aperture for shooting through, & nothing but direct hits from heavy Artillery will shift them.

The people in N. J. will think that their small Division is doing its share in the great war, but it will make them a bit more against the second Division being drawn on.

There is no doubt that the N. J. Troops are second to nothing in world & the people have every reason to be proud of them, the Infantry in particular. — Before the stunt I received my N. J. mail & of course received a nice long letter from you, but as it is inconvenient to write here I don't think I will answer it very fully but will do so when a

(5)

& the arrangement will suit me very well. If I want it I can draw it & if I don't I can burn it. — The original members of the company are all due for leave & the first one went today.

I feel awfully sorry about Jessie's state of health & hope that she will soon recover & be her old self again.

Will is having a very bad run with her married couples & helps generally. She will be getting run down if she does too much work. Dorothy is very good to stay & help her. — Daisy Mann's health will cause her people a deal of anxiety, but it is to be hoped that the warm weather will help her. When you write her you might give her my kind regards.

The fancy methods of sending

France

9/9/17

My dear Mothers Father

It is only about three days since I wrote you a letter but as I received five very nice parcels last night I must write & tell you what they were & also to try & thank you for your very great kindness in going to all the trouble you must have done. — I have still got the numbered list which you sent me & it is those parcels on the list which I have received. July 1. 7. 17. No. 1. 7. 17. No. 2. No. 3. 1. Bake, & I also received the four tins of Butter which arrived in splendid order & is very very nice. The Bake is just as good as it would be if it had been kept in your own Bake Tins at home. The Sox are a great scheme & my feet never get sore with the hand knitted sox never mind how much marching we

do. — Yesterday I was in a town
& I bought some tooth Paste & was
just going to buy a new tooth Brush
but I thought the one I had would
do a little longer & when I arrived
home I found the very nice brush
which you had kindly sent me.

I forgot to tell you that I met
Andrew Grant one day when we were
on the march. He is looking very
well & is still a transport driver. I
didn't have more than a couple of
minutes to talk to him so I don't know
much about him & his doings.

There is a feverish haste to get
a few letters written for the Officer
to Benson as it is the last chance
we will have to write for a few days
as there is something afoot shortly.

I'm afraid this is not a very lengthy
epistle, but I must close to catch the
mail. Love of love

from your affectionate son
S. J. [Signature]

France

14/4/17

My dear Mother & Father.

I have just arrived back to billets after attending the M.G.C. Sports which were a great success.

All the M.G. Companies were there competing & our Company had a good few wins & were second on points for the day.

I was in the Mounting Gun competition as second on a gun & we got second place against all companies so we did not do so badly. — We have not been up in the line since I last wrote so I have nothing new to relate. I answered your last letters some time ago & have not received any mail since, but I received a parcel with matches, tobacco, cheese & tea tablets which will be very handy when we go into the line again. — My friend Harry Bowie has gone to the hospital with bad feet, corns & his feet are rather deformed & the marching has always been hard on him, but I'm afraid he will either get a base job or else go back to N.Z. If he goes home he says he will call on you, of course it will be three months at least before he leaves France if he goes home.

(2)

We all hope to be thinking of leaving France, & making for home by that time, with the war finished as there are great prophecies about the finish coming by that time, but I think there will be another Winter for us all in France unless something very unusual happens, anyhow we are all hoping for the best. I started this letter two nights ago & have not finished it yet, we have just shifted camp preparatory to wintering old Fritz again shortly. Since I started this epistle I have received another mail from W. J. & two nice long interesting letters from you & I will be able to answer them now & that will make a fairly long letter. We are in a camp now with huts instead of the French Barracks & Stables, & we have a nice little table in our hut, which the Austrians just left. It is the first time I have written on a table since coming to France & it makes a pleasant change. I am now answering your letter of the 7/5/19. Many thanks for seeing that Frank Parker & Les are paid up. I told Stanley that it had been squared up & he was told in his

