

My Experiences in the Great War
1914 - 1918



*Lieut George M Livesey,
50th Battalion,
Australian Imperial Force
On active service*

*To Hannah & Harry
Christmas 1918*

(Extracts from letters)

Enlisted June 27th, 1915

Left Australia October 27th 1915 as Corporal, No. 3302, 11th Reinforcement of 12th Battalion for Egypt.

Oct 30th 1915 Having a lovely trip. Things are just the thing on board, I am dining and sleeping in the second class, and I can tell you it is a bit better than down below under the hatch. We are sighting Cape Leewin some time tonight and will soon see Fremantle. Food and everything else on board could not be better and as regards myself I couldn't be better. We may be able to get off at Fremantle, but are not sure, if the trip keeps up as good as it is now it will do me down to the ground. Les. Butcher and a few friends are sleeping in the Sergeants' quarters, and we are having a good time. Our 11/12 Unit were complimented for turning up full strength. You had better send letters to me to Egypt as particulars given.

Nov 11/1915 I am now writing after being out from Perth nine days, and we are still having lovely weather. It is pretty warm now we are in the tropics,

and it doesn't do to have too much clothing on. I hope you received my letter & telegram from Fremantle. We had an enjoyable run up to Perth. The whole ship had leave for 3 hours (2 p.m. – 5 p.m.). Les. Butcher was unlucky and got picked for duty and could not go to Perth, but the rest of our little mob went and we had a good time. Perth is not a bad place, but it struck me the whole place seemed dirty. I did not see much of Fremantle as we only had time to go up to Perth. We went by train, narrow gauge, but my word they can buzz along. It takes half an hour to go from Fremantle to Perth. We arrived there at 3 p.m. and by the time we had a look around it was 5.30 p.m. and the boat was due to leave at 6 p.m., so we thought we were in for a bit of a mess, we all jumped into a motor and came down full speed to Fremantle, it was a lovely spin, and the roads in Western Australia are splendid. We arrived at the wharf just as the boat was moving off and we had to climb up a rope to get on board, we found there was about 200 men missing, but the boat pulled out into stream and launches were running out till midnight, and at the finish we got nearly all of them on board, and steamed off through the night. After that things have settled down to an everyday routine. I have been having a good time, not much work and plenty of time to do it in. They are just beginning to wake up a little on board now and are supplying us with a few concerts and boxing matches, which are very interesting. There is nothing to do of an evening but play cards or go up on deck or read books. There has been a lot of gambling going on but it is now being stopped, and it is only right. Some men have won over £100 and some have lost a good deal. We were paid yesterday and my word it was a good job, because nine out of ten men on board were hard up. You can spend money on board just as fast as on land, as there is a dry canteen and a wet one, but in the wet one they only charge 1/- a bottle for a small bottle of beer, so I can tell you there is not much drunkenness on board. Last Saturday night we had a concert, Les gave a rag-time, he was very funny, and they encored him. The dry canteen is run by the Govt. and they charge pretty stiff, the only cheap items are cigarettes and drinks. I have given up smoking for a week, I got tired of it. I may take it up again, it all depends if I feel like it or not. There is not much doing on board, so I cannot write too much news. We have seen a good many steamers going by, as we are well in the track, and we passed a transport

going home with Wounded Soldiers, and my word we did cheer them. This is all for now will write again when I have been a few days in Egypt, and then I will have something to say which ought to be interesting, so "Au Revoir".

Nov. 28/1915 Zeitoun, Egypt. Arrived in camp at last after one month on the water and am pleased to be in Egypt. We are camped 7 miles from Cairo in a nice sandy place, but so far have had a very enjoyable time. The first chap I met was Ken Everard, then Claude Bruer, George Thurgaland and Willie Young who used to work with me. Greg Bruer has been invalided home to Australia. Harold Moore and Len are here and Fred is in a camp not very far away. Ken Everard and the rest are in a camp at Heliopolis, about a mile from Zeitoun and I think a better camp than ours. They are going on to the front either Monday or Tuesday 28th or 29th Nov. that is to Lemnos. We have been having a good time at Cairo and Heliopolis. I have not been to many places yet, but will be going to the Pyramids next weekend, and also to the Zoo, which they say is very beautiful. Cairo is a dirty place, but very interesting. I had a good feed there for 8 Piastres (1 Piastra 2½ equal 1/8d.) 4 courses and it was very nice. There are some lovely buildings over here and I think Heliopolis is better than Cairo. Money goes just as soon here as in Adelaide. Fifty Piastres equal 10/-.

We arrived at Suez about 4 O'clock on Nov. 22nd and had to wait two days before we disembarked. We landed at the wharf and got into a train about 7 o'clock at night, then had a 6 hour train journey through the night, and after we had gone about halfway we left half the train behind, a coupling broke and they were left about a mile down the track, anyhow we arrived at last and marched into camp, arriving at 4 o'clock. We are sleeping in tents and the training is pretty hard, marching on a sandy desert. The weather here is beautiful and my health is excellent. The darkies are all rooks, and they will take you down for your socks, if you do not watch them. Have just been advised that the mail is closing in a little while, will write a long letter during the week.

Dec 6th/1915 Zeitoun. I have had news today, Sunday that on Monday morning we are shifting camp to a place called Abbasia, and are going to form a garrison and my Lieutenant told me we will be lucky if we see any fighting for months to come, and from what I can see of it we are going into

winter quarters. They are withdrawing our Brigade from Gallipoli, that is the 3rd Brigade, which consists of the 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th Battalions and all reinforcements. That is any men still alive, in any of the four battalions will all be in camp together at Abbassia, in tents. Things will get pretty monotonous here for 4 months, I am beginning to get tired of Cairo already. I will meet a good few old friends when we all get together, so will no doubt have a good time. Laurie Reeves is over here in hospital at Abbassia, so I will see him. This is good news to you at home, but disappointing to me, but we will get to the front sometime. Now for Cairo and suburbs. There are camps all round Cairo and of a night-time things don't hum in Cairo when all the soldiers get there. Cairo is about the dirtiest place I have ever laid my eyes on, in the native quarters, and the immorality is something terrible, one has to keep his back up against it. The natives do nothing but try to take the soldiers down and I think they often fall in. They all seem to be in business here and everything you see is for sale, and they always ask 6 times too much for anything, but you can beat them down. The meals here are not as good as in Cairo so when we get to Cairo the first thing we think of is a decent meal. Things are as dear here as in Australia and everywhere you go costs money. The European quarters of Cairo are very interesting and some of the buildings and parks etc. are beautiful. The Electric Trams are excellent and they only charge ½ Piastre to go 7 miles. Travelling is the only cheap thing here. There is a mixture of nationalities in Cairo from a bull-pup to a white lord, and some of them are interesting. I have sent you some views of Heliopolis and I think you will like them, the buildings and town are simply marvellous, and the Palace Hotel beats the lot, it is an eye-opener. The Luna Park is a nice hospital, but no where as big as the Palace Hotel. The streets and everything in Heliopolis are very neat and clean as you will see. I have not been to the Pyramids yet, hope to go shortly. I am going to the Zoo today. Have just received mail which left Adelaide on Nov. 3rd the first mail after we embarked from Australia. Very few got letters, they were disappointed, but I suppose it was a bit too soon for folks to write. Les. Butcher and I got lost in Cairo the other day, and got in such a beehive of streets that we could not get out for a long time, when you ask a nigger the way he will tell you the opposite way. By the time you get this it will be

Christmas, I wonder what we will get, a rotten piece of beef I suppose, as the food here is very bad. We have been kicking up a row, so it is a little better.
Dec. 11th/1915 *Abbassia. I am a Corporal in the ranks now, no more office work, and I am getting very interested in the work, but just at present I am falling in for a lot of work. I have been on Piquet since 5 o'clock last night, Friday night, and am still on till 5 o'clock tonight and then tomorrow, that is Sunday. I am Battalion Orderly Corporal from 6 o'clock to 10 o'clock so you can see I have plenty to do, but I do not mind as I am picking up experience and that is what I want. When I arrived in Cairo I had a good fly around, but am getting tired of it now and I am only going up on a Saturday and Sunday, and of a week night I intend to study a bit and also have a quiet time. My health is excellent. Our new quarters are very fair, but the tucker is stingy, I have not had a decent meal here yet, but am getting fat on it. It must be the climate here. We are sleeping 12 in a bell tent and it doesn't give you a lot of room but on the whole I am having a fair time. I went to the Zoo last Sunday and spent an interesting time, but it was like all Zoos. I saw you on the launch but was on duty paying the men, I was waving for a time later. Send anything in the parcels, Socks, Chocolate, Cigarettes or Tobacco, but wrap them up well. I will give you an idea of a day's work here, get up at 6 a.m. go on parade at 7 a.m., out in the desert till 9 a.m. Breakfast 9 till 10, from 10 - 12.30 in the desert, 12.30 till 2 p.m. dinner, from 2 p.m. till 5 p.m. in the desert, we are either trench cutting, bomb throwing, or route marching. So you see we are not sorry to go to bed after tea. Send any Papers you like they will be acceptable.*

Dec 18th/1915 *Abbassia. The 32nd Battalion arrived here on Saturday and they are 100 miles away from our camp. Glad Scottie is getting on alright, guess you were surprised to see him back again.*

Dec 22nd/1915 *Abbassia. We will still be a fair time in this camp as far as I can see, no one knows for certain. I would like to give you more information but all letters are censored now, so you cannot put in any particulars. I was sorry to hear Lee will not be over just yet, perhaps it is as well, it is pretty rough over here. I have not received any parcels yet, they generally come a week after letters. The letters arrive on time. Things are running very smoothly. I do not think we will see Gallipoli but very likely see some fighting*

at Port Suez with the Arabs and that would be better than the Peninsula. The poor boys are coming back every week to the hospitals, frost-bitten and very bad through the cold. We do most of our drill in the morning before breakfast. How are the Pictures going, you can see them for nothing over here, and very good ones too. Anxiously awaiting news which is like gold over here Have just received parcels from you and Nell.

