

CENTENARY OF ANZAC 2014 - 2018



PRG 373/13E/2 Correspondence from Private Victor Voules Brown to members of his family between 4 October 1916 and 22 May 1918. Victor joined the 48th Battalion and was injured in France in April 1917, after which he spent some time in Richmond Military Hospital. Victor writes about his sea voyage to England via South Africa, his arrival in England, and his experiences fighting in France.

Transcribed by Ernest Roe, Volunteer at the State Library of South Australia 2014

Item 1

[16 page printed item, the front page reads]

Printed at sea.

Souvenir

AIF Reinforcements

"PITCH & TOSS"

"I know not, I care not,
Where Eden maybe,
But I know, I am in
Excellent company."

Second edition

[Handwritten at the top of page 1]

Dear Doll

Xmas greetings from your loving Brother Vic
Don't forget to show this to Dora, she will show you another one of four poems made up by
chaps on board they are very good
Best love & wishes

Item 2

At Sea

Oct 4th 16.

[The beginning of each page of a letter is indicated by a figure in square brackets]

[1] My Dear Mother & home.

You will see by the date that we are well on our journey, we expect to arrive in England next Tuesday night or Wed morning We are now getting out of the tropics which treated us very fair as regards heat. I have spent many a hotter day in the S.A. but of course it was a different sort of heat. We saw a few whales & any amount of [2] flying fish, the latter especially this morning there were thousands & thousands of them, they remind me very much of swallows. We did not have the best of times while at Cape Town, So much discipline Although what we did see was worth seeing, The coast of Africa is very very rough & I should think very dangerous They have a fine harbour there and it seems a very busy one, it is made in a funny shape (thus [sketch inserted here labelled "harbour" and "ocean"] only a \bit/ different shape [3] But that is the principal F Each or rather nea\rly all of the warfes are capable of taking three ships at once in them three the small lines

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represent ships. We have had a lot of sickness on board, especially mumps & influenza Meningitis has also been in evidence there is one case on board at present, but I believe it was caught early enough to check it and at present, the man is supposed to be out of all danger.

Yesterday morning we called at Pt St Vincent [cent] [4] It is a port in the Verde group of Islands & belongs to the Portuguese It is a natural harbour there but no wharves Should say it was impossible to get at, all rough by the shape of it, thus [sketch inserted here labelled "island" "harbour" "island"] It is absolutely the last place made I should say, the most hungry, rough, rocky & mountainous looking country I have seen As far as the eye could see. It was all mountain with no herbage at all growing upon \it/ and the mountains are peek after peek [sketch appended here] [5] The only vegetation we could see in any direction was a patch of about 5 acres where what looked like banana trees growing otherwise it looked absolutely barren. It is used principally as a coaling station Yesterday there was 20 steamers in Pt besides a lot of sailing ships One was the British Warship High Flier you may remember the name as the vessel that sank the Kaiser Wilhelm ale Grosse sometime back We dont know but expect she is acting as our [6] escort to England And of course we also hope so Every day now we have a submarine gaurd on of 40 men besides another gaurd on of about 60 men I was on last night am glad it is over as now I wont strike it again perhaps for the trip. They seem to do every thing very secret now and as you may guess considering we know & hear nothing for certain, there are some great alarms get about the ship, and everyone seems to add [7] a little more to them I want you to send me a Chronicle every now and again I feel as if a little Australian news will do me good In fact any paper at all with some news on it would be acceptable at present.

Monday

Well mummy dear hear we are, will soon be in England only another day And fancy it is six weeks today since we left. So you can see the ship must be fairly fast as we lost 3 good [8]days at Cape Town and St Vincent. I think we are now in the Bay of Biscay and it is as calm as a duck pond barring a swell We see quite a lot of sailing ships and steamers now We travel now all the time in a zig zag course now [sketch here] thus, on account of submarines as it is supposed to hide our course better We also have orders to carry our lifebelts all the time now with us in fact according to orders [9]we will be cremed if caught without them. We have not seen any \submarines/ uptodate, although the other night, the Colonel & officers were running about like one thing with glasses looking at some thing they thought was a submarine. Was talking to one of the gunners yesterday & asked him what \it/ it was they saw. He told me it was their joke as they reported seeing something which they [10] knew was was only a tun [?] or piece of wreckage So How is the farm getting on I hope a1, Suppose M^r Green is thinking of cutting his hay at present. I hope it turns out good.

I have told you about the chap from our deck having meningitis he was doing a1 & was reported out of all danger, but seemingly had a relapse & to-a early sunday morning died. He was buried [11] yesterday at sea with full military honours It is a very solemn service & I hope never to see any more Church parade took place immediately afterwards, The chaplain gave a farewell sermon to the men. A real mens sermon with advice for the benifit of the Empire as well as the individual

The weather last night took a change & this morning was quite chilly. I suppose [12] it will keep on now getting cooler until we reach the end of the journey

We expect to go into Plymouth. Also I hear it is nearly certain we will all be in quarantine when we arrive owing to the amount of sickness on board especially mumps which are just about raging Uptodate barring the flue I have been tip top and at present dont get enough to

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eat [13] in fact I am always hungry. If only the food would only get another flavour barring chips I am certain I could eat two ordinary dinners

The boxing tournament ended on Saturday. It always carries a big following with it, And ended as it started with no ill feeling against anyone.