last letter from home, that they had received the money, so he knew before I did. Sorry to hear that old Hooper has slipped his cable, but I suppose he could not live for ever. — You might offer my condolences to Mrs Hooper. — It is satisfactory to hear thatoley likes the camp life, & is able to stand the training. I think he will get on all right, but if he ever gets any fighting he will get his eyes opened, & I think he will stand that as well as most fellows. I can imagine I see him running to get the nose caps of the first German shell which lands near him. I did not receive any parcels with this mail, but the ones you speak of will probably arrive later. It is to be hoped that my cakes arrive safely because I would thoroughly enjoy a nicely home made cake now, I have not tasted a piece of cake for a long time. — Nell's wish about my being able to see little Sid is fully shared by me & I would like to see him very much. Andrew & Constance must be getting quite big

(4)

kiddies now. — It is a very peculiar thing that all these fellows with the money get called up & have something wrong with their hearts when medically examined, Do you think they do a little palm greasing?

I will bet that Mike Rooney doesn't get out of it although he is a struggling bookkeeper.

Jack Connell told me that Jimmy Wareing was at church the other Sunday, & was asking about my health, so he must be still going well.

How do the Burkes manage to keep away from camp? I am sure that it is not because they are physically unfit. Father's idea of amusing himself, when you went to Fred's place for the evening, appeals to me a good deal more than playing Bridge. — Frank Barker seems to have run amok altogether since he joined up. I used to hear great yarns about him in Featherston but I never thought he was as bad as you say.

His wife must have felt it awfully hard when Frank didn't know her at the station. — No doubt ~~Wini~~ Phil would come to terms over the farm.

(3)

From what I know, & what I have read in the
N. Z. papers since I came over here, the papers seem
to know very little about the actual facts &
any gains which we have are greatly exaggerated
although recently there have been some big things
done. I received the cutting, out of the paper,
which B. L. Humphreys wrote to Mrs. Gussner
about his leather waistcoat. I told you that
I had seen him over here. The ~~other~~ information
on the other slip of paper is, as far as I know
absolutely incorrect & I have not seen anything
of the crowd referred to. — Poor old Joe Wareing
must be in sore straits when he has to get at Falter
about the poor attendance at his funeral. As you say
Joe must have been very drunk. Now that is the
end of N^o 1 letter & now I must answer N^o 2. — You
seem to be getting quite a good many Troops back
home now. Wm. Pearce & his wife will be pleased
to get back home. — I hope Father's Asthma cure
keeps on doing him good until he gets quite well again.
Why the dickens Les will stop in Lemukay

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add jolting & going out to Lachie, is beyond me.
I told him that he was a fool if he ever thought
of staying in Simuka, because he could do far
better in the U. S. & so did an Officer friend of his at
Walton, when I was with them. — Maggie
Bein wrote to me last mail & she told me that
she was staying with you & that she found it very
nice. So I take it that you must be treating her
in a friendly manner. — The title of "Daily
News" would be very good for your letters, but I
don't know what to call Father's, anyhow they are
very short & sweet. Lizzie Macaulay, you would
have a great old yarn. I must write to Lizzie tonight
because I owe her a letter & should have written it
before. — You must have a busy time writing
& cooking for two of us now that Polly is in camp.
The little Scott girls must be very fond of
Constance when they want her to stay a month.
Fattie & Jessie would not care for Donald's affections
to rest when it is rumoured that they do. He wouldn't
make a good soldier & I think it is just as well

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that the medical board rejected him. — \$

I think that the Australasian Mail Boat which was sunk was going out to the colonies. Now to answer Father's effort in letter writing. I am afraid you will have to write to me several times before I finish this blanky war even if you don't write any more often.

No doubt your idea of my surroundings is very different to the actual thing. My own ideas were very different before I arrived here. — I sincerely hope we won't have to go in for another winter here.

It is easy to understand your saying that I was alright when I last wrote, because I feel the same thing about you when I receive a letter.