Dec/1915 The 12/10th Reinforcements arrived on Thursday and I met a lot of chaps I know, was pleased to see Wally Evans over here, he is a Sergeant. I am having an enjoyable Christmas. Things were a bit lively in Cairo on Xmas Eve, but there was not a great deal of damage done. I have not been out of camp for a week, but there have been some good concerts and sports to pass away the time.

1st January 1916 I saw the Old Year out last night and was thinking of Home Sweet Home. Alex Barreau is back in Egypt again and I am going to see him on Sunday.

Jan. 9th/1916 Abbassia. So far have received all letters and parcels also papers in good order. Things are just the same over here day by day. I am having another change, yesterday some of our fellows went away to join the 3rd Brigade at Tel El Kebir, that is about sixty miles away from here along the Canal. All the troops from the Dardanelles are camped there, re-organizing their Battalions. 700 men went from the 3rd Training Brigade, that is my battalion. Our unit just missed, but if any more are required we will be the ones, but have heard on good information that we are going to form a new battalion here in Egypt. I have been called back into the office again. The office is not a bad one, consists of one Sergeant, one Corporal (myself) and an Orderly, we have to do the work for 600 men, it is a good job, better than marching in the desert all the time drilling. I didn't mind the drilling so much, and would have gone on, but had no option. I was called in a told to go on Office duties, but I still have my 2 Stripes and intend keeping them, and things look pretty good for being appointed if they form a Battalion here. We are shifting camp tomorrow and are going to a camp called Aerodrome, about 4 miles from here and about 7 miles from Cairo and a mile and a half from Heliopolis, which is very handy.

Jan 18th/1916 Aerodrome. Am still doing well, I am in charge of the Orderly Room now, the Sergeant is in hospital, and I was put in charge, we have to look after 850 men and some more coming. There is plenty to keep one going, but it is not too bad a job. I applied to get in the Camel Corp over here today, a Corp that is forming. I was advised to apply, If I get it I will get the rank of Sergeant Major, so I hope my luck is in. Fancy me riding camels, funny wont it be, but never mind I am doing my best to keep my stripes. Things are just the same over here, the same thing every day, but I am enjoying myself. I went visiting on Sunday, saw a lot of chaps I know, Bert Yeo, Frank Moore and Fred Moore, and a Semaphore boy, E Rose, an old schoolmate of mine, Jack McDonald is a Lieutenant in same Squadron, but is at present in hospital with Quinsy, Frank White is in Egypt but I have not dug him up yet, but he has met several of my friends so he knows where I am. The new camp we are in is the best of all and things in general are tip-top.

Jan 24/1916 Aerodrome. Les. Butcher, another friend and myself are going to see a friend at the Light Horse Camp over at Matouri, where the Virgin's Well is, so it ought to be interesting, and the ride enjoyable. It is a beautiful day today, (Sunday) just like a lovely spring morning in Australia. Everything is going well over here, things just the same, have no idea when we will see any fighting. In fact no Australians are fighting at present, they are still in Egypt, getting drilled pretty hard, which is not fair to those men who have been fighting, they are deserving of a spell. I have seen a good few chaps I know. For a wonder I was in Cairo last night, the first time for a fortnight, but after a few weeks of Cairo you soon get tired of it. There are only two shows worth seeing, one in Cairo and one in Heliopolis, all the rest are Picture Shows and you know how I care for Pictures. Have just returned from our ride, had a lovely trip. We went to the Virgin's Well, where Mary drew her water from, and found it very interesting. It was lovely to be riding a horse again, you know how I love riding. I often wish I was in the Light Horse, I think it would be alright. I have not seen Alexandria but hope to soon, when I can manage to get a bit of leave.

Jan 31/1916 Aerodrome. Same old routine every day over here, except yesterday when we had an alarm and had to be on parade at alarm post in an hour, Full Pack, Blankets and all, the cause being a bit of a rising in Cairo with

the natives, but it was soon stopped and we were dismissed. At first it looked as if we were going to get what we came for – a fight, but we were disappointed as per usual. I had a pleasant surprise last Saturday night, I met Edgar Oldfield, Alf Bender and Ted Parker all within a ¼ of an hour at about the same place. Ted is an old rowing friend of mine. Edgar is a Sergeant, and Alf Bender is in the Army Medical Hospital (the cold footed brigade they are called over here). The only fault with Egypt is that it is so dirty. Have not been over to Lil yet, but will go when I get leave, it is only a couple of miles from our camp. Re the Billy-cans, I was unlucky in that respect and didn't get one, only got a packet of Lollies and a tin of Cigarettes, there not being enough billies in our camp to go round.

Feb 7/1916 Aerodrome. Still in same camp and likely to be. We have had a little rain, but not much, it seems strange to see rain in Cairo. I met young Montgomery from Kilkenny the other day, he looked well. I expect Lee is on his way by now, I am looking forward to seeing him. We are expecting Reinforcements from W.A., S.A., and Tasmania, they are the 13th Reinforcement and the Tasmanians are at Suez now, so I expect the South Australian lot will not be long now. I saw in a paper that Doff Dixon was married, do you ever see anything of Len Barlow, Bert Jeanes, Errol Stone or any other old friends, let me know if they have enlisted or any other news as to what they are doing now. You get so little news over here. I often look back and think it wonderful the things that have occurred, but you can say what you like there is no place like Australia and Home Sweet Home for me.

Feb 14/1916. Aerodrome. We are moving camp shortly, but do not know where to for certain, some say Mena, and some Tel El Kebir, of the two I prefer Mena, it is the best place, but they don't let you pick and choose over here. I am still holding my stripes and if things go on alright I may get another stripe, that will be Sergeant, and be appointed. I have just found out that we are moving to Tel El Kebir about 50 miles from Cairo towards Suez. We are moving on Feb. 24th. It will be a bit strange down there for a start, but I suppose a fellow will get used to it. I met Sergeant Moller the other day also Laurie Levy, my old Semaphore mate. There are a lot more South Australians just arrived. The original lot Lee was in are only 50 yards from us. I often wish he was there with them. The new place we are going to is away out on

the desert and I bet it will be hot very soon, but one place over here is as good as the other. Things are just the same over here, jogging along as usual. I am in charge of Company Office, the other Sergeant is returning to South Australia and I am taking his place. We have 900 men in our Company. The Camel Corp business is knocked on the head now, they only wanted Lieutenants. My last Lieutenant (Jenkins) got in. Prospects look much brighter here now, don't believe all the Returned boys tell you, I can tell you on the whole the Australian soldier has a very good time in Egypt.

Feb 20/1916 Aerodrome. We are leaving this camp on Wednesday and going to Tel El Kebir nearer Suez. It will be quiet and slow down there but it will do me. It is starting to get hot over here now, and they say it will be hotter than we want it in another month. The latest war news we have, is the war looks decidedly in our favour, but you get more news in Australia than we do, judging by the papers received. My address will be altered when we go away as we will become a new battalion. Ken Everard is at a place called Ishmalia now. We are going is where the 32nd Battalion is, so will see some more chaps I know. I was out riding the other day so called over at the Heliopolis camp the 7/27 Reinforcement had just arrived and I met Herb. Bull who used to be on the Wednesday night job with me. There is some talk that we are going to France, I will believe it when we get there.

28/2/1916 Aerodrome. At the new camp Tel El Kebir we are going to be the 51st Battalion. I met Alan Maguire, who used to be at W & M's, he has just come out of hospital at Malta, it will be sometime before he is himself again. He is a fine big chap, a lot bigger than I am, and I used to be able to call him small, but the tables are turned. I also met Walter Wilcox and Harvey Burt, Semaphore boys, just arrived. They had a good trip, stopped at half a dozen places and had leave too, they6 were lucky. They call the chaps who have just arrived "Deep Thinkers" and the old boys who have had a smack, tell them "they took a long time to nut it out" and come over. I heard today that a lot of troops will be going out of Egypt to France and Mesopotamia.

March 6/1916 Tel El Kebir. I had no sooner got to camp than I got Mumps, into Hospital for 3 weeks. I only hope my lot do not go away without me. The food is excellent and everything is good, but it hurts to have to stay here 3 weeks. Have some Semaphore and Alberton boys in my Battalion now, but

have not had a chance to have a look around the place. The boys in my battalion are Alan Playfair, Young Chapman, Ern Hodge, the first one you all know, Chapman used to play for the Ports, the 3rd one is G.P. Hodges' son (Port Orpheus) and a lad called McGuinness from Alberton. Our new battalion is the 52nd and the 13th Brigade, at present we are stationed at Tel El Kebir about 40 miles from Cairo, it is the largest camp in Egypt. We have a new lot of Officers. I am in the 2nd Auxilary Stationary Hospital, Tel El Kebir, and is not a bad place, address letters

Corporal G M Livesey (No. 3302)

C Company

52nd Battalion

A.I.F

Egypt or Elsewhere

March 14/1916. Tel El Kebir. Still in hospital but my time will soon be up, and I will be back among the boys again and will not be sorry. I had the bad luck to be reverted to ranks while in hospital, am one of the many privates again. The N.C.O's were selected three days after I went into hospital, but I will do my best to try and get promotion again, but it will be hard to get, so many of our men have been in since the landing and they get first consideration. Seniority counts for everything in the army. I had a try for the Artillery, they wanted drivers, and I got Hospital instead. I have met a lot of chaps I know lately, the 32nd Battalion are just near our camp, I have met Lieut. P. Hagan, Bert Randall, and Charlie Leoble, all Semaphore boys, I also had the pleasure of meeting Peter and Alec Barreau, up at Peter's tent in the Artillery Camp, both are looking well, Alec was down on leave to see Peter. Peter is three miles away from our camp. I am going to see Fred Lock, he is camped near, also P Wald and one of the McSweeney's. There are a lot of Semaphore boys at Tel El Kebir and I think I will transfer into one of their units, it would be nice to be with some of my Semaphore friends.

March 19/1916 Tel El Kebir. Am out of hospital and back with my Company again, am trying for my Stripes again. This camp is a good change from Aerodrome and is not so handy to Cairo. We have a Y M C A here and if you like you go in for a read. Glad to hear Lee has left, have not heard from him. Les Butcher has left our Battalion and gone into the Pioneers.