I heard just this minute that it is out in orders [14] from the Col that the 48th in his opinion are the best disciplined unit on board. All I can say is I am very very sorry for some of the rest if we are

I M. B is still well but I think he is rather afraid his old complaint is not quite cured, he is not certain so dont mention anything about it [15] I have ordered a couple of Pitch and Toss papers (that is the paper printed on board about the journey, and all the principal events It is very good, & when I receive them, will forward them on. It is now 9.25 and just on parade time so will write some more later on. [16] Have just had a roll call and now are having a general inspection of hammocks blankets and kits. We have a kit inspection every week, to try and find some of the things that get lost, which are very plentiful, There is generally a lot of things which are genuinely lost come to light. But a lot which are stolen always manage to keep out of sight.

I had my braces stolen off my pants while asleep also six bob out of my pants [17] and the cover off my cap Evidently I dont sleep but with one eye lid shut. Also had my razor strop stolen out of my kit. I believe some off them would steal the teeth from ones mouth & growl because they were gold filled

This morning soon after we got up we saw a destroyer boat about a mile away, thought perhaps she had come to escort us through the channel [18] As up todate we have seen nothing in the shape of a destroyer convoy.

Well mother dear I think I have told you every thing worth mentioning since leaving Adelaide I will cable as soon as we arrive if I get the chance and write soon after.

Am well and in good spirits

With fondest love & hoping everyone at home is well

From your loving son Vic

Item 3

Oct 6th 1916

At Sea

My dear Mother & home.

You will see by the date we are well on our journey now, and I don't think there will be to many sorry when it ends. We expect to arrive next Wed or Thursday. You will know by my last which track we came. We have only touched 2 ports since we left You will receive a letter latter on describing the trip more fully, at least I hope so. The orders we have had about what we cannot mention leaves very little to write about so am not going to try and write much in this. You will gather that I am well, just about over properly of cold. and as soon as we get off the ship will be quite happy. Every precaution is taken now as regards submarines. Besides the ships crew all the old deep water sailors in among the soldiers have volunteered as lookout men, they are constantly on the lookout.

I will say Au Revoir for the present you will receive a longer one perhaps the same time as this. Love to everyone

From your loving son Vic

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Item 4

Oct 14th 1916
Codford.

[1] My Dear Mother

You will see by the heading that we have arrived in England. I sent a short cable just to let you know I was well. We arrived at Plymouth on the 11th so have been here 4 days now. From Plymouth we were entrained to this camp through Exeter & Taunton. The country is I think in bonza, and am quite satisfied it is all the girls & you said it was, only the reality is far away & above a description And can quite understand an Englishman fighting for his country.

We are camped on the side of a hill with farms all around us, between two small villages Codford & Wylie. The other evening I went for a walk through Wylie, a lovely walk. It is a funny little place The Country Church & Inn are right along side of one another infact the Church is practically in the Inn back yard. I had a look through the Cementary but it was to dark to see much every thing seemed [Attached to the back of this page of the letter is an envelope addressed "Mrs J.A.V. Brown Brighton South Australia" Throughout the collection, envelopes are attached similarly, most addressed to Vic's mother. Significant exceptions have been noted where they occur] [2] as old as Adam. Saw one funny memorial [?] In memoriam of John ——— 28 years rector of this Church also of Anne dearly beloved wife of the above who died in Bath Am going to try and get off to go to Church one Sunday.

I also paid a visit to the Inn or Tap Room it seemed very old and just what we read about. The walls seemed about 6 ft high, and in the little parlor very stuffy & smoke dont mention it. When I say I couldnt stand it & had to get out you can imagine it was bad. And the publican also just what we read about, a funny old codger in real English clothes.

I am going to write to some of the cousins I wish I had Dougs Aunts address but suppose I can get it from Cousin Perkins but not in time to see them on my 4 days leave to London which I think is going to start on Tuesday. Only one thing may stop us & that is both yesterday morning & this morning 3 cases of mumps have turned up and at present we are under isolation Am hoping it will only be for a day

[3]We had a destroyer for an escort the last day & a half before coming into Port my word they are lively little things, when she turned we first saw her on the sky line and in about a ¼ of an hour she was dashing around us at the rate of knots.

In some things there camps are above ours but take it all around they are not in the same street for convenience & cleanness. I think the discipline over here is going to be rather sudden and will take a lot of getting used to. I think I have found out where young Alf is also Jack Malone Alf is about 14 miles away & Jack about 3 ½ Am going over with luck to see Jack tomorrow to see if he knows anything of Ernie. Au Revoir mummy

Best love to all

From your loving son Vic

Item 5

Codford
Oct 15th 16

[1] My Dear Mother

Here I am still in the quiet old place of Codford I say quiet but last night was one right out of the common as from what I have heard things were only middling infact it was close up big trouble all over the same old trouble Anzac police being too officious with some of the boys any way things are much better tonight and likely I think to keep so.

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I had another letter from Doll a few days ago. I suppose long ere this Kath is quite a1 again after her mumps I guess she did look some handsome while they were at their prime. Never mind Kath I hope you will come out of the examination with flying colours again this year just to spite the mumps.