Now my dears I must close with
very best love

from your affectionate son

Sid

France
20/9/17.

My dear Mother & Father

This week I have had a big lot of letters & a lot of Parcels amongst which was my birthday cake & it was grand. When I received it I was on guard with six other fellows & we all enjoyed it immensely. They told me to tell you that they enjoyed it & that it is the best cake they have had since leaving N.Z.. One of them is called Sid & he said that I had to tell you that a namesake of mine had enjoyed a piece of it. A strange thing about this section, which I am in, is that there are two fellows named Sid & we never know who is being spoken to. — We are still back in rest billets & the other day we had a Divisional inspection by Sir Douglas Haig & he told us that he was pleased with the whole turn out, of course "He would do". — The Photographs, which you sent me, of Constance, Andrew, & Grant arrived quite safely & I have still got them. They were very interesting to me & from the different attitudes of Constance I think she must be a particularly

(2)

hand little case. The different Parcels which I received were one with a tin of Havelock Mustine, a tin of Devilled Ham, a Tin of Sugar, a Pair of Socks, & a Tin of Acid Drops & of course the cake which I have already mentioned. Lizzie Macaulay sent me a Tin of Wafers & sweets so you see I have had a good few Parcels. Harry Bowles little girl sends me a tin of Soldiers Chocolate occasionally & it is very kind of them to bother. She left us a couple of months ago & from letters which I have received from him I don't think that he will get back to the Company.

I am sorry that he is not coming back because he was my best mate, but I suppose for that reason I should wish him the good luck to get back to N.3. All the Papers which you have been sending seem to be arriving alright as I have received about four Bulletins & six Presses & a large number of Traders during the week. Batten came to a very sad end & it seems to be a novel way of committing suicide. I think he ought to have had a Gas Helmet like the ones we all have to carry. — From the general tone of the N.3 Papers I think that there will be a good old dust up before the second Division is called up.

(3)

Where we are settled we are able to get plenty of apples, although they are not nearly so good as the W. 3. fruit, they make a pleasant change after being without for such a long time. — I didn't know that another mail had gone down. It is not so bad when there is not any W. 3. mail coming into the company but when all the fellows get mail except yourself it goes a bit hard. Fortunately I have not been unfortunate enough for that yet. Being with the company all the time one gets his mail regularly but if a fellow goes away & goes from one hospital to another he often goes without mail for a few weeks — I sincerely hope that Jessie will get well again & not be as bad as they are afraid she will get. When you see her you might give her my love. Mrs. Rugg is awfully kind to be always sending me a message & I hope you will return the compliment.

Alce Cooper will just about break things up if he takes an Hotel. I suppose he thinks that his popularity is so great that it will make his fortune, but he will find that his so called friends will be looking for a cheap drink.

You must have thought that thinkers were

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fairly lively in Temuka when you saw the Police scuffling with Jackson. If that went on now this is the place for them to come to because there is plenty of it over here.

Les should have tried A & W all the time after he got back as I told him that they would give him a good run. Instead of doing as I said he tries round Temuka as if it is the only place on the map, but if he only knew it, it is one of the worst in N.Z. for a fellow to make a start. If he goes to A & W, I hope he will get on well with them. Given a fair deal & they are amongst the best to be with. — Young Bryant seems to come in for a deal of admiration & from his Photograph he looks a nice little kiddie. — I am glad that you fixed up my Insurance & as you say \$14.00 will be handy but since coming over here there have been times when I have wondered if I would see another thirty minutes out to say nothing of thirty years. — You speak of the damage Fritz does with his Aeroplanes but I believe it is only a mere trifle to what our Airmen do to Fritz. In fact our fellows have got the wind up Fritz with their Aeroplanes.

(5)

I can quite understand Andrew feeling a bit hurt when you ask Constance to stay with you. Probably he thinks that it is the first stage of Constance getting preference with his granny.

