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LETTERS FROM SOLDIERS.

BENDIGONIANS IN FRANCS.

GUNNER REX HYETT.

The following letter dated 12th April, has been received from Gunner Rex Hyett, now in France:-

"I am well up to date. We are right in the thick of it here, and at times things in general are rather lively. However, with a bit of luck, I will get along all right. I am a telephonist, and have to work a six line switchboard. There are three of us on this, night and day – Morris, who was with me at Essendon and Jack McSweeney, a jolly fine fellow. We do 12 hours a day and always have to be on the "qui vive" (*on the alert or lookout*). One gets one full night's sleep in three. I have seen plenty of shells kicking about. Coal boxes make bonzer holes in the ground. Fritz livens up at times, and "sans doute" (*without a doubt*), so do we. We have been in our position a long while now and suppose we will be here for some time yet before we get into a rest camp or billet. Some of the places are smashed about. You have no idea what they are like. I got two "Bendigonians" (*newspapers*) last night. My word, we look forward to the mail from home. It is mighty cold here, and it has been wet the last couple of days. One cannot get much exercise, and we are cramped for room. All the Bendigo boys up to date are well. I saw Jack Brown yesterday, and saw Harry Weller about a fortnight ago. We get practically no news here. I have seen a good few aircraft shelled. We have no kit bag now, just what we can carry. Our haversack contains shaving gear, towel, soap and a few little oddments, water bottle, bandolier, gas helmets which we are never without day or night, and last, but not least, two blankets and waterproof sheet. We have been issued goatskin jackets, which are fairly warm. All the other batteries except ours had waterproof capes issued to them. We have also had trench rubber boots issued to us. We appreciate stew and bread and jam. A tin of bully beef and biscuits is not up to much. Our dugout is rather drafty just now as it is windy and cold outside. We have a fair number of rats and mice which nightly have coursing matches as they race up and down the floor and along the hessian on the roof. A cat usually pays us a visit during the night, but doesn't seem to make much difference. Letters from all, whenever they may be, are always jolly welcome."