I suppose Doll will get a letter from Bert by this mail I know he wrote one [2] to her as I was with him at the time as the letters will show, he wrote it the day before he left for France. Ah well Doll he had to go sooner or later & now he will have a lot better chance of getting his com you know it is understood over on this side before anyone gets a com he has first to see active service in France so you can quite understand now why he was not sent to Oxford 1st I dont envy him much though this weather it is getting real cold again except you know at times when one gets thinking Anyhow at present it is no good wishing at present as I am feeling no good at all have got a real bonza cold also another fit of aches I feel thankfull at times I am not out in the cold all day. I suppose it will wear off in a few days. At present I am sitting near the stove in the hut feeling quite warm trying to write [3] this between the intervals of talk of the rest of the boys It is funny old talk I'll guess you would all find it interesting at times at some of the different experiences they have gone through

Just fancy it is over twelve months or there about since I arrived in Codford The place is beginning to look just like it did then. The leaves on all the trees are beginning to fall now very fast, so in the near future we can look forward to the trees all having their winter coat on either on with snow or off with leaves. Have been expecting a letter from Jack Malone now for a fortnight Anyway no news is good news so they say so I suppose one will turn up in a day or so. Doll tells me in hers you have had a lot of new enlistments in Brighton of late I am afraid with out something unforseen happens in the [4]near future their will be something left for them to do when they arrive over here.

Well I must agree with Doll as regards the Hunish sound of Australia day at Borrika I didn't think there was so many German names there until I saw them all in print and then I remembered a couple more which were not on the programme Wait until the new families go to live there My word something doing then Eh.

Au Revoir mummy for the present. Will write again soon

With fondest love to all

From your loving son Vic

Item 6

Codford

Nov 12th 16

[1] My Dear Mother & home

It is Sunday afternoon and a nice day. for a wonder, we have been having some real cold and wet days lately Bad colds are the order of the day needless to say I have my share of them. This time last sunday I was out at Chelsea with cousin Nellie & Algy I think that is his name It was quite a treat to get inside a homely room again. I like them both very much and think cousin Nellie very like Auntie Lizzie They made me very much at home & wanted me to stop with them. Last night when I arrived home at the camp, there was a large box for me full of ham sandwiches, cakes, apple tarts & lollies from Chelsea, they were very welcome I can tell you as the food here is very very limited The only time I have been contented was while in London & today. We all had a bonza good time for the four days, but time was to limited. We arrived about noon on a Friday. Three or four of us stopped at the Shaftesbury Hotel, real good single rooms & everything up to the nines, afternoon I wandered about hopelessly lost, had to get a taxi to get home In the evening I went to the Hippodrome, Saturday [2]morning I caught a train for York at 10 am arriving about 1 pm, spent about an

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hour at the Cathedral had a walk around the old wall & then went out to see Ernie Smith at the hospital. Am glad to say he is much better than he was, & looking forward very much to the arrival of Miss Vaughan.

I arrived back in London about 11.30 pm. On Sunday we saw the gaurd mount at Buckingham Palace, & then I went out to Chelsea, next day we saw The Tower, Westminster, St Pauls, & Madam Tousards, also had a walk down Threadneedle St, & caught a train back for the camp at 6.45 pm so try to imagine what time we had to spare. I would like very much to spend a month there, but dont like my chance. I dont think one can buy leave over here, let alone get it genuine a tremendous lot take it, but it is usually only about 3 or 4 days before they are caught & usually get about 10 to 14 days in clink or worse still, chasing the bugle. One has just blown & chaps are going from every hut.

I saw the account of Frank Langs death in the paper this morning. I was very sorry to hear it from home Am try to find young Alf upto date I have had no luck, but think he is at a place called Larke Hill about 12 miles away [3] In an Observer I saw today I saw a photo of an NCO school, managed to see Berts phiz also a few more I knew at the exhibition. I also saw M' Greens in among a lot more cockies at the conference just after I left.

No I was not among the crowd that had their photo taken at Mitcham before leaving I have received the photos which were taken before I left & like them very much, they fetch back memories of a happy days. The third of the 48th Batt are leaving for the front in about a week. They are picking a lot of us for different jobs about principally MPs They have picked me but up to date am still with the boys at drill and we are getting any amount of that A bit too much to suit me and all with a full pack & rifle it is a great thing for the appetite.

Up todate I have not received the money I paid into the Bank. I wish it would come along as I borrowed two pounds to go to London with. Things are very dear over here, a good deal dearer than Australia

Poor old Tom Bennett has been very crook with the mumps they got down in his groins. I had a note from him today he is getting on tip top, so perhaps things are not as bad as we thought with him. Also Jack Malone is not going to the front for some time he is on the staff I think or very soon will be I am glad as I look forward to seeing him every few days Goodbye mummy dear for the present Will write again soon, with best love to all From your ever loving son Vic

Item 7

438 Kings Road

Nov^{br} 20th 1916.

[1] My dear Dorothy

I must not let another mail go out without answering your nice long letter, which I was delighted to receive, & quite excited at the news of Vics coming, but I began to think he must be lost, as week after week went by & he did not come, till finally Fannerie & I went & raked his address out at the Australian Office, & then I just wrote & bullied him for not coming, of course as it turned out it was not his fault, fancy keeping them all that [2] time without any leave, I call it a down right shame, dont you, Well as you may guess we were delighted to see him & I am thinking all the family will be green with envy to think they were not here to welcome the wanderer, but of course I only got short notice & then was not sure if he wd come Saty or Sunday, we have been so wishing he could be here today, it has been so bitterly cold this last week, that I think he wd appreciate a good fire, am afraid he will be feeling it, as we who are used to it, are doing a lot of grumbling, the East wind is cruel.

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[3] I am sending him a line tonight to ask if he is in want of anything in the way of extra clothing

I suppose you heard what he did when in London, my goodness he must have hustled, to have seen so much, I wish he cd have stayed longer, there are some splendid things on at the Theatres he wd have enjoyed.