In one of the Letters which you sent me I saw where Andrew & Enid had had rather an unpleasant experience in the Breendon Hotel.

You tell Enid that I think that she had better carry a revolver & I will see if I can't find one stray one for her someday. Anyhow I am very pleased that they never got all the information the fellow tried to give them.

Doesn't it seem strange that Gary should meet your friend Mrs Gibson in England, but I suppose anybody who knows any people in N.Z. visits the Hospitals in England.

The Butter which you had sent from Mr Mackrell has not arrived yet & I am anxiously waiting for it & if it arrives safely it will be a very pleasant change from Margaret as I have only tasted Butter a few times since

(6)

leaving the boat. Your idea of giving Mrs. Booms wool to knit socks with is a good one & you can tell her that they will be greatly appreciated. The last pair which I received a few days ago have got quite a loud bright blue band round the top & I think that I should keep them outside my trousers.

Mrs. Hayhurst will probably have met Gilbert by this time, & won't she be pleased to have him back again. Harry has not come back to the company yet & I don't suppose he will for sometime.

It is quite easy to understand your feelings towards Bissy when she kept on ringing up some of her choice friends. There is no doubt that they manage to pick up some strange acquaintances — No doubt you have some great old talks about the different items of news you get from us fellows when a few Mothers get together, consequently you like to hear if we have met one another.

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Dr. Rugg seems to have made things rather unpleasant for Scannell before he left, but I think even Rugg has left it a bit long to look upon himself as a hero, but he will only be on a par with a lot of useless specimens of Drs we have over here already. — Our beloved Uncle could not even help leaving a dog a Roly before he left. Will he take the biscuit. — It is awfully good of Dorothy Coombes to go up & help till when she is by herself. — The other day I had a letter from James Guild, asking me which M.G.B. I belonged to so I wrote back & told him. It is strange that I have never seen him. Although he wrote me from the ~~first~~ guns it took the letter 23 days to arrive here. — Roly seems to make people's acquaintances very easily. I hope he won't go along with anybody who snuffs him if he gets leave in England in London. I am sure to hear when Roly arrives in France & I will make a point of looking him up. There seems a likelihood of Race in a few months. I hope it does true. Best love from
Your affectionate son. Sid

France

28/9/14.

My dear Mother & Father

You will be looking for a letter from me & I'm afraid I have rather over stepped the time for writing on account of being on the road for the last four days. — The other day I received a parcel of Muscatelles & Almonds from you & also four Boudetins for which I must thank you very much.

We are having perfect weather here now, nice warm days. During the long march which we have been on, my feet have been in splendid condition owing to the nicely hand knitted Sox which you keep me supplied with. In nearly every case of scalded feet it has been the issued socks which were worn. It is impossible for me to carry all my socks so I just keep about the four best pairs & give the others away to fellows who are short. You will be wondering what we have been doing the long

(2)
march for. Well I cannot tell you, but
as you will see from my recent letters we have
been having a good spell & now of course we
surmise all sorts of things & hear plenty of
rumours but we don't know anything for
certain but:—, H. H. H. has not returned
to the company yet & I have not heard anything
of him since Alice wrote to me. J. Knowles
is our company transport officer now.

The Germans have been getting well smacked
up lately & we have all got the feeling that we
are winning at present, & hope that old Fritz
will realise it too & give up the game &
let us get home. This morning I received
a magazine from Lizzie Macaulay, &
you might tell her that I have received
it & mention that I greatly appreciate it.

I wrote to her a few days ago & will
write again when I have more time.

There is a N.Z. mail expected in
two or three days so I suppose I will
hear from you again when it arrives.

(3)
One of the fellows, who was in the gun team
that I was in at Messines, wrote to one of
his mates in the company & told him that
he is off back to KZ with heart trouble.
He was a bit delirious after being under the
bombardment for three days so I persuaded
him to go to the dressing station.

I had a letter from Nell Beckett the other
day & she seemed to be fairly cheerful & of course
is hoping for the speedy termination of this war.