April 9/1916 Serapian. Have been sent to this camp as an advance party and got very short notice, so couldn't write before, that was two days after my last letter. On arrival here all correspondence was stopped for 3 weeks. We were joined by our Battalion about three days ago. Captain Ekin-Smyth of Kilkenny in charge of our Company. He was attached to the 32nd and is now transferred to us. Heard from Lee at last. I am still wearing two stripes but am only holding an acting rank at present, but hope for the best. We are now about a 100 miles from Cairo, out in the desert where the last fight took place some time ago. One bottle of water a day is all we get, the one beauty is we get a swim in Suez Canal every day. I have swum the Suez Canal a good number of times lately, it is about 150 yards wide and the water is lovely. The one bottle of water is for a wash, shave and drinking, we wash our clothes in salt water. Have been inoculated again today, that is 8 times now since leaving Australia, and vaccinated 3 times and the vac won't take.

April 23/1916. Serapian. I have received my promotion and it dates back to 13th March, so I am lucky. We have been having Sports in our Battalion for a big Sports Meeting in the Canal. They have competitions in Company's first, then pick out the best of the Company to compete in Battalion. My Company won all but one event. We won the Teams Relay Race, 8 men out of each Company, 6 of the old Semaphore Swimming Club in our Team. I also won company Diving, Neat & Fancy, and then Battalions yesterday. On Anzac Day I dive for Brigade Championship, and if I win that for Divisional Championship. I am going to try my hardest. If I win it will be out of about 20,000 men. I believe there are some excellent trophies. Our Company won the Relay Race for Battalions and I hope it will win the Championship. I enclose Programme for the Final Championships, so you will have some idea of the big day we will have. I do not think we will be in this camp long, having a big move shortly believe. Les. Butcher is in the Pioneer Battalion and is getting on alright, he was acting Sergeant then, it may be confirmed by now, I hope so.

May 17/1916. Serapian, Egypt. Have just had 48 hours leave to Cairo, just arrived back in camp at 5 o'clock. Had a good look around, bought a few Souvenirs for presents and sent them to you. The brooches are a transparent Egyptian stone, design a Scarab Beetle and a Mosaic Bracelet. Have a slight

balance in hand, which may be handy in French land, as they tell us we are going there shortly. We will not be sorry either. Everyone is sick of Egypt. May 22nd/1916. In the Desert. We are now having trench work and life, and find it interesting, a lot of night work, but lazy days. I prefer this camp training to the one at Serapeum, there was too much drill there. The weather was not fit for strenuous work, the men couldn't stand it, were getting stale, a couple of weeks of our present life they will pick up again and begin to feel well. From what I can see we are having a couple of weeks for Instructional purposes prior to embarkation for another country, no doubt you can guess where. The food we are getting here is good. On the whole the boys are contented. We had a stiff march coming down, but one gets used to it after a while. I am going up to Cairo in a few days to a School of Instruction to have a short course on Bombing. I think it ought to be interesting and it will be more experience.

May 26th/1916. Egypt. The big move to France is just about to take place, pretty near a certainty letters will be stopped for a while. We leave our trenches here in the desert tomorrow and proceed to a place about 5 miles from Alexandria to be thoroughly equipped and then will proceed to France from Alexandria by transport. The whole move will be carried out in a month and we will be jolly glad to be out of Egypt. I believe the Australians have a big training camp at a place called Bion, somewhere in France, well near the Capital and opinion is we will train there for 5 or 6 weeks, so may see Paris which out to be alright.

FRANCE - June 22nd/1916 I will now try and explain a few details of my life in France up to date. We disembarked at Marseilles last Monday week and I had leave for 7 hours so had a good look around, it was jolly interesting. We en-trained the next morning forbut actually arrived at our destination afterhours train journey. The journey was tiresome, but on the whole I enjoyed it very much. All I can say is we journeyed from one end of France to the other, and just before the completion of our journey could see the English Channel, so that will give you some idea where we are, I cannot say too much on account of the Censors. We arrived at our destination at midnight and had to march 4 miles to our billet, which turned out to be a big barn and we made ourselves comfortable. Stayed there 5 days and then got on the march again

and experienced about the hardest march yet. We covered about 17 miles on a hard road with full pack and ammunition, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., after being used to the sand in Egypt the hard road cracked our fellows up terribly, there were dozens who fell out. I got through alright, but my feet were sore, we don't want another march like it for a long time. We are now billeted in a large Mill 4 floors high, just outside a French village. We do very little work and get leave every night and go up to the town. The position we are now in is 3 miles behind the firing line, and as I am writing can hear the Machine Guns and Artillery getting into it. Our next move is into supports, that is just behind the firing line and I think we will be there in a few days, then after that the firing line and I will not be sorry to be there, 10 months a soldier and we have not seen fighting. We can see the Aeroplanes fighting quite plainly from here, and last night they were firing at Aeroplanes for a long time, you can see the shell burst, but they do not seem to hit them. Aeroplanes are numerous here. The main thing is Gas, it is terrible, but we all have Gas Helmets now and they are good proof against the Gas. A couple of nights before we came they had a Gas attack and there were casualties, but the fault was they were caught unawares. I had the good luck to meet Pierre Barreau the other night, he is quite well again, has been here a few months, all the Australians seem to be here. We have to carry our Gas Helmets everywhere we go.

France – June 25/1916 We are still in the same position, and I have met a lot of fellows I know. Wally Evans has got a star in a Pioneer Battalion now, Fred Mead and R Crosston, the policeman (he got wounded the other day). They have must come out of the firing line. He and Fred were in the same battalion. Captain Smyth is all right and in good health.

In the Trenches, France. July 3/1916 I have been in the firing line 7 days now and have had a few experiences since which have not been too pleasant, but on the whole am having a fair time. Have got a fair dug-out and getting good tucker. Last night was our Company's first experience of being under fire, it only lasted 1½ hours, but it was the hottest thing I ever want to see. It was a bombardment and raid, but our Company was lucky, we never had a casualty. It was a great experience, talk about an Iron Foundry, it was not in it, at times I thought it a bad dream, but it was only too true, but we are safe enough in

trenches, if we keep our eyes open and do as we are told, it will only be an unlucky one that catches it. Up to the present trench life suits me alright. It is not so strenuous as I thought. At present I am writing this outside my dug-out, sitting on a box, at about 7.45 p.m. and the weather is beautiful. The sun is very pleasant playing on me. I would like to send you a photo, but no cameras are allowed here. It does not get dark here until 10 p.m. and it is daylight again at 3 a.m., so you see we have plenty of light, sitting here at present you wouldn't think there was a war on, you cannot hear a sound. We have a small canteen here, and you can buy things occasionally, such as tinned fruit, jam, sauce, cake etc. I met Korber's boy in Egypt also Edgar Oldfield. I am sending you a couple of photos taken of the boys swimming in Suez Canal, and one of Lieut. Wadsley in his dug-out in the front line in Egypt. It will give you an idea of a dug-out in Egypt, but here they have to be much more solid, and ours on the whole are good. Our first two days in the trenches were very wet and rather miserable, mud up to your neck everywhere. I was lucky I had a pair of rubber boots given me and a leather jacket, the boots came up to my waist. There were only a few of us who didn't get wet to the skin. You ought to have seen me, with my boots about 4 sizes too big, the leather jacket and tin hat, of course you know they are steel. I looked just the thing, but it keeps the wet out. It is not cold here, just like beautiful spring weather. I may see Les Berrill, he is in the Pioneer Battalion attached to our Brigade, the same one as Les. Butcher, I have not seen him since leaving Egypt, but may meet him any day.

France, In the Trenches 7/7/1916. Have just received promotion, am now Lance Sergeant, do Sergeant's work and have same privileges that is, if there are any. It carries 3 stripes. The N C O in the trenches has a fairly good time. The weather has been wet, everywhere muddy, but it seems to be clearing up. Things on the whole are very quiet here, except an occasional bombardment, then they get lively, but not too much to fear in the trenches. In our trench we do best part of our sleeping in the daytime, and if there is anything doing we get very little sleep at all. If it is not Gas Alarm, it is a Bombardment, and we have to stand too. The last few days we have had a fairly strenuous time, but it is better now. We are all able to get a good sleep. The last three nights we have been practically standing too the best part of the time, and often in

the rain, but taking it all round it has not been too bad. The names I am giving are the names of various foundries (nick names of course) they throw about over here, Whiz-bangs, Aerial Torpedoes, Plum Puddings, Peanuts, Sausages, Minnie Whoofers, nice and appetising by these names, but I hope I never get alongside one. Our company has been lucky so far, and have missed a good few of the above named foundries, and a good job too.