I suppose by the time you receive this, Xmas will be over, of course it is nothing like it used to be, festivities are scarce, & every one is thinking of our soldiers & sailors, & hoping that the war will be over very soon, but how it seem to drag

[4] When is your beau coming ? tell him we shall give him a warm welcome, but I hope he may get a commission, so that he will not have to rough it so much I rec'd a letter from Baltimore U.S.A. last week, opened by Censor & two cards extracted, they open everything going to & coming from there, so we have to be careful what we say. of course I am curious about these cards expect they were war subjects, at the same time it makes one thankful that at atlast we are beginning to realize as a nation, that our enemies are everywhere. I am so pleased to have Vic's photo, it is a good one, I wd love to have one of you girls, any chance ! –

[5] One good thing the war has done for us, is the compulsory early closing 8'ock each day & 9o'ck on Saturday, I do appreciate it, our hours used to be so long, of course the streets are so dark, there is not much pleasure in trapsing] about at night. A friend called to see me last week, she had a house in Dover, but the constant visits of the Zeps so unnerved her she had to give it up, they always went to bed ready to clear out at a minutes notice & even had instructions the direction to take to Canterbury in case of invasion, so you may guess things are very serious there. & no one allowed [6] to enter or leave the town without a Pass Port, she is now doing Clerical work at a Munition Place at Woolwich, where the guns are going all day.

How is Mill ? I hope she is not finding her work too trying, it is splendid if one can stand to see so much suffering, & Kath I am glad to hear is making good progress with her singing. I do hope you will all have a very very Happy New Year, & be sure that as far as we are able, we shall look after Vic, I know how you all must feel it, that he is so far from \home/ but we shall pray for him, & that will help so much my fondest love to all from Your Loving Cousin Nell. Alfie sends kind remembrances

[Attached is an envelope with Nov 1916 pencilled on it and addressed in ink to Miss K.M.Brown. Sturt Rd. Brighton South Australia]

Item 8

Codford
Nov 27th 16.

[1] My Dear Dad

Just a line to let you know I am still going strong, barring a cold which seems the order of the day. It is as cold as charity over here now, am afraid a lot of us will find the climat to severe for us during the winter, that is if we are left here that long. We have heard rumors this last few days that one we may be leaving in about 3 weeks, but of course nothing for certain We have had one dose of snow, 'and I for one don't wish to see any more Last night was very severe cold & frosty this morning there was no water or mud about anywhere up till dinner time, the whole ground was frozen hard & quite slippery about dinner time the mud started to appear again, and there is some mud everywhere it seems impossible to get out out it, and it seems to rain every day. As for going for a walk into the village after tea I have cut that right out of the programe. I either go to bed or sit [2] by the fire every night.

We have been rather unlucky as regards our last shift of the camp, as some of the camps

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are chattie [?] , especially the gaurd room, when we were on gaurd the other day we found out to our sorrow. Some of the boys caught quite a haul myself I couldn't find any but fancy I can feel the little devils at times, anyway I have brought the silk undershirt into use, anyway it is an experience worth leaving out of any programme.

Uptodate I have done no good with the Commonwealth Bank, my money has not arrived, at present there is a cable trying to find out where it is which is hard to take out of the 2/- per day. I would advice no one to have any similar dealings through the same Bank

I had a letter from cousin Nellie a few days ago, they are very good to me, & seem to try to make things happier for me I would like to get a little more leave but don't seem to like my chance

How are things getting on with the farm I hope every thing is still a.1, & am looking forward to a letter from Green.

[3] It will be three months tomorrow since we left Adelaide, my word the scene has changed. I suppose Bert will soon be on the water now if not there already. I hope I see him when he arrives over here, that is if we are still here

Well Dad news seems scarce this trip so will say Au Revoir for a few more days Hoping you are all in the best of health

With best love & wishes to you all From your loving Son Vic

Item 9

Codford

Dec 11th 16.

[1] My Dear Mother & home

There is a mail leaving Aus about the 15th, so will let you know the latest I suppose the most important is that the 5/48 boys are all warned for the next draught We dont know for certain when we are to leave, but beleive it will be on the 23rd of this month, so it looks as if we will not see an English Xmas after all, but as we are told we will get no Xmas leave if we are hear, we will miss but very little by stopping \going/. We dont know for certain where we are going whether France or Mesopotamia some say one & some the other, I think it will be France, as according to what we hear the Australians are in want of Reinforcements but hope it will be Mesopotamia as I am afraid of the cold in France. We are having it very severe over hear, & practically everyone is ill more or less We hear of deaths now every day, & you would not be surprised if you knew the treatment or how ill some have to be before they are taken into the hospital. It is due I will say in a [2] big way to some of those who maligner & are always on sick parade to try & dodge a bit of drill, consequently a lot of the dinkum fellows have to suffer. Up to date I have not been on one sick parade so you can see I have been holding my own, I am taking no chances now, as to many are ill, in a lot of cases I think it is neglect on their own parts

Yesterday Sunday was a beast of a day. We had a little sun, a cold wind, sleet, snow, and rain, & this morning the ground was simply frozen hard with frost. According to what we here I think the winter is exceptionly cold for this month.

On Saturday we had another couple of hundred men come into the camp from Quelé/nsland, they are finding it pretty cold needless to say. There was about 1000 of them arrived in the boat they came in.

There was Australian mail arrived about a fortnight ago I got letters from Dora & Mary but none from home I think yours must have gone down in the Arabia. I have received an Australasia also a Bulletin from you since arriving.

