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**Private Kenneth Samuel Eales (Service No: 6495)**

***The following long and interesting letter has been received by Mrs D Walls from Pte Kenneth S Eales, son of Mr and Mrs Samuel Eales, of Penshurst***

We left Melbourne on October 2nd on the troopship " Nestor' which is one of the best and fastest troopships we have. After three weeks sailing we arrived at Cape Town, the first stop we had. The Africans are, as far as I have seen of them, pretty good workers (also cadgers), but must say for the white people there, that they treated us very well indeed.

We were at Cape Town three days, during which time I had a very good time indeed. The scenes around the place are very pretty, especially a motor trip I had around Mount Table Top, during which trip I went through part of Sir Cecil Rhodes' property.

This was a three-days-on-land, that came in very handy, although we had only been on board three weeks.

Starting out again we went for fourteen days, then struck Gape Verde Island, and pulled in at Mundello, but only for about four hours. The most noticeable thing here was the way all the traders were out to the boat before we had hardly stopped. The natives there are great divers, even children about four or five years diving for pennies. Here we heard that conscription had not been passed in Australia.

Seven days from Cape Verde brought us to Davenham, Cape Verde which we were all glad to see. Although most of us, including myself, have had a very good voyage. I put on a few pounds of flesh during the voyage over, and still seem to keep my weight up, being about 10 stone 7 Ibs all the while. Between Capo Verde and England, one of our lads out of my Company had the misfortune to fall overboard. Two lads, who witnessed him, promptly threw 1ife buoys overboard, and dived in to his rescue. Eventually after being in the water a quarter of an hour, he was brought on board again, little the worse for his adventure, but suffering a little from shock. The two lads who jumped overboard were promoted to Sergeants and also awarded the Royal Humane Society's medal after we landed, which they had well deserved.

On November 10th we arrived Davenport and went ashore first thing on the 16th - the Searchlights were a great sight the night we stopped in port and they were very powerful….

From Devonport to Bovington Camp Wood, Dorset, was a great trip, and the scenery very pretty indeed. We passed through the Shires of Wiltshire, Devonshire, and a couple of other shires I have forgotten.

The things most striking to me were the miles and miles of hedges, and very few wire fences at all; the water scheme they have in England. No matter what part I have been in or even through, is very well supplied with water, some parts seem to be all drains and water-courses ; the thatched roof, seen in all the villages about, and even noticeable very close to London itself.

About a week at Bovington Camp where we were treated very well indeed, then a shift to Fovant Camp. Here we had a fairly good time, and received our first Australian mail, which, I can tell you we were all eager to get. I was the lucky one to receive the most letters, and held that record until a little over a month ago, when our mail started to go to France.

I believe there is a big bundle of mail at the base in France for me, and hope to get it all soon. My mate, when going to France on draft, noticed it there, and let me know.

The bigger part of our Company were at Fovant Camp about three weeks ago but about fifty of

us were left behind on a rear guard, and were there about six weeks, during which time we had a very good time. The rest of our Company came to the 2nd Victorian Training Battalion and we joined them on the 6th January. I spent Christmas Day on guard but had a very good Christmas dinner indeed. I also spent New Year's Day on guard.

Our first two or three days at the 2nd VTB. Dorrington, Salisbury Plains, soon showed us that at last

we had come to the real thing, but after a week or so we were quite used to it and began to enjoy ourselves …. Jerks which are used a great deal in training over here, and bayonet drill.

I had been through all my drill programme, and was just about ready to go to France. when I was put

into The War Babies Brigade, consisting of all the lads in the camp under nineteen years of age. My mate Willie Francis, was allowed to go to France although only about ten days older than myself, and this was quite a "knock" to me, as we had been together since the day we went to camp.

On December 1st, 1916, we went on leave to London until December 4th, 1916 While up in London I had a very good time indeed, and saw a great number of very interesting sights, a good few being very ancient places.

We were staying at the War Chest Club. Garney was saying that when on leave from France, in London, he met Miss Molesworth at the War Chest Club. The chief place 1 had the pleasure of seeing (due mostly to the thoughtfulness of the YMCA's guide) was Westminster Abbey, which is just lovely, although some of the most valuable things are heavily sand-bagged for fear of air raids.

We then went through the Houses of Parliament; and were shown where the men of the day, Mr Lloyd George, Mr Asquith, Sir John Jellico and others had made such great speeches, and also where King George is seated during the Session of Parliament. We then visited the Guild Hall, Law Courts, Royal Exchange, London Bridge, and Admiralty Arch. After dinner we had the luck to be able to see the King's horses, and go through the Royal stables and coach houses. The horses are a fine lot, especially a team of six blacks. As the Greys were away, we missed seeing them. I also had the pleasure of seeing the State Coach and Coronation Coach, which are very fine pieces of work, especially the Coronation Coach.

During this trip we also saw Buckingham Palace, and Queen Victoria's Statue. The next day I went to the Museum, and saw the first gun captured by the British in the present war, a 47 gun. London is a very poor place at night, fogs and very few lights indeed, but would be much better with the lights I daresay, but the underground railways are very good and l was often getting out after passing two or three stations and going up to the street again on revolving stairs, and having to take a tram to The Strand so as to be where I knew, my way about.

When we were put into the " War Babies Brigade " we formed a permanent guard for our Camp, and we are on guard three nights a week, so are only able to get to bed every second night, as when on guard we are forbidden to take any part of our equipment or clothing off, and it is very uncomfortable to be lying on a water-bottle or haversack all right, but if we can't stand this we wouldn't be able to stand the lire in France. I have volunteered three times to go to France on draft since Private Francis went, but have been turned down each time, and am told now that I will I not be able to go until I am 19 years of age.