Somewhere in France. July 15/1916. I have been in the best of health and really think I am getting fat, although as regards treatment we are getting you will think it impossible. Our Company was relieved from our position in the firing line 4 days ago, after 17 days in the trenches, and we were not at all sorry at the time, but after the last 4 days treatment I think the majority would sooner be back in the firing line. On the whole we had a good time, had a few casualties, but they were mostly through carelessness on putting the head up. I had my share of experiences out there. I had the pleasure of taking out our Company's patrols the first 3 nights, the first one was alright, the second, one of my mates got shot in the foot with a machine gun, and he is in England now, the third night we had worse luck. Of course you know what Patrol means, anyhow I will explain. One NCO and half dozen men, they generally ask for volunteers, go out in front of our trenches, that is no man's land, which is between us and the enemy, and patrol and see if they can gain any information as to the enemy's movements each man carries a bomb, a small hand grenade, his rifle and bayonet. Bayonet covered so as not to shine, and one little lump of lead in the breach, but orders are not to shoot until necessary. I had bad luck, the first 3 nights we were out, it was raining all night and terribly muddy, and there we were crawling about on our stomachs. I have been out 6 times now, and I can honestly say am not anxious for anymore, but if they ask me I shall certainly go. Sergeant Alan Playfair and I volunteered for permanent patrol, but they decided to change them about. Captain Symthe told me he was satisfied with my work. I will now give you news from when we left the trenches. We were ready to come out at midnight, when the old Hun started a bombardment and we had to keep to parapets for nearly an hour, then we started through the communication trenches till we reached the road, and then marching started, full pack, blankets and ammunitions, and were marched for an hour and

twenty-five minutes (it took an hour to reach the road before marching started) without a stop, it was pretty tough I can tell you, we marched 8 miles that night, just arrived outside a village at about 4 a.m. and bivouacked in a paddock, off again at 12 o'clock and marched 14 miles through villages till about 8 p.m. and billeted in barns, had a spell next day, started off again at 9 p.m. and marched 8 miles to a station, and they had the cheek to put us in horse trucks, 40 in a truck, with the damp manure in them, never even cleaned them out, had to sleep sitting up (this is the life) travelled in train until 9 a.m. next morning, had breakfast and then marched 10 miles to billet we are now in, have been here 2 days now and are having a fair spell. I am Orderly Sergeant this week and do not do any marching or drill, am lucky for once. They told the boys they would have a spell yesterday and they had them drilling all day, and today, being Sunday, they had to do a route march this morning and a church parade after it, this afternoon 3 hours drill, that is the spell they gave them. Most of the fellows have sore feet, but that doesn't matter in the military, when the doctor sees you give two last kicks he sends you off to hospital. To cap it all we have had no fresh meat for over a week. Bully Beef and Biscuits and a drink of tea is the permanent menu, with a bit of butter and jam or cheese occasionally. When I get home you will see me eating anything, Fowl-scraps or Dog's meat. It won't cost much to keep me. They ought to feed the men better than they do, if they expect them to fight well. The marching has not got me beat yet, but if they continue with much more I think I will give up cracking hardy. We are now in Reserves, the Lord knows where, but it is a very pretty village, all the country here is beautiful. We may have to move out at a ¼ of an hour's notice at anytime to another portion of the firing-line.

France 27/7/1916. Am still in the same billet. I met Les. Butcher the other day, he is doing alright, still a Sergeant. I often see Butch Lansom, he is in the same Brigade as I am, his battalion were in supports to us when we were in the firing-line. I am now in the Company Machine Gun Section, am not sure if for good. It is the Lewis Machine Gun and I think I will like the work better than Infantry, though sorry to leave my platoon, as they are such fine fellows. I am in charge of a section, 15 men and myself, they are all good fellows. I am only learning the Gun, but will do my best to learn Machine

Gunnery from A to Z if I get the opportunity. To give you an idea of what a splendid piece of Gunnery the Lewis Gun is, it firesshots in....seconds, it is a deadly little article, and when firing at a distance it reminds you of a typewriter clicking.

France – August 1st, 1916. Our Battalion is now in reserves, have only been in this place a few days. I am still in the Machine Gun Section and likely to stay there, I am getting along alright with the Gun. At present I am in charge of 2 Guns and 14 men, to our Company. There is talk of getting more Guns. For the last 6 days our section and several Infantry fellows have been in Isolation for Meningitis, one of our mates had the bad luck to get it, we are contacts. Having a fair time, good tucker and not much to do. We are camped out in a paddock under a big hedge and it is alright. News has just come in that we have to pack packs and hand them in. Must be a move on again for another fly.

France – Aug. 10th 1916. We are now in another village. I am still travelling around France, rather a surprise, but here I am at a Lewis Gun School, right on the French coast, opposite old England. About a week ago I was in bed up in reserves about 8 p.m. when a messenger came along and I had to report to head-quarters at 2 a.m. next morning (a nice time). I saw Capt. Smythe and he said it would be a splendid experience for me. My word it has been, it is a good school. The boys might have been going into the firing line anytime, so I shook hands with Capt. Smythe and wished them all the best of luck if they did go into the big push before I got back with the Battalion, but I sincerely hope I am back again before they go in again, but I am doubtful. I have only one more day to go in the school and then will rejoin the boys, but I think they are in it now. I have just had a swim in the Blighty Channel, our position is about 20 miles from Boulogne, so that will give you some idea of where we are. Have washed my little all since my swim, that consists of 1 pair Socks, 1 Singlet, 1 shirt, 1 towel, no razor or anything, just equipment, rifle & haversack, also steel helmet ready for the trenches. That is how I came to a fussy English School. I couldn't get a change of clothing or my felt hat, had to come just as I was, and use my head to manage shaving and washing, but I got on alright. It will take me a day to reach my Battalion, they are up Pozieres (up north east) no doubt you have seen the name in the paper. We

have had the hun on the retreat lately and I hope it will not take long before the war is over. I see Perce Hagan was killed, I am sorry, but the good ones seem to go first. He was killed near where we were in the Mill fight, his division relieved ours. The poor old 32nd Battalion got a rough time. I had a pleasant birthday, spent the evening in a pretty French village.

15/8/1916 Somewhere in France. Am back again with the boys in the Battalion they have not been in the firing line again, but may be in any minute now. A lot of Australians have been slaughtered lately out here, and a lot have gone to England. The shell fire here is Hell on earth, but we have got the Hun going. We are in supports at present and the Artillery is firing over us all the time, this is not a war for Infantry, it is all Artillery, they snipe at you with 9.2 shells. Received your parcel safely, it was excellent.

France. August 27th 1916. We have moved on again and are working up to have another big push. I believe they have a special job for us this time. The General of our division complimented our Battalion for splendid work during our last stunt in the big push, but expect we will be right into it this time, and will have to put in. I am still in charge of the Lewis Machine Gun Section and having a fair time. I have 2 Guns and 18 men, just a nice lot to look after and the work is more interesting than Infantry. We are now billeted in a nice little town, a very fair billet and will only be here a couple of days then move on again it will take us two days to march to the firing line. There is talk that after this push the Australians are going out of France to a warmer climate for the winter, there is a lot of talk of India, and I think it very feasible, but it is only talk, still I hope it is correct, I would like to see India. Captain Smythe is still alright.

France 21/8/1916. Am out of the trenches again am now 20 miles from the firing line for a bit of a spell, but it wont last long. We will be marching back again in a couple of days. That is our usual luck. The majority of Battalions in our division, have to be reinforced considerably, had pretty severe losses during their spell in the firing line. Our Battalion was lucky according to the others. One south Australian Battalion got terribly cut up. You will see which one later in the papers, I can't say which on account of the Censor. We are now partaking in what they call "The Big Push". We caught it light last time and I hope for the boys sake it will be light again. It is a living hell out here, it

is marvellous how so many come out alive, but on the whole there are very few killed, a man has a big chance. Fred Lock is wounded but not too bad. Jack Quin is going on alright, also Fred Mead. Butch Sansom is in England cooling off, he was ill and was sent there for a spell. A lot of the boys long for a Blighty (as they call a wound). The sooner Fritz chucks in the sponge the better. I think he is just about settled now, if he isn't he ought be. The lot Edmund is with is still in England, having a good time I expect. I am sore to think we tramped the desert for 7 months in a sweltering heat, when they hadn't even joined up, and when they did they get to England. Since we have been in France we have either been in the firing line or marching, full pack up, over the country. The life will sting them when they do get here, sleep in a wheatfield one night, a stable or even something worse the next, and then a trench, with none of your flash dug-outs, but simply shell holes connected up and between each place route marches of about 13 miles. When you settle down of a night with 1 Blanket, no Overcoat and it is raining, well it is time to say "This is the life", and again 1 loaf of bread between 8 men, and lucky to get it at times. We are quite used to it now, and they couldn't kill the boys by starving them, I am sure we can live on anything now. A drink of tea and we are satisfied with a cigarette to digest it. The new boys will find it a change from England, it will be a bit different.

Somewhere in France 10/9/1916. *Our Battalion has been in the firing line again, another big push, and it succeeded alright. I had a few experiences in that time that have not been too pleasant, but I am alright now, had the luck to miss anything that was knocking around. I had my first charge and got through the experience without a scratch. We got through the trench, the Huns would not fight, but bombed us and then tried to get away. We took a good few prisoners, held on to the trench for 48 hours and then were relieved I never want to be in a position like it again. Leo's Uncle got killed in the charge, but he died doing his duty. We are out for a spell now, and you ought to see me, got a new rig-out from head to foot and my word it feels clean, I can tell you. Received parcels safely.*

France - Sept. 22nd 1916. *Having a fairly quiet time. I have received promotion and am now Quarter Master Sergeant, it is senior to Sergeant, the badge on the arm is 3 Stripes and a crown. At our last stunt the Machine*

Gunners had to go up a day before the Company, we started out on a Friday night for the front line, it was raining and terribly muddy, and eventually got there about 12 o'clock in what they call a trench, but it was simply shell holes linked up, sat in the rain all night, getting a fair bit of Artillery fire from Fritz, but had the luck not to get anyone knocked. Guarded the trench with the Guns all day, then at about 11 o'clock that night the company arrived, Captain Smythe in charge. When he came he sent for me and I had to show him the trench and give him an idea where Fritz was, then we all sat down in the trenches for several hours, waiting for the word "Charge" my word it was a wait, raining and bitterly cold. I bet a lot of the lads thought what I did, that it would be better at "Home Sweet Home". At last the word came and we kicked off, Captain Smythe alongside of me, but after the first 50 yards I never saw him again. I had a lucky spin going over, I don't remember a schrapnel bursting within yards of me, but could see the other poor fellows getting hit everywhere. Machine Guns were getting a lot of them. After a while we got to Fritz's barb wire, but had no difficulty getting through, our Artillery had blown it nearly all up, kept on going and came to Fritz's trench we all hopped in and soon bombed Fritz out, got a Machine Gun. Then we got the trench and had to hold it, we just managed it, until a couple of Companies of Canadians came up on the Monday afternoon and supported us. We were pretty right then for a few hours and then Fritz began to shell our trench and didn't we cop it. When we arrived in the trench at first we called a bit of a roll and only about 120 of the Battalion got up into the trench. Our Company had only a Sergeant Major and myself as N C O's and no Officers, (only 3 Officers out of all in the Battalion got up) and 18 men, and all the time we were there one after another got wounded or killed. We were praying to be relieved, and at last relief came. Some more Canadians relieved us at 1 o'clock Tuesday morning, when only 25 Australians came out of the trench. C company came out of the front line 6 strong (Myself and 5 lads) when we got back we met a lot who did not get up and 25% of the Canadians who supported us. At last we got back to where our Battalion had been stationed and had a jolly good sleep, the first one since the Thursday before and besides that very little food. If anyone had told me I could have done it, I would have said "No", but one never knows. I never felt the strain again, that was at the Somme, and now

we are at Ypres, it is fairly quiet down here. I don't know where we are again. The name of the place at the Somme was "Mouquet Farm".