We have got a bonza band over here now in our Training Battalion it is from NSW [3] It makes a big difference when out on route marches We are in D Comp of the 12th Training

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Battalion 4th Division, but as regards address keep to 5 Reinf. 48 Batt A. I. H you can add 4th Division if you like as we will still be in that Division whether training or at the front. I forget whether I told you that I had a letter or P C rather from young Alf, he could not manage to meet, as he was leaving for France so I suppose he knows now ~~by this~~ how cold it can get.

For the last week I have been acting as an MP I took it on for a few days to get out of the cold, as it is mostly indoor but would not like to stop at it, As I am quite satisfied I was never cut out for a Policeman.

Now mummy news is scarce, so will say Au Revoir
With fondest love to all at home From Your loving son Vic

P S When I get away I will try to let you know in what part I am by spelling the first letter in each word after a -----

Item 10

Codford
Dec 22nd 1916.

[1] My Dear Mother

I think this will be the last letter from me in England for some time, as I think we are off to France either tomorrow or Xmas day. We are not sent straight into the firing line, as for a month at least we are trained at the a training camp which is called the Bullring it is situated at a place called Etaps about 12 miles from Bulo\ugn I think I said in a previous letter it was near Epres, but it is not any way near it at all It is in the South of France so perhaps it will not be quite so cold of there

Last night there must have been 8 or 9 hundred troops left Codford, about 350 out of our particular camp, which consists of the 45th 46th 47th & 48th Batts which forms the 12th Brigade & the 4 Division if Inf. Last night the boys of the 45th 6th & 47th went over & we are to go either on 23rd or Xmas Day. I think it will be Xmas Day or perhaps later I still want to get off for a couple of days at Xmas as the Brighton cousins wanted me [2] to go down there as cousin Nellie & Algy would be there also, anyway I suppose it cant be done so it is a case of smile & look happy.

We have had some terrible weather lately for a week it has been freezing & the night before last it rained like mad & the place yesterday & this morning is like a big hole, mud up to our boot tops. Also all last night it rained very hard, until about three quarters of an hour ago, when it started to snow, and at present it is snowing like mad, the best snow storm we have had the flakes are quite large & it is falling very heavy, so I suppose it this year is going to be a real old fashioned Xmas, with any amount of snow about.

I am sending Dad a couple of Daily papers, with Loyd Georges opening speeches in it. No doubt in my mind that there has been something very much wrong at the head of affairs. And I do beleive now they have the right man in the right place. He is I think going right in to win the war as soon as possible & up todate he has proved himself both fearless & bold, also very brainy so perhaps in the near future things will begin to move a little quicker in our favour.

I had a letter from Mr Green [3] last mail He told me things were looking tip top at Berrika especially ours I saw in the paper the other day that owing to the heavy rains in Australia practically ½ of the crops would be spoilt. I do hope we were lucky enough to miss the year. Cousin Fanny & Nellie have been especially kind kind to me in sending me things also they tried to do all they could for me while in London. Both Nellie & Alfred Cupit have asked me to treat their respective places as if it was home

Now mother dear I must say Au Revoir once again. I will send you all a a line as soon as I can on arrival in France I think now that is our destination & not Mesopotamia I suppose

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you are up to your eyes in work preparing for Xmas. I was very, very, glad to hear that Bert was going to Duntroon. It is worth the candle, when we know the difference between the living of private & Officer Otherwise I am quite contented with things here, as of course one doesn't expect all beer & skittls, & I wouldn't change the fellows in the 5/48 for any I have struck yet, & I only hope we dont get separated in France
Best love mummy to you & all at home From your Ever loving son Vic

[4] P.S. I havn't received the parcels yet. But last night a rather large mail arrived in the camp so perhaps I will be lucky enough to receive them before I go, they will be just right for Xmas if I do.

Item 11

Postcard labelled "Camp No.1 Codford S^t Mary", on the back of which is written "This is I think the Camp I am now situated in Best love from Vic":

Item 12

Postcard of Stonehenge, on the back of which is the date 22.12.16 and "Dear brother I have had a bonza Xmas mail in the last few days. We are not leaving tonight as expected perhaps Xmas day but I think most likely on Wednesday next I sending a sketch of Englands answer to President Wilson Peace note to hang up in the lodge. It is a bonza only out in tonights paper so the latest Best love to you & yours Vic "]

Item 13

Hurdcott.
Jan 7th 17.

[1] My Dear Mother & Home

A few days ago I received a home mail of four letters One from you two from Doll. & one from Kath Of course I was very pleased to get them & hear of you all it was about three weks before when I had the last letter. Dolls was written on the 4th of Nov telling me that dear old Marj had passed away. 4 days previous Poor old girl I was sorry to read it It doesn't seem fair to me to think of a dear young girl like Mari being taken but I suppose it is not for us to wonder why and perhaps it was all for the best As Doll said in her letter perhaps she would have had to suffer a lot of pain if she had been spared.

[2] Well Mother both Xmas & the New Year have passed once more I know you all could not be as happy as usual, but I do hope every one was in the best of health We over here in this Depot had a right royal spree as far as Xmas dinner & tea were concerned I can't remember every thing so will send you a menu We had everything that is on it in plenty It certainly does not read as if there was a shortage of food in this country but of course the military have first call on all food stuffs It is as far as I can see & hear as per usual the poor people that have to suffer & go short My experience from my leave w is provided one has money he can get as much as ever in London

[3] Last Saturday I received the parcel that the Green family sent to me It took about 4 ½ months for it to reach me It was knocked about a good deal but inside was as good as the day it was packed I will write to them in a few days.