We passed through a lot of French towns
& villages & if we have a few more marches
I shall be an expert on Geography soon.

I often think how I used to argue the point
about learning French when I was at school
but I realise now how useful it would be.

It is a bit sickening when a fellow goes
into a French shop & the people keep saying
'ne comprez', & then you go through a heap of
gesticulations.

Best love

from your affectionate son

Sid

France
24/10/14

My dear Mother & Father

I am still able to write you a few lines & I am through a very strenuous time & I only hope that I will never have another experience like the recent Ypres battle. No doubt you will have read all about the fighting lately & have seen the casualty lists which were rather distressing. The day before we went into the line last time I wrote you a few lines just to let you know that I was well on that date. You will have seen that the Seneca fellows in this company have been wounded. Jack Connell has written to me, since leaving us, wounded. He has not had the good luck to reach England, but W. Bain managed to get to Walton-on-Thames & he wrote to me & told me that he was

(2)

well treated. — At present we are
all back from the line having a
rest & are in comfortable billets with
a nice fire & plenty of straw to sleep
on so we are doing well. I have been
receiving quite a lot of Parcels lately.

The first day we came out of the line
I got a big tin of Ginger Biscuits &
a Parcel of Chocolate from you. Yesterday
I received a very nice little Fruit cake
from you & we had it for afternoon
tea. To-day we received a Parcel each
from the Auckland Women's Patriotic
League. I also received two other Parcels
with quite an assortment of good things
in them so thanks to your great kindness
I have been doing jolly well through
all the strenuous fighting. — Jimmy
Waring told me, the last time I saw
him, that Denis Aspinall had been
killed in the first Ypres battle that we
were in. — No doubt you will often remember

(5)
that I was always unlucky
I can assure you that my opinion
is altered in that line. When Bain
got hit I was sitting in a half dug
trench between him & another fellow & they
both got smacked with a shell which
burst only about six feet away from us.
Bain got a piece of shell in the back of the
head & the other fellow had his upper arm
badly shattered so I was fairly lucky to
miss. I have been through all this summer
fighting which includes five battles & after
for nine months service I am pretty well
except of course I am feeling the effect
of the continual shell fire, being a bit
nervy. — Whenever I see any artillery
fellows I try to get some information
about James Guild but I have not
heard anything of him so far & am
wondering how he managed to come
through the recent fighting.

Now my dears the mail is just going out
so I will close now & write more fully on a
day or so. I miss you very much.
from your affectionate son. (S. J.)

I can always
do with a few envelopes
like the ones you generally send
~~Sid~~

France.

14/11/17

My dear Mother & Father.

A few days ago I received a N.Z.
mail, your letters arrived safely again. I
also received a parcel with Lily's face towel
in it & the Foot Powder & Soap. - We have
started to take an interest in the proceedings
again after having had a good spell.

Since last writing to you we have had
a Reinf't. draft & amongst them was Archie
Shaw who has joined the transport.

I don't know what is wrong with me
to night but I can't write for mits.
Roly has not answered my letter yet so
I have not got in touch with him, but
will probably hear from him before long.

I don't know whether he has come over to
France yet. - You spoke of Sid Phillips
being wounded. I heard from one of the

(2)

Artillery fellows that he had being rather badly hit. — Every other night we get our issue of Rum & I have to go along & draw it & weigh it out to the boys. — Now I must continue this epistle which I started a couple of nights ago, but I am in better form to night. — We are now nearer the scenes of operation & will be taking a keen interest in things shortly. — Today I received a letter from Roley & he seems very cheerful, but says that being right away from his people makes him realise how good his home was. — He told me that he had received some N. J. mail & he was very pleased. — My answer to his letter was a good long time getting to him & he said that he was beginning to get anxious, owing to his having heard all about the two Ypres battles which the N. J.s were in.