Belgium 30/9/1916. Still in the same camp having a fair time, nice and quiet. I met Arnold Morris the other day, he was slightly wounded in the last stunt, but soon got over it, he was a stretcher bearer. I expect Edmond is still in England, so are Hurtle Page and Lee Rogers. I have heard from them.

Belgium 17/10/1916. Am in the trenches again, but it is very quiet here to the last place, have been here 10 days now and nothing much as occurred. The new job is alright. Have received parcel safely. We are now situated in trenches at Ypres where all the fighting was done in the early part of the war, the trenches are in a dreadful state, of course the boys have to repair them. The Australians seem to get all the hard fighting and pushing, also the dirty work. Am sitting in my store now and there are a few shells going over, high up, looking for our Artillery. The weather is pretty cold. There is still talk of the Australians going out of France for the winter.

France 10/11/1916. Been having a very fair time since coming out of the trenches about a fortnight ago, our Battalion has been on the move, staying a few days at towns and villages on the way, had a ten hours train journey and a couple of days ago had a Motor Lorry ride, it was better than marching, quite a change for the Australians to get a ride. We are on our way back for another smack at Fritz. So Capt. Smythe said in his letter he was alright after his fourth battle, he meant 2 in Egypt and 2 in France, but sorry to say the fifth one was fatal. I have been in six now, just entering my seventh, 2 in Egypt and 4 in France, but have only been in one charge, when all our Officers got killed and so many men. I would like to get over to Bligny to see the folks there, but no chance at present. I have been in a few towns lately, such as Amiens and Abbeville. Amiens is a fine place, when in it you wouldn't know there was a war on. They say Amiens gives you a good idea of Paris, although on a smaller scale. It is very wet and cold here, some of our chaps are as cold as charity. Take no notice of Casualty Lists they will be heavy for some time. N H Livesey, my namesake, was killed, I expect a lot will think it is me, seeing the name, but you know who it is, he was in the Exhibition camp with me.

France 21/11/1916. Our fellows are in the trenches again and it is terribly wet and muddy, have had very heavy frosts and it has snowed once. It was

great to look at, snow up to the horses' stomachs most of the way. To give you an idea, you see 10 horses on an empty G L Wagon and 6 horses on a water cart. I have just returned from the trenches, have to take up rations every day. It is a great job, I don't think. I have a pair of rubber boots up to my waist, a leather jacket and Steel helmet, I look a beauty, I can assure you, mud from head to foot, still they keep the wet out. We are used to anything now, when I get back I will be able to sleep anywhere and eat anything you like. We are in for a good time I believe, then go into Winter quarters, one will believe it when it comes off. Things are not too bad up here, a bit lively at times, but too wet for any advancing. All the Australians are up here now, except the Anzac heroes that float around London and don't mean to come over and fight. The famous non-fighting 3rd Division, that is the 43rd Battalion. I see they are sending trench comforts to the 43rd Battalion, when they haven't seen a trench yet. When any of the boys go home on leave, they meet these heroes, and when our boys say they have 10 days leave, after, for most of them 2 years fighting, they reckon it is not fair that they only get 4 days a month, so what do you think of that.

France 9/12/1916. Have been in the trenches for a month, no letter writing allowed. Have just received your parcels. It is getting near to Christmas now, we have one consolation, that being a decent Xmas dinner in a respectable billet. If I am lucky I may have it in Amiens, considering I cant get to Aussie or Blighty. The soldier boy is not down-hearted, he is having a good time in a quiet way. The month in the trenches was miserable it was so muddy and wet, the mud was up to your waists in saps, but as far as casualties go was very good. A shell would lob near you and you would be smothered in mud, unless you were very unlucky. I had a narrow escape the other day a friend and I were talking in a tent and Fritz was sending over a lot of 12 inch shells and we were 5 miles behind the lines and one the beauties landed 10 yards away, and before we know where we were a thundering mass of bricks and mud came down, clean through the tent and all over us, but no harm was done. In a couple of hours he landed about 20 all around us. It was one of the liveliest times I have had in my life, and for about 2 hours I didn't like my chance of seeing Xmas. You could see tents going up, wagons, no end of bricks and mud, then when it was all over, there were only 40 casualties, it

was marvellous, just shows how near they can come and not hit you. It is very wet here now, always raining. The boys stick it and don't complain much. I may get leave in January.

France 5/1/1917. Was pretty busy through Xmas. Received your parcels safely, and my friends and I enjoyed contents very much. Had a real good time. After my Battalion had left the trenches a week, we entrained from this town and went to a nice town for Xmas, the billets were good. The Sergeant Major, myself and my storeman, had a two roomed cottage to live in and we did it in fine style. I will now give you my Xmas Day. Got up at 9 a.m. played in a game of Football with another Company, had an easy win. Then dinner, don't get a shock, the Sergeant Major and I had it with the Mayor of the town. First of all I saw the Company get dinner, issued out the beer, they had Roast Beef, Roast Potatoes & Onions, Cabbage, Carrots and Turnips, then some jolly fine Xmas pudding to finish up with. Then 2 pints of beer and fruit, and for tea another good hot meal, I think everyone was satisfied. My menu for dinner with the Mayor was 6 courses of French dishes which were lovely, cooked to a nicety. Wines of all sorts and Champagne, just the two of us and the Mayor and his wife. I can tell you I really enjoyed myself. After dinner I went to see some Boxing, it was too wet for Sports, rained all day, got back about 5 o'clock. Along came a mail, more letters and parcels, also a bundle of papers. Then we went to house, where before the Mayor's invitation came, we had arranged for Christmas dinner at 6 o'clock and had our second dinner. On entering the house, there on the table was a cooked Goose, we soon got to work on it and the etceteras, also Custard and Jellies, they were hard to take. After our meal we stayed and had a quiet evening, went to bed at 9 p.m. I have two mates with me with the Company now from the Semaphore, Roy Drummond and Jack Dunstone. It is nice having someone from the same place. They were surprised to see me. They came as Reinforcements to the 52nd Battalion, were originally in 43rd Battalion which is nearly breaking its duck and about time. My new job is to see to the economy of my Company, I have to see my men are properly fed, get correct rations, and also keep their equipment and clothing in order, get new stuff for shortages. I have charge of 4 cooks and good fellows they are too, nothing is too much for them when the boys are in the trenches. I also do all the clerical

work, pay the troops, also see to all mail inward and outward. It looks a lot on paper, but will do me. You get the latest news and are in the know. At a Lecture the other night our Colonel said, "the Quarter Master Sergeant is the main man in the company, if he doesn't do his job, the other departments could not do theirs". Of course the men must be fed and clothed properly to start with. It is like running a Store only with a few more difficulties. We are on our way up to the trenches again now, it is snowing like mad outside and has done so all day. I am in a tent, writing at present by a nice warm fire-pot. We are 5 miles behind the lines among the big guns, you can hear the shells go whistling overhead, carrying New Year Greetings to Fritz. There are guns everywhere here, they are all round us, firing most of the time. I had a bit of bad luck yesterday, my turn for leave to England was due, but the O.C. would not let me go till we come out of the trenches again, he said he couldn't spare me, that will mean waiting 3 weeks. Fancy me going to Blighty, it will be as well then as now, that is if the war doesn't finish. When my leave does come the 10 days will go too soon. I will go to the folks at Manchester first, then have a look around London, just a few days, the rest will be visiting. I will dig Lee up as well, won't he be surprised.

France. 20th Feby 1917. It is a month since I wrote last, except for a field card. I ought to have written when on leave in England, but was out all the time, so left it until I got back. It seems hard to realise that I have been to England, on leave, ten golden days in Blighty, free from the Army. I was away 24 days, as it took 14 days to get there and back, traffic being so congested as in ordinary times it would only take 3 days. It was trying going and coming back, I hope my next trip will be to Australia. Pleased to hear you met Roy Pollard, when you see him again tell him we will never see anything as hot as that again. I hope he will soon be better. Now for news of my leave, I arrived at Waterloo Station, January 30th, rather stale, but soon got some clothes, a good hot bath and a clean up, and felt a new man. Stayed in London two nights, went sight-seeing and to amusements, then left for Manchester, arrived there early in the morning, got on a Sale car and soon found Aunt Hattie and stayed there 6 days, had a beautiful time. Aunt reminded me of you Mother, ways and all, always cheery and bright. Nothing was too much trouble for her. Muriel was home on Sick Leave and we went around

everywhere. Visited Cousin Charlie they were very nice also Harry and Hannah. Had a day in Manchester with them, went to a theatre etc. Harry was also on leave. Had a good look around Staleybridge and Sale, it was a beautiful time all round. Went back to London for a couple more days and then came back to France. Had photos taken to send to you. Uncle Will is a delightful old man full of fun. I saw all the main places in Manchester and London, and was jolly sorry to have to come back. I was lucky to get my leave, it is all stopped now for 6 months. It was a chance in a life-time, so I do not regret it. I might never have another chance to see Blighty.

France 24/2/1917. Our Company has caught a good job, we are down at a Divisional School. The Company acting as Dummies at an Officers School. We have got this job because we did double time in the trenches the last time, and they are recompensing us, which is fair for once, I must say. The outlook is much brighter now I think. The Allies on one front have Fritz retiring, they have had some fine successes. Fritz has retired 3 miles on an 11 mile front, and no fighting for us is good, we will not go back into the lines for 10 weeks, that will make a 14 week spell for us. It is a pleasant outlook for us. I have settled down to France again after my leave and trip to civilization, I only wish it had been to Australia. Hope to receive letters soon, the P.O. is about 15 miles away and the wagon only goes once a week. How is Scotty getting on. Hurtle Page is in France by his last letter, so I expect Ed is also. Haven't heard from Lee lately.