When you wrote you were complaining of the cold The cold must have followed the letter because of late it has been awful It has been fairly dry but frost & cold in galore I loathe the cold I can't stand it at any price & am sure it does not agree with me I have only been fair of late nothing to worry about all the same I wish I could feel my old self again It gets on my

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nerves And you can guess military discipline does not help matters But that is all nothing It will all come [4] right in the future. And let us hope it will be soon At present the papers are full of peace talk, goodness knows what will come of it, but I always think where there is smoke there is fire so perhaps something will come of it

Cousin Nell received the cable while I was on 4 days leave I found it on my plate at breakfast one morning Nell then sent it on to Bert so he also ought to have got it about Xmas time I hope you or rather Doll received ours in time for Xmas I also sent one to Dora but addressed it to Tasmania so suppose as she was in SA she did not get until after Xmas. Never mind though better days a coming when there will be no need of wires I often wondered if you had ever collected any of my 3/- per day, was glad to here you had [5] collected same

Was sorry to hear Alf Smith had been wounded but without it was a very serious one he has been much luckier than Will Nearly everyone gets wounded it is nearly impossible to miss one. so you must never worry about a wound.

The boys are beginning to arrive into the hut before going to bed consequently plenty of noise so will say Goodnight With fondest love to all at home

From your loving son Vic

[Used envelope attached, addressed to M^rs J.A.Brown Sturt Rd Brighton South Australia]

Item 14

France

Feb 3rd 1917

[1] My Dear Dad

Just a few lines to let you know I am still going strong. At present we are still in the same place as when I last wrote, but I think this time tomorrow, we will be a good many miles away from here, making for the front. We have had a good deal longer at this camp than most of the units, so are not out of our turn. We don't know where we are bound for but it is very often the case to be billeted behind the firing line for weeks on joining the Batt, as very often the Batt is out of action, & resting. I did say in one of my previous letters to John I would wire when I left for the front, but seeing it is about 6 weeks since I first wrote saying we were leaving for France, you ought to know about now I am here, & money is not to plentiful We were only warned yesterday for draught, & since we have been getting issued with the necessary equipment for the trenches. I wrote to Dora on the first, but did not know then we were off, also to M^r Green

I wish I knew just how things turned out with the harvest. I saw some glowing accounts in a English [2] paper the other day of some South Aus crops, so think & hope provided nothing happened at Berrika, the returns were good. I have no idea how or what the Gov is doing with the wheat this year but hope it something satisfactory Thinking of wheat & frost I have often wondered lately how the crops & cockies would get on with some of the frosts we have been getting lately. I never intend to growl any more about heat when I return, it will do me every time in preference to this cold, We have been having real good sunny days of late, but no strength in the sun at present I am looking out of window in this hut & all I can see for a couple of miles of hilly ground white with frozen snow.

Mother said in the last letter I had from her for Xmas that you were still very keen on war news, I wish one could write without being censored, one thing I think there is a few months fighting ahead of us yet. In this mornings paper we get the news of Germany declaring war on all shipping, to my mind that sounds good for us, as I cant see the neutral powers doing nothing in return.

Do you remember Dave Sorenson from the Lake, I met him the other day, he has just returned from hospital after being wounded & is going up on the same draught as we after

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he has had over two years of it, his brother Ted [3] is also over here somewhere. Also Old Ted has had two years of it, & at present in England convalescent after a wound, he was in the Artillery a Sgt Major & was I believe down for the next promotion, but did it in his own old style, anyway now he is booked for Australia, as medically unfit with age & also the wound I got quite a lot of Lake news from him about different ones, quite a lot of chaps I know have enlisted from W A. Have also in the same tent as I a young chap from Salisbury named Henry Siddle he is a real trip trick

Another thrilling bit of news. Dora will tell you in ho about a previous trip we had out one night visiting a town quite near which is out of bounds, (in fact every town is out of bounds) Well we thought last night would be our last night hear so a couple of us decided to pay another visit & have another good feed steak x eggs x chips We were unlucky & got caught going in by the MPs consequence saw spent about an hour in side a cell waiting for an escort to fetch us back to camp we searched & had everything taken from us, & then turned loose in big stone cell, with in it to sit on but a cobble floor & pitch dark, no blanket or heat Oh Lor, wasnt it cold. Its my first experience of one [4] & hope it is the last, Not finished yet. We have to go before the Major for being out of bounds, usual fine is five days pay stopped so the feed we didn't get is going to cost 25/- (cheap at half the price)

One thing it was an experience I had never had before, also saw more of the town than I intended to.

We expect when we join our Batt to find some letters awaiting for us, I hope so anyway, as it seems ages since I received one. I hope everything is a1 with you mother & everyone else. With love & best wishes to all at home Your loving son Vic

Item 15

Somewhere in France
Feb 12th 1917.