(3)

Last night a part of another N. J. mail arrived here & I received a letter from you & that was all the mail I got but as it is the one I always look for I was quite satisfied. — I expect that we will get a big N. J. parcel mail one of these days, as the boys are all expecting parcels & have not had any for a couple of weeks. — In your letter written on the 27th Aug you said you had received three letters from me including the one giving you an account of the Messines battle. — I was afraid that it had gone astray. — It is awfully good of Mrs Kersel to enquire after me but I wonder if it is with mixed feelings.

You have no need to commend me for any efforts in the letter writing line because yours are much greater than mine. I always tell you all I can & I don't like

(4)

putting anything in them for the Officer to cross out. Lieut Preston was from England & had a property in the Bay of Plenty.

Uncle Phil's remarks on my efforts were more complimentary than might have been expected. - Yesterday while marching along the road I saw Leo Twomey standing on the roadside & I couldn't think who he was for a while & when I sang out to him he answered me & looked hard but I don't think he knew me, although it would probably dawn on him after we had passed. I also saw Mrs. Eli Prattley's second youngest son who was wounded on the Somme. He came alongside of me & had a yarn as we marched along. - Young Frisby was a Lewis Gunner. It is an Automatic Rifle & not classed the same as a Vickers M. G. but is a lot more dangerous. Prattley told me that Jim Macauley was batman for

(5)

for an Officer & was away with him at present. — I am very pleased that your throat is well again. Roly said that you were quite well when you wrote him, but he reckoned that you were lonely. —

The half-sovereign which Les gave you to enclose for me arrived quite safely & I will drop him a line & thank him for it.

I don't save them, but I draw less money out of my ~~of~~ a day, when I have any sent me.

At the present time my credit balance in my pay book amounts to over £20, so I will have a good time when I get leave.

To-night I had a long letter from H. Bowie & he is in England & is waiting for a boat to N.J. — He told me before he left that he would call & see you if he got back home so I hope he will. — The Bein family do not seem at all pleased with Renee & Dave. — In this letter I have taken your

(6)

hint regarding capital letters.

The strike in Australia seems to be causing a good deal of inconvenience & I think the best thing would be to send them over here & put them over the top. — The Mokoia is the boat which I came over in & she was a fairly fast boat although not very comfortable.

Les's prospects at present seem to be fairly good & I hope he will be successful. The only thing against it is the Southland climate.

It is a pity that he never got North, although he will be a long way better managing a farm than as an Agent especially if he is married.

The worst factor of the war at present is the Italian situation which is rotten.

I will be very pleased to criticise your Jersey herd when I return.

Now my dears I must close &

Heaps of love

from your affectionate son

Sid

France

26/11/14

My dear Mother & Father.

Just time for a few lines to you before going into the line for a spell.

We came out of rest billets some days ago preparatory to going into the line.

The weather here is getting colder every day but we have not had snow yet although we expect it any day now.

Yesterday I received a parcel from you containing 1 tin Sugar 1 Tin Sardines & 1 tin Boffe & Milk & 1 Pocket Handkerchief for which you have my greatest thanks. The Parcel had a note in it in which you asked me to tell you when it arrived & saying that it was posted on the 28th of August.

Polcy wrote to me the other day & said that he was still in England & the work that he was doing reminded him of pulling Mangolds in the Winter time.

I don't know what sort of work he is

doing but it must be cold on the hands.

My health is very good so far but tonight my throat is feeling a bit sore so of course it makes me think of Lonschites. Anyhow if I get it I will have a good spell when I get well again although it is painful during the first week of it.

Tell Les when you write to him that I saw Tom Goudie, the other day, he is here in the Bridname Stores. She was a great mate of Less at Walter's time.

The latest British success against the Germans down on the Somme is just the thing & will keep him thinking for a while.

My only wish is, that they were driven back to Berlin. Damn them.

Now my dears I must wind up with very best love.

from your affectionate son

Sid

France
1/2/7.