France 4/3/1917. Not much news, Fritz has retired about 4 miles on the front we have been on the last 6 months and is still going, some shrewd move. Things are "Tray Bon" French for "Very Good". My French is improving, you know I reckon I can speak fluently, but I am not understood by the French people at times. It is Sunday today, nice and quiet, tip top menu for today, Eggs & Bacon for Breakfast, Roast Beef, Roast Potatoes and Pudding for Dinner. We have a good cook. I am well clothed now, bought nearly everything in Blighty. All real Australian, our issue here is nearly all Tommy, that is English uniforms and they are no good. Will Drummond is in our Coy. Now, another Semaphore boy, so I have another pal now, in addition to the others.

France 17/3/1917. Our Company has joined the Battalion again, and things are going along nicely. The Allies are having some splendid successes on all fronts. We have Fritz on the run. Tonight by the paper we have captured 13 Villages and one big town B.....the name I cannot say because of the censor.

France 25/3/1917. Things are pretty quiet just now, having plenty of victories, but very few casualties. Things are progressing favourably on all fronts, nothing to what it will be in a little while. There are soldiers everywhere behind the lines waiting for Fritz. Have not seen anything of the 43rd Battalion yet, expect to run into them any day, I would like to see Hurtle and Edmond, also many more old friends. Our present Brigadier is a Light Horse King, has his pals as Officers in Infantry, expects the men to be contented when they have to tell them what to do. Can't expect the men to follow them. In our Battalion we have 20 Light Horse Officers out of about 30, that will give you an idea how things are with us. No encouragement to our senior N.C.O.

France 26/4/1917. We are out of the line again after a fairly strenuous time and all the boys feel the benefit of it. Have been out for a fortnight. There is talk of being out for a couple of months and a change of front. We have had enough of the Somme now, another trip to Armentieres will do us. Our boys got it pretty hot this time in our dash through Hindenburg line, although we got knocked back, the Hun got a terrible hiding. Our Battalion was lucky we got relieved at 2 o'clock one morning and at 5 o'clock Fritz attacked with several battalions and took a lot of ground, but our boys drove them back the next night, so they didn't gain anything. It was very nice to be out on green fields again after the shell holes and mud. This last time we were far past Bapaume, about 10 miles. Things look very nice here now and although we are having a lot of casualties, it is nothing to what Fritz is getting. We are billeted in a fairly decent French village. Yesterday was Anzac Day and we had Sports, also a good dinner, I think all the men enjoyed themselves. I was in the Sports and won several events. Had leave in the afternoon to a French town, Amiens, Roy Drummond and myself. We had a good time, he is my storeman. Ern Hodge has been away wounded, but is alright again.

France 6/4/1917. Am just out of the trenches and am going in again tomorrow. Things are not half so bad now as last September. The only

trouble being the conditions, but it ought to be better now as we are getting well on into Spring.

France 12/6/1917. Things are nice here at present, our Battalion has just come out and suffered heavily. I had a few lively nights taking up rations, but nothing to what the boys got in the front line, some of my pals got knocked, but only Blighty's, not serious. Tom Dunham wounded, Ness Doyle shell shock, Doug Henderson wounded, Sergeant White shell shock. Shell shock is worse than wounded but there were numerous casualties, though the victory was glorious for the Allies. I cannot say where it was, but it was nearly as bad as Mouquet Farm, but on the other hand, a far better success. Drove Fritz back about 4 miles on our front, captured a lot of prisoners and a fair number of guns. We are working our way back again now, at present we are 5 miles behind the lines. Haven't seen Hurtle yet but hope to shortly. Frank White wrote to me, he has just been to Blighty, had a lovely time. I met Arnold Channon from Alberton and we had a good talk about old times, also Walter Wilcox. Johnny Dunstone is in hospital in Blighty, took ill before the stunt, was pretty crook too.

France 6/7/1917. Things are much the same here. Tom Dunham is still seriously wounded, too weak to cross to Blighty and Ness Doyle is pretty crook in Blighty. My pal, Sergeant White won the Military Medal this time for bravery and good work. This world isn't so bad after all. Had a field card from Lee, he is in France somewhere. Our Battalion is in reserves now and in a fairly safe place, a chap would have to be unlucky to get hit, but only a few minutes ago our Anti AirCraft Guns were shelling a couple of Fritz's planes right over our heads and a piece of shell case as big as your hand came through my hut. You could hear it whizzing coming down, and you get out of the way unless you are unlucky. I met Colin Shand a few days ago also Jim Carey from Kilkenny. The war doesn't seem to be disagreeing with them. I bought those P.C's I sent over at a fairly large town called Bailleul, about 3 miles from where I am billeted. Don't know much about our movements, there is some talk of going further North, I hope so, nothing like a change.

France 30/7/1917. Have been in the trenches again, had a fair time for 10 days, only one night was really hot, we had a little of everything, H.E.Shrapnell, and Gas Shells, but had only two casualties, so we were lucky.

The Sergeant Major, Roy Drummond and I had a lovely dug-out made of reinforced concrete, you were safe enough inside it, except from concussion, one night we were bounced about like rubber balls. One of my cooks got gassed pretty badly, I think he will go to Blighty with it. We have some Reinforcement Officers up with us, they were humorous. Altogether she was a picnic. After coming out we went back to huts about 6 miles from the lines and when we had been there a couple of days, old Fritz thought he would liven us up again and started putting in heavy stuff right near, then on the camp, had the bad luck to have a couple killed, and several wounded, it was pretty lively for a while to hear them come roaring over with only a waterproof cover over your head. The Colonel gave orders for the boys to scatter in the fields and a good job too, because Fritz kept it up all the morning, also at night Fritz's Aeroplanes used to come over and drop bombs on our Dumps, then the Anti Aircraft Guns used to open up and the Machine Guns, there would be a terrible din, only they didn't drop them too near us and a good job too. The bombs are deadly things. After leaving this camp we moved back about 5 miles and are in tents in a nice green paddock and the weather is decent. Don't know how long we will be here, but it will do me for a while. Things are going smoothly now, we have some good Officers. First there is Captain Kennedy of the Original 12th Batt. Our O.C. then second in command 1st Lieutenant Alan Playfair, guess you know him, the next two are Reinforcement Officers, then my friend Lieut. L Wilson, who used to be my Sergeant Major, and sixth & last Lieut. C Marshall, who you also know, he used to be Coy. Sgt. Mjr. Of D Coy and on getting his commission was transferred to C. Coy. I was unlucky the other day, missed a trip to Blighty, Ern Hodge caught it, I happened to be on leave and some evidence was wanted for Sergeant Orr's case in London. Ern. knew where I kept my papers, looked them up and gave particulars, next I heard was his name had gone in as witness. Has been in Blighty three weeks and the case has not started yet that shows my luck. Still as long as I am well I am happy, but get cross with my bad luck at times, and the boys joke about my job worries me, but of course they mean it the other way about, that nothing seems to worry me. Only no news from home, then I have a box-on with Roy Drummond or Dave Stewart our Sgt. Mjr. They are two good fellows. I have a clerk under me now,

as I have to go down and see rations drawn. I think Lee is still up the Somme way, that is where his division is. Will try and dig him up.

France 25/5/17. Now for news, we have had a change of front and are not at all sorry. We are on the same front as when we first came to France. Have had the pleasure of seeing the 3rd Division 43rd Battalion. I met Ed Shepherd, he is a 2nd Lieutenant, also met Pat Wills and several others I knew. I didn't have time for a talk to them as they were marching past. From what I heard they had had very few casualties and were on a very quiet front, they don't know what it is like yet, but will shortly. I wish them the best in their trot over the bags. The country is in beautiful condition now, it is a pleasure to be here, we are out of the line of course. I had bad luck in missing seeing Hurtle Page the other day. Cpl. Dunham went on leave to a town about 8 miles away from where we are billeted, and Hurtle asked him if he knew me, when Tom came home he told me, and first thing next morning I took the bike and rode over to see him but was just too late, he had gone into the trenches. I am sure to meet him shortly. I would like to have a good chat with him for old times sake.

France 19/8/1917. Am just at present away at a 5 weeks Army School situated in a pretty area, up to the present I am enjoying myself, plenty of work and a fair amount of sport, so I am satisfied, have had a week of it to date. I was pleased to be selected for this School as it is the best in France. The O C sent for me and asked me which would I care for, a four months trip to Blighty at an Officers Training College somewhere near London or take on Regimental Quarter Master in Battalion. I didn't take long to say O T C. He said I was wise. Then after 8 days I got notice to pack up and come here. I don't know what is really going to happen, but am going to do my best to get a good report at this School. The Instructors are very good, mostly all old soldiers, and my word they know their work well.

France 4/9/1917. Have heard from Lee, if I was with my Battalion I would be able to see him, but I am here at this School and it is too far from where he is. I will be going on leave to England when this School is finished, so that is something to look forward to. I am enjoying it here very much and am keenly interested. They vary the work so much, one cannot help being interested, especially in the out-door work, that is Field Operations. Taking it all round

we have a fair bit of spare time. There are plenty of Lectures for those willing to learn. Saturdays and Sundays we have leave to a rather nice town about 8 miles away, we are taken over in Motor Buses. On Wednesdays we have training for Sports to be held at end of term. Had a letter from Roy Drummond from Battalion, all the boys are going on alright and having a fair time.