[1] My Dear Mother

Since my last letter to Dad from the Base, we have made two moves, nearer to front line. The first one we went for about 7 hours in train and camped the night in tents near a fairly large town which at one time was in the hands of Huns, but is now in the hands of the British again you can guess the place is knocked about a good bit. Next morning we marched about 8 miles & joined our Batt who were camped in iron huts about 2½ to 3 miles behind the line in a sort of reserve & doing fatigue work in the shape of making roads, railways etc. It was here we got our first experience of the big guns while out on fatigue. The older hands don't seem to take much notice of the shells, but to us it was all knew I suppose [2] we will soon become like them. They are a jolly fine lot of fellows, & to true they have been through a lot of hardships but are still as jolly as sandboys, on every chance are up to jokes & singing

It was a great treat there to have fires in oil drums in the huts again, of course the coal is not issued, but no one objects to them getting it the best way they can, & needles to say every hut has a fire bucket

We were there about a week & last night on returning from work, a fair number of us were told off (Alf included) to join the Brigade quarters for fatigue work so about dark we started to march up to our present quarter which is not such a great way from the line It is a funny old place we are in not a bit like I imagined, it is all little dug outs we camp in In ours [3] there are two of us, just room to lay in side by side, & we cant sit up. I am lying down writing this, so you can imagine I am pushed for elbow room. We spent the last part of this morning clearing our little house out, & laying clean bags in it

Last night it was too funny for words when some of big guns opened fire just near us, noise don't mention it. The first big one that went off we thought was a Hun shell just near us, we

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nearly jumped out of our skins, and then as each one went off we got a sort of used to it, & started joking, & really I thought I would cry at one time with laughing. You ask Doll how I can laugh when started, & finally laughed or coughed myself to sleep

I think in the near future our Batt will be in action again for about a fortnight And am led to beleive we will be on the job until they come out, when we will [4] will again join them, & perhaps will go back to the billiet. Fritz is not getting much rest this winter, they are all ways at him. Last night one of the Batt in our Brigade hopped over (That is the term used when a Batt makes a raid And I hear this morning were successful in taking a front trench & holding it all so some prisoners, & very slight harm to themselves.

I recievied a letter from Dad dated Nov 28th also one each from Kath & Mary a few days ago & two from Dora dated about Dec 19th & Xmas Day these are the first letters for some time, so expect soon to get those that have missed me. I have also seen Xmas papers, I was glad to hear in Dads letter that things were well on the farm & see by the paper that the English Gov have bought all the wheat from Aust at 4/9 per bushel or about 4/5 for the cockies, & are advancing 2/6 bush as the first advance

[5] I also see that the thunder storms continued latter than Dads letter, but hope it managed to miss our little lot Tell Kath I was glad to hear she had passed another year with her singing

It is just commencing to snow again I hope it forgets & stops as our work is night work from t 5 pm until about 12 midnight and it is not to nice moving around in the snow at night

If I should not get time to write next week I will send a Field card Must now close hoping everyone is well at home With fondest love to all I am Your loving son Vic

Item 16

Somewhere in France

26/2/17

[1] My Dear Mother

A few more lines this time to wish you & Doll many happy returns of the 24th & 25th It will be a bit late for those days, but during the last 10 days I have had no chance of posting letters, but still my thoughts will be of you both on those days, and may they be happy days. Since writing last I have gone through some more experiences I have been up to the front. & I suppose now am entitled to be called a dinkum soldier. The Batt was up there for 8 days I was only up there for 6 days as the first two I spent in the hospital with influenza but am practically free [2] free of that now thank goodness There is no doubt whatever about the days in the line being the hardest time of a soldier's life I used to think we were treated hard at times in the training camps, but I am quite satisfied I will never growl any more about the training part also when I come home again growling will be cut right out of my programme

A couple of days before we went in the ground began to thaw & owing to that the ground was practically one big mud hole at times we came up to our middles in it quite common to be up to our knees needless to say it is impossible to keep ones feet dry. And when we left to come out again well I am sure you would not have known me, As we were practically covered [3] covered in mud. I also had about 10 days growth of beard on, which did not improve matters as far as appearance Anyway we arrived out of the stunt with few casualties, and at present are camped in huts a few miles out of it. It is glorious to be able sit down dry, & practically away from the roar of guns

It is about 3 weeks to a month since we changed our clothes & about 7 since I had bath, but I think in a day or two, we will all be treated to a bathe & a change of clothing, which will be very acceptable as my clothes at present are almost talking to me I am looking forward to another treat this afternoon While up at the front I received a letter from both Doll & Dora,

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also the two cables that were sent for Xmas. They [4] were on the late side for Xmas but nevertheless were very acceptable And yesterday I received quite a lot of letters, in fact I think I must have received all of those letters that have missed me since leaving Codford, so you can guess what a bonza day I spent reading letters. All the rest of the time was spent cleaning clothes equipment & rifles It is a work of art to get the mud off, we have not finished yet, most of them are still brushing away, I have to have another go directly

I had a very pleasant surprise on coming out I saw Bob Hyman walking along in charge of a group of men, Needless to say when I sang out Hallo Bob we both fell out of our line & had a talk. Bob is a Sgt in the 32nd Lewis guns. He came down to [5] to see me in the night, and again last night The first night we talked over sardines & tinned tomatoes, last night over the contents of a parcel I received from cousin Harry. I also had one from Fred & Rose Perkins All the cousins over here seem very good to me. I have not been lucky enough to receive any from PA up to date but am still in hopes, as I am looking out for some socks. I hope Bert was lucky enough for Duntroon \to be opened up again, as that ought to keep him over in Australia long enough to miss this lot, & I can assure you it is worth missing I will keep on the look out for Will Smith also Harry & Norm Collins Will now say Au Revoir once more I will write again in a few days With best love to all & hoping everyone is well From your loving son Vic

Item 17

Somewhere in France

March 6th 1917

[1] My Dear Sister

I wrote to mother last week for her birthday, so will try to write you a few lines for yours, it will be a lot late, but better late than never. I got a letter from you last week in a green envelope with found open written on it, so was evidently lucky to get it. better yours than Dora's Eh what In yours you told me that Duntroon was very likely closing, anyway I hope Bert managed to get in before it did so, in any case I hope it will all be over before many more months are over, and then instead of Bert coming away I will be on the way home (much betterish Eh) I was surprised to hear of Will Smith leaving so soon I will keep on the look out him also Harry & Norm Collins. I would like to have an hour over there just to find out how things really have turned out this season. All the accounts I have seen in the papers, seemed to point to everything being A1, but would like to know the result. I suppose I will in due course. I suppose Dora by this time is well in Tasmania.