My dear Mother & Father

I am in a concrete emplacement in the line & have been here for a few days now. Things are fairly lively here as the weather is holding fairly good, but when the winter sets in properly it will get a good deal quieter anyhow I hope so. I have had enough lively times this summer & will be glad of a quiet time again. - My nerves are beginning to feel the strain of the bombardments which I have been under. - From the position we now occupy we can see the Germans at work behind their lines & also see them coming up to their front line. We strafe them with the guns occasionally & they do run & duck their heads.

Of course you can bet that old Fritz can see us too & he brightens up the our movements with bursts from his guns & then it is our turn to duck & run. - It is great to hear the Machine gun duel at night when we put up a bit of fire, old Fritz will send about as many

2

back to us. — Since last writing
to you I have met Ernest Sworney
several times. He is looking jolly well
& seems fairly cheerful. He told me
that Jack Lee has joined up here & is doing
abright. Ernest is attached to one of the
Engineering companies & he likes it a lot
better than the Infantry work. — We
have all got an idea that we will probably
be out for Christmas & we sincerely hope so.

I'm only sorry that I can't be with you all
for your Christmas Pines & Dinners, but if we
can only climb all over old Fritz this coming
year we may be home for next Christmas.

I notice ~~that~~ in the latest paper that the
Russians have just about got a separate peace.

It is a bit off to hear of the Germans winning
on other fronts while we have to fight so hard
to beat them here.

Now my dears I must finish this short
note with very best love.

From your
affectionate sons
Sid

France

29/12/17

My dear Mother & Father.

As I will be going to have another look for Fritz in a few days I will try & write you a few lines because it is rather awkward to write while in the line. This afternoon James Gould came along to the camp to see me & we had a good old yarn for about half an hour & as it was getting late he had to get away. He is looking very well but I think he has gone fairly grey. I made enquiries about Polcy but could not find out whether he had joined up or not. Jim Brown has just rejoined the company after being away in hospital for some considerable time & he told me that he met Polcy down at our French Training Base, & he thought that he was still down there.

I have had a fairly good spell out of the line

(2)

this time, as I told you in my last letter, I did not go in with the Section. I also have had a spell out with them. — We had Christmas in the camp & I was in charge of a guard all day. Alice Shaw was kind as usual & sent me over a Christmas hamper containing: 1 tin Duck & Green Peas, a Plum Pudding, a Christmas Pudding (a beauty) a Tin of Pine Apple Junks & a Tin of Sardines. We had a good fire in the Guard Room & I treated up my hamper contents & had a great dinner, thanks to Alice, the Duck & Green Peas was a treat.

We are getting very cold weather, the Snow seems to have come to stay, but it is dry cold so it is not so bad as a lot of rain. — We are getting an issue of Coke & Wood now so we are able to keep ourselves warm in our Bivvy at nights. — There seems to be great hopes of Peace before very long, amongst the Troops. Of course we all hope it is true but on our own terms which I'm afraid will be a bit stringent

(3)

for the Germans to accept until they is well beaten.
James Guild met H. B. H. while he was on leave
in England & Harry pitched James a great tale of
suffering, but ~~from~~ from what James said to me
he was doubtful about Harry's ability & ^{as} ~~himself~~ a true
Soldier. He also remarked that Harry hadn't done
anything much of heavy fighting. (Don't make those few
remarks known too well). Since last writing I have
received quite a few Parcels from you & also one from
Will. Your Parcels contained, 1 Pa Box, 1 Tin Cocoa, a Tin of ~~these~~
some Loaf Sugar, Raisins & Almonds, & 1 Tin Tobacco so
I have not done badly. The Christmas cake has
not arrived yet, but will come to light yet.

A lot of Bulletins & Presses & Letters also arrived here
for me. — The particular piece of Front which we
are fighting on at present is fairly lively & we won't
be sorry to get out of it to a quieter spot.

News is fairly scarce so I'm afraid I
will have to close with heaps of love
from your affectionate son
Bill