Cambridge. England 17/10/1917. *First of all I am in England for four months at an Officers Training College at Cambridge. I left France on 30/9/1917 and reported to A.I.F. Headquarters in London on 1st October, and got orders to proceed to Cambridge on the 5th Oct. by midday train from Liverpool Street Station, which gave me 5 days leave. I had a friend with me, Doug. Henderson, he left same lot as I did from Aussie, we are great chums. I invited him up to Manchester, and he went up with me, we stayed two days with them up there and then came back to London and had an enjoyable time. We arrived at Cambridge about 1.50 p.m. on Friday, 5th Oct. Got to the college, which is St. John's, no doubt you have heard of it before, and found things very comfortable. Was in luck again as Doug. Henderson is in same platoon as I am. Our rooms are close to each other. I am in a 3 roomed flat with two other Aussies, which consists of Bedroom, Sitting-room and Bathroom, and we are happy and contented. Everything is run well, the food is excellent. You ought to see me in Officers Uniform. The only difference is that we only wear a belt not a Sam Browne, and have white band on our caps, with number of battalion on it. Gloves and Stick felt strange for a while. Our pay does not increase, until we are gazetted, but no one ever fails as you come here to get your commission, and you must, as long as you behave yourselves. If I had stayed in France I would have had my Star now, but I was luckier I got sent over here instead. How it was I was at that Army School in France for five weeks and got as good report for a direct commission, came back to Battalion and was made Temporary Reg. Qr. Master Sgt. One higher than my old rank. At the same time Doug and a chap named Bower were sent to a Corp. School for a 4 weeks course and then to come on to this college. Well they came back and Bower was sent into the line and had the bad luck to lose his arm, so couldn't go. Capt. Kennedy said he thought of sending me in Bower's place, and here I am. The colonel of the 52nd Batt. told me when I left*

I was going to get my Star in France, but he thought this trip would be best for me, also that he was well satisfied with my past work. I am proud to think I was one of the two sent from the Battalion for the College. It is a four months course, get 4 days leave mid-term, Christmas leave, and 10 days at end of course. How about it, spending the last three Christmas', One in Egypt, One in France, and this year in England. Hope the next will be Aussie. I suppose you wonder why I didn't take my Star direct in France, but this is a great gain educationally for me. Meet fellows from all over the world, and the college is a first class one, then I will miss the winter in France, that is something one may benefit by in later years. The College is a bit expensive for a start, buying clothes, underclothes etc. that one wants. I am in Hospital at present with a skin rash caused by Gas, which I told you about when I had it in France about two months ago, when I had a sore face. The doctor says this is the after effects, they are very particular with their medical examination, but it is nothing to worry over. I have been here a week and will be out any day, am close to my College and having a great time, sightseeing in Cambridge which is a very pretty place. I can go out when I like. Being in hospital makes no difference to my course.

Correct address – Cadet Livesey G.M.

*No 19, Platoon, E Company
No 5, Officers Cadet Battalion,
St. Johns, Cambridge,
England.*

"St Johns" Cambridge. 5/11/1917. Am back again at College and pleased to be out of hospital. My 4 days Sick Leave I spent in London and had a good time. Time was too short to go up to the folks at Manchester. Since being here I have had to get glasses, couldn't pass the Eye Test. I forgot to tell you before that I saw Lee in France and had a good talk over old times.

Cambridge is a pretty place and reminds me of Adelaide a lot.

17/11/1917. Have passed my first exam and am swinging along steadily. Having beautiful weather over here at present, although a bit cold. Get 4 days leave this month, so am off to Manchester. Will also get 6 days at Christmas, so I suppose that will be spent at Manchester too. Get plenty of work here and a fair bit of sport. Am rowing again Wednesday & Saturdays. We get

plenty of lectures but manage to survive them. Get plenty of fun in Cambridge, also red tape, but at present England is better than France. This year I will have Christmas in England, wish it was Australia. England is not in the same street as Aussie, in all ways, miserable weather and the people seem slow.

"St Johns", Cambridge. 28/12/1917 Had a pleasant 10 days in Manchester, went to Sale, then to Stalybridge and back to Sale again. Had two Christmas dinners, one with Cousin Charlie Livesey, the other at Sale with Muriel, Uncle & Aunt. Harry was home on leave when I was at Stalybridge. I had a letter from Lee, he has won the Military Medal. Roy Drummond wrote me that Jack Dunstan is back again with the old Battalion, also Ness. Doyle. Ern. Hodge is at a Training Battalion in England, he wrote and told me Alan Playfair got a bad knock, may lose his foot, I hope not. I met Wally Evans before leaving France. Glad you met George Cain, he is genuine, though a hard nut.

"St Johns" Cambridge 13/1/1918. I sit for my finals in a fortnight, on 29th January, if I pass I go to our London Headquarters and get starred also ten days leave. After that I may stay in England or go straight to France. I don't care which it is, would prefer France, as all my chums are there. They have been through some heavy fighting the last few months, with the weather miserably cold, and practically no comforts.

20/1/1918. Just at present I am enjoying the quiet life with my friend Doug. Henderson, he comes from Mile End, I sent you his photo, but as you never received it, it must be at the bottom of the sea. We are always together, the boys here call us "The Big Hun" and "Little Tich" because he is so big.

Sale, Manchester 8/2/1918. Here I am "on leave", have finished with College and am a one star artist now. Got through final exam comfortably. Am having a good holiday now. Going to Stalybridge tomorrow to see folks there.

Tidworth, England. 22/2/1918. Still in England, when I reported at Headquarters, they sent my friend and I down to Codford, to our Reinforcement Depot, we stayed there a week, they were sent on here to an Officers School. We were horribly disappointed, it is a terrible hole, about 5 shops and nothing else but barracks. Have found another home in hospital. Same complaint as before, effects of Mustard Gas, causing a rash to break out, it will be better in a few days. Hospital for Officers are great here in

England, good accommodation and splendid meals, also a room to myself, containing a single bed, big upholstered chair, dressing-table and washstand, hot & cold water, a dining table & chair, also a fire all day. Breakfast in bed, Lunch at 1 o'clock, go for a walk till 4.30 then come in and have some tea. After that go over to the School and see my pals, and back to dinner at 7 o'clock. Doug Henderson is here with me. I met Ern. Hodge at Codford, after I finish here, I will go back to Codford where he is. I met Hughie Garland the other night, he is just back from a six months trip to Australia. He told me he saw Jack McDonald, who left to come back before he did. Address all letters –

2nd Lieut. Livesey G.M.

C. Coy.

52nd Battalion

A.I.F. France.

or else send them to Manchester to be forwarded to me wherever I may be. Tidworth. 4/3/1918. Am still in hospital with my chum, it is quiet down here, but when we leave, we get 4 days leave, then back to Bodford again to our Training Battalion to knock recruits into shape before they leave for France. There is a large surplus of Officers in France, that is why we are not there, we have to wait until we are wanted. That is why we were sent to another school just to fill in the time. Received two nice parcels from you posted Oct.4th 1917 and they reached me March 2nd 1918, after going all over the universe, but they were very acceptable, especially the socks and handkerchiefs, also one parcel you sent to Cambridge arrived at the same time.

13th Training Battalion, A.I.F. Codford, Wilts, England, 24/3/1918.

As you see I have had another move, but am still in England. It is very quiet here. My friend Doug. Henderson is still with me, we are room mates. We have a beautiful mess here, nothing to complain of. I had the bad luck to lose my kit when shifting last time. It has been very inconvenient, I only had what I stood up0 in left. Have only bought a few things, hoping it will turn up again, if not it will be bad luck, as it was forth a bit. It is expensive in England for an Officer. Firstly the mess bill 2/3d. a day here, it is pretty dear, but food is so high in price. Then there is your servant and you have to have one, then dances and concerts, they always sting you whether you go or not.

There was a Dinner and Dance last Friday night, and it only cost us 30/- each, no option. Then where-ever you go costs you twice as much as an ordinary person. They have special prices for Officers and they are special too. Most of the fellows are drawing all their pay and squandering it right and left. Just depend on one pay to the next. I never thought an Officer's position was nearly as expensive as it is, but one has to be thankful for one's life now-a-days, and put up with the expense.

Havre, France 9/4/1918. You will see I am in France on my way to join Battalion which I hope will be in a week's time. The weather is splendid here and I am having a lazy week waiting to proceed to my unit. I will not be sorry to get back again with the boys, too expensive in England.

Le Havre, France. 15/5/1918. Am still at Base have been draft conducting from the Base up to Division, not a bad job, plenty of train journey. My last trip lasted 6 days and 5 nights, I slept in the train, but to break the monotony had a day in Boulogne and Rouen, they are very nice places. I had to take 50 men up to the line, but don't know yet when I will be going up the line, but it wont be long now. There is a lot of talk about breaking up a Battalion in each Brigade of the A.I.F. (the 52nd Battalion will be a goner). If they do I will very likely join the 50th Battalion as they are the South Australians in my Brigade. Pleased to hear you have met some of my pals who returned home wounded.

France. 10/6/1918. Am now in the 50th Batt. As I told you before, the 52nd Batt. was broken up and used for reinforcements to the other three Battalions in our Brigade. I joined the 50th on the 20th May, it is not so bad, but of course I prefer the 52nd. When I get to know my fellow Officers it will be better. I am now in the South Australian Battalion for our Brigade, and have a few good chums here with me. My main pal, Lieut. Doug. Henderson is in same Company (D. Company) also in same tent as myself, we were lucky to keep so close to each other, then there is Ern. Hodge of Alberton, Capt. Christophers from Adelaide way, Roy Drummond, he is a L/Cpl. Now, and Sgt. White, also Ness Doyle. Tom Dunham is well settled down again in Australia by now, also my other pal, Dave Stewart from Parkside, the chap I spent my first leave with in Blighty, has been badly knocked and is returning to Australia. I expect you have seen Alan Playfair since his return and got all the news. Our Battalion is now in the line but Doug. And I are left out this time,

in what is called the nucleus. They are all South Australians here and I know a lot of them. My Company Commander is Capt. Churchill Smith from North Adelaide. Taking things all through I have had a lot of experience and seen the best part of Egypt, Cairo and Alexandria, the main places of France such as Boulougne, Marseilles, Rouen, Calais, Le Havre, Amiens, Abbeville and my next leave I hope to see Paris. In England I have seen Cambridge, Newmarket, Bath, Troubridge, Salisbury, Manchester and many other smaller places and don't forget London. To see all these places in Peace would cost a small fortune. There only remains Italy and America, I should love to come home via America. I ran into the 27th Batt. the other day, first chap I met was Ken Everard, he looks well. I had dinner with Capt. Perce Bice and the 27th Battalion Officers. Capt. Roy Beddome was in the line. I would have liked to see Roy but may another time.