Yesterday I received a parcel from Harilda [?] the first I have got home from S A. so now as I have got one perhaps the ones from home will also come along. I have had about 7 from the cousins in England, they are very good to me, & have offered to do anything at all for me. I had a letter from Fred Perkins [2] the other day, he has been confined to his bed & says he will have to give the farm best this winter, as he feels his health won't stand the strain.

We are some miles behind the line camped in huts at present, between two French villages one about a mile away the other about a mile & a half Some of the boys have been over to them, but up to date my old feet have been to tender to take on any unnecessary walking, around here the villages are not knocked about like they are further up It is quite a treat to see some houses & trees still standing up. There is some lovely woods in France just near us is a bonza thick one of big trees either elm or beech. Evidently in peace time some very big bug has lived here, as there is a very big building near by, & a lot of the ground is laid out in garden fruit trees if I am any judge, no doubt I could tell you better if there were any fruit upon them

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You will get an idea of which front we are on by looking up an old paper & seeing where Fritz has evacuated along a distance of the front. [3] And no doubt when we go back into the line we will have to go a few miles further than we did last time & the further the better as it will be so much nearer Germany or the end of her. I think I told you about how I met Bob Hyman, he is a Sgt in the Lewis guns & in the 32nd the same Batt as Jack Malone. I too was detailed into a reserve team of Lewis gunners the other day so am putting in most of my days now learning how to use a Lewis gun Well Doll news seems hard to think of this trip I suppose it is because we are stationary & nothing new is happening to write about, so in the future perhaps my letters will be shorter, of course if it was not for the censor I could keep going to some time Tell Bert I havn't had a drink since coming out but when I do it will be to (the fair) With fondest love to all And best wishes for the 25th From your loving brother Vic

[Used envelope attached, this one addressed to Miss D.E.Brown , same address]

Item 18

France
March 15th 17

[1] My Dear Mother

There is a mail closing here for Australia tonight so will write a few more lines to let you know I am still well We are still out on the grass This afternoon has been a sports afternoon in the shape of a football match A Comp V B interest was very keen & a good many francs changed hands, needless to say I was a good barracker for A Com who turned up easy winners It has been raining a good [2] deal infact all last night & the match was played in the rain. We are having funny old weather some days here are bonza sunny days others wet, but I think the real cold must have left barring an occasional day

Today I received 3 letters one from Mill one from Dora & one from Ern Harvey Mill & Dora were written on 21st Jan Ern on Xmas Eve, was sorry to hear M^r Green had had trouble with the stripper, but no doubt he overcame it, especially as there was evidently something pretty good in the paddock. It was [3] bad luck though losing Bob I also saw in an old Chronicle that R S Penfold had died in the hospital. It must have been unexpected. I hope the report of the Berriman turned out untrue especially as she no doubt would have a big load of troops aboard.

Yesterday we had a big surprise as both the Xmas puddings & Xmas boxes turned up The puds were A1 also the boxes it was marvellous what was stacked away in them, They \were/ packed by the League of Loyal women in SA mine was sent by Sylvia Ritchie from Goolwa I have just recognised it

[4] It was good fun opening them and am sure if the senders could have seen us they would have been quite satisfied for the trouble.

No doubt you have seen by papers of this date that things have improved a bit in our favour both here & in Mesopotamia May it keep on going & we will all soon be home again in good old SA.

Well mother must close now Cook house has just blown & it doesn't pay to be late here as we are not in the land of plenty Best love & wishes to all & hoping everyone is in the best of health From your loving son Vic

[Used envelope attached addressed to Mrs J A V Brown, Brighton South Australia]

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Item 19

Somewhere in France
March 22nd 1917

[1] My Dear Dad & home

A few more lines I wrote mother last week We are still in the same camp as when I last wrote surrounded by a bonza French wood And no doubt the French are great ones for Forestry. I have just tossed it over in my mind weather I would write this, or give myself the daily chat hunt decided on the letter my mate is at work on the other job My daily catch is between 40 & 60 so you can guess we put in some very comfortable nights

I had a letter from Mill by the last mail. She seems to be keeping A1 at her new job, according to her letter things ought to have turned out tip top at Borrika It was stiff luck for Green losing Bob, also to have [2] both strippers go bung, but that I suppose is all in the game & no doubt he overcame the stripper trouble I am expecting to hear from him next mail.

I saw in yesterdays paper that SA had put up a record yield & not a single district had turned out a failure, so am expecting to hear some good news

A couple of weeks ago I had a letter from the Common Bank London saying Ten pounds had arrived for me from their Adelaide branch. I wondered if it was Ten out of the £15 I put in before leaving or whether you had sent me Ten pounds I wish I had some of it here as at present I am having another new experience in the shape of being dead stony broke I have only a lucky halfpenny & it is a week off