

DOMINION WAR NEWS.

NEW ZEALAND EXPEDITIONRY FORCE.

THE GERALDINE MEN.

Mr J. Kennedy, the Mayor of Geraldine has received a letter from Trooper B. G. Edwards, in which he gives news of the Geraldine men. The writer says:—

I hasten to convey my heartiest wishes for a Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year; also to thank you for your personal care and attention to the welfare of our boys. Much as we appreciated it when in camp, we more fully realise now what trouble you and the people of Geraldine went to, to ensure our comfort during the trip. Every now and again some Geraldine goods are served out to relieve the monotony of our menu . . . I feel I am speaking for all, and especially for those who have not had time to write, when I ask you to extend our thanks and greetings to our Geraldine people. All the boys are very well and fit. We are all the best of pals, such pals as would be impossible except under such conditions. One has to live, they say, with people to know them thoroughly. Our experience has bound us together more thoroughly than could have been possible under any other conditions. We have had a most excellent trip, the same good weather throughout. All are anxious to go on and get it over and are looking for the speedy return to our friends. Our letters are to be rigorously censored, so place and date must remain blank, also much of our movements, but I may say we are still on the high seas but nearing a port. We spent some days in various ports—Hobart, Albany and Colombo. We had a jaunt ashore at each of these places, and we all enjoyed ourselves. To make this letter interesting I will try and give a line about each Geraldine boy.

Ted Squire.—Well and fit, getting fat, grew a moustache, but the boys took it off for him. Very keen on his work.

Lieut. Barker.—Still always ready for a laugh; popular with all ranks, idolised by his troop and regiment, and voted by all on board to be the "best ever."

Sergt. Barker.—Good old sport, who puts us on fatigues, etc., and generally makes things as light for us as possible.

Sergt. Priest.—Same as Sergt. Barker; good as gold, quite a top-notch at semaphore signalling.

Sergt. Laurensen.—Our troop sergeant; coming quite to the front with his boxing, of which we do a lot. He is getting fat and is learning the foils.

Jim Johnstone.—Getting transferred to the 2nd Infantry Regiment, and will be in our band, which is the attraction.

Alex Bennington.—Getting quite fat and prominent in the band which will take some beating.

Jimmy Patrick. —Has been mess orderly last week, and is getting so fat you wouldn't know him. He beats the lot when we have a foraging hunt through the ship.

Billy Scott.—Had a crook spin for a while, but is now his old self again. Had the misfortune to have his horse die en route from Albany to Colombo, the only horse our troop lost.

Fred Greyburn.—Popular Q.M.S. for the 2nd Regiment. Enjoying the trip immensely though, he is kept so busy that we don't see much of him.

Len Mason. —Will probably be in the first line of transports, where his horsemanship will be valuable to his troop. Len is a great favourite. His good nature and ready wit often tide us over awkward moments.

Herbert Campbell—Noted for his wit and humour. Getting quite eager for the front.

Bert Lord. —A picture of health. Putting on weight. Weighs over 13 stone now.

Des Cogan. - Was quite a while on mess orderly, but has given it up that he may get in more drill. He likes the boat life well, as most of us do.

Dave Devon.—Kept busy as assistant veterinary on board, and a great reader. Same weight as usual and very fit.

Jack Howard.—Same as of old. At home with us all and always a laugh ready when barracked about some recalled incident.

Bill Davis. —Keeps in better health now and is always ready when we have a whip round for a supper or extras.

Now I think I have got them all, and as to “I” I find more time to have a spell than ever before. The food is below the standard we are accustomed to, but we don't expect very much on active service. The climate is hot now, and we mostly sleep on deck. I have been lucky enough to be selected with one other from our troop as regimental scout. I like my work very much, and am enjoying the life. Our horses are in great fettle, very few have gone amiss and none seriously.