France 19/7/1918. *The weather here is beautiful just at present. Have received a letter from Lee, he is in England, had French Fever but is alright again. Laurie Reeves was Lucky getting back to Australia. My friend Doug is away at present at a six weeks school and I miss him very much. Roy Drummond has gone down the coast for a rest. I am sending over photos of friends, also one of Perce Bice, a Capt. Gatley and myself taken together. (Capt. Gatly is from Hindmarsh).*

France 9/8/1918. *We came out of the line a couple of days ago, after a fairly quiet time. The main trouble was mud, but that doesn't hurt anyone. The Colonials had a splendid victory here, pushed the Hun back for about 10 miles. Casualties to date are light, it was a glorious walk-over. The Hun has been pushed back over the ground he captured near Amiens. Also with the French victory I tell you we have him scratching his head. Doug is not back yet from the School, expect him any day.*

France 22/8/1918. *The Aussies have been tickling up the Hun, with the Canadians, out of 30,000 prisoners captured, little Aussie got 22,000, not bad going. The French are going great and between the Allies I think Fritz is thinking hard. I have been in it pretty thick lately but have pulled through alright. I am not meant for gun fodder. Doug is still away, but he has had his share. Am in reserves at present, am sitting in a comfortable dug-out with*

chairs and table, the weather is ideal. Address all letters direct to the 50th Battn: Lieut G M Livesey

50th Battalion

A I Forces, France

I will get them quicker than via England.

France 1/9/1918. G.H.Q. Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. Back again at the same school as in 1916 when I first came to France. Everything is tip-top, near a beautiful seaside resort called "Paris Plage", it is a fine spell for me. The School lasts a fortnight, Doug was back with the Battalion before I left. We are both lost without each other. I have been recommended for award out of the last stunt I was in. I hope to know the good news as regards result in a short time. I did a bit of a stunt with my Platoon, captured some Machine Guns and prisoners, and then went out again next night with a raid. You have to be lucky to get decorations if you have no influence. The recommendation read something like this "Conspicuous Gallantry and Initiative and splendid example to his men". That is the wording, but I may not get anything out of it.

14/9/1918. Still at Machine Gun School but return to Battalion tomorrow. It has been very instructional here and will be of great value to me. I had my exam today but don't know results yet, think they will be pretty fair. Things are progressing favourably over here just at present with the Allies. The French are going well, also the Americans, who made their first big attack two mornings ago. They will be a real help to us, for they are fine boys. Just received news of exam, "Excellent results".

France 15/10/1918. Am out spelling at present, the spell may last over Christmas. I was alongside Alan Leschen when he was killed by shell-fire. It was a pretty warm night I can tell you. It was my first trip to the line after returning from Blighty.

29/9/1918 France. Been in the line again but am out in billets behind lines at present. Doug is OK also Roy Drummond, he has just won the Military Medal. I have had a pleasant surprise, I am now Lieut. Livesey M.C., I was decorated with a piece of blue and white ribbon a few days ago, and am also promoted to Lieutenant from 2nd Lieutenant, that means I am carrying 4 stars now, instead of two. Everything came at once, a

common lieutenant one day and the next Lieutenant (4 Stars) also M.C. When I get to England on leave I will have to see the King at Buckingham Palace and be decorated by His Majesty. Too much red tape about it all. France 15/10/1918. Doug is away in Blighty on leave now and I hope to be going shortly. I sent on a letter to Manchester from General Birdwood congratulating me on my decoration, and they will send it on to Aussie after reading it. Roy Drummond is well, also Arnold Silverlock, he is one of my Corporals. War news is splendid at present. I don't think it can last much longer now, I hope not at any rate. We have had some Sports lately. I fluked the Officers' Horse Race, having a change from running to riding. I found it much easier. I have always been lucky in Any Sports held. So Sid. Howie is in the Army Medical Corp, they don't go near the line, unless Stretcher-bearers, but they do good work. After my leave in London or England, I hope to go to Paris with Doug very likely, shortly afterwards. A trip to Blighty costs £40., and to Paris £20., but I may not get another chance to see them, that is the result of being an Officer. If I get to Blighty to be decorated it will mean a new uniform £15/-/- so a trip means extra expense. Most Officers always reckon £50. for Blighty leave or more, and £40. for Paris but I am not so gay as some.

France 29/10/1918. War news is excellent. Doug is not back from Blighty yet, expect him any day, I am lost without him. We are still in same village as when I wrote last, think we will be here for some time.

France 3/11/1918. Doug is in hospital in England with a crook leg or something. Hope he soon gets back. Roy Drummond is back from leave, Ern Hodge is back again, also Capt. Christophers, he is with C. Coy. I am with D.Coy. I often see Cpl. South, also Rig Wills, he is a Lieutenant and is at present in command of my Company, as my Captain left for Australia a few days ago. He was a Tasmanian, one of the old 52nd Battalion Officers. Would not be surprised if the war ends by Christmas, the war news is so good. The weather is pleasant but beginning to chill up a bit, very dark at night. Good job we are not in the line, it would be lovely doing patrols.

Belgium 2/12/1918. At last the war is over, have just finished a 50 mile march and train journey and couldn't write while on the move. Now for news, on Nov. 11th the day the Armistice was signed we were in the train

hurrying up to the line to give the Hun a final push, and didn't we jump for joy when the news came through, but one can hardly realise it yet, it seems un-natural since the 11th. We have been on the move and have marched and ridden out of France into Belgium, at first we were going into Germany, but that is cut out. In a few days we resume our march for about 35 miles and then finish up at a large town named Dinant, and stay there as the Demobilisation scheme starts from there, and we will be drafted to Aussie when our time comes, length of service, such as 1915 men, then 1916, first married then, single men with dependents, then ordinary single men. During the time the A.I.F. are waiting to go home, there is a git Educational Scheme on, also employment for a lot in England. I reckon to see Aussie at the outside, say in August, and a very good chance before that. I am for Aussie as soon as possible, I don't want to stay in Belgium any longer than possible. One thing I am thankful for is that God has spared me to return home. When I look back and think of different times in the war it is good to know one is alive and to think I came through without a scratch, I reckon I was dead lucky, but I always seemed to think I was going to see it through. Thank God all those awful times are over and the boys who are still alive will be able to return to their loved ones. What a joy it must have been to you all when the news came through. The French people went mad with joy. Our boys took it very quietly, I was surprised, in fact I don't think they realise it yet what it means, they are so used to War, they can think it is over. I am at a bonny Belgium farm, very comfortable, will be sorry to leave it. Wont it be wonderful to be back home again once more. I can hardly believe it will come true. Doug is still in England, last letter he was improving.

Dinant, Belgium 20/12/1918. Have just completed a 45 mile march, the one I spoke of before, making a 100 miles altogether, but at last we have reached our destination, Dinant. Before the war it was a lovely place, but the Hun burnt about 200 places in 1914. The people are very nice. I suppose there are about 5,000 persons here, Belgians. The Hun killed about 1,000 of them, this is one of the towns which were brutally treated, nearly everyone has lost either, father, sisters, or even babies, done to death by them. There are some nice places within a few hours by train

from here, namely Charlerio, Namur and Brussels, I hope to see them if my luck is in. There isn't much work to do, am busy with the preparations for the boys Xmas dinner. Can hardly imagine it is Christmas next Wednesday.

Dinant, Belgium 2/1/1919. We had an excellent Xmas and New Year. My luck was in on Christmas Day as I received two very nice parcels from you, they came at the right time. Things are very quiet here, am sending you over some views of the place, also Menu Cards of Christmas dinner, signed by all present, will be excellent Souvenirs in after years. Am also enclosing a history card of the Fort of Dinant, as you will see it is a very historical place. Have been delayed with my Blighty leave, rather bad luck. I intended to spend it at Sale, at Christmas time, but never mind, all good things come to those who wait. Will have to leave it till February if nothing turns up about returning to Aussie. In any case I suppose I will return back through England. Leave doesn't matter, all I am waiting for is news of returning to Aussie. Doug is still in Blighty, will be going home from there sometime this month.

Bodford, England. 10/2/1919. Am now in a demobilisation camp at above address, waiting for a boat to come home by, as far as I know will be leaving sometime this month. Doug left for Aussie on the 8/2/19 by the "Ascanius". He sent me a wire when he sailed. I had bad luck in not seeing him before he left, only caught a glance of him on a bus, but couldn't find him afterwards. Have just finished 14 days leave, of which I spent ten days in Manchester the other 4 days in London. Doug was at Sale the week before me and stayed five days. Now for news of what will happen when I return home. First of all I will get 60 days leave on full pay, and four days after arrival in Aussie the Military will place to my credit in any Bank 75% of my deferred pay for a start, then after my leave is up I get the balance of my deferred pay on my discharge. Then there will also be my Gratuity Money, the English Army are getting

100 days pay for 1st years service

60 days pay for 2nd years service

40 days pay for 3rd years service

but ours is not published yet, but is said to be the best of the lot. We are sure to get better than the Tommies (English). It is some time since I wrote last, but was expecting to sail any time, but owing to strikes over here the boats have been delayed considerably. I think it is three weeks since I wrote from Belgium. I think we have a good chance of returning home via Panama Canal, wouldn't it be lovely, just fancy seeing New York. If I do I will be perfectly satisfied. It is very cold here at present, wish I was in a warmer place, but soon will be I hope. When I said I will send a cable.

From: Defence Department

Lieut. Livesey "M.C." sailed "Warwickshire" leaving England on 5th April, Probably arrive in Melbourne 17th May any further enquiries to be Made at Keswick, South Australia.

"Warwickshire"

19/5/1919.

Just a line on chance it reaches you before I do myself. Have arrived at Fremantle, had a glorious trip, only rather slow. Hope you got my cable from Blighty. It seems too glorious and too good to be true, that I will be home in a week, as this boat can only crawl. Will see you Saturday or Sunday at latest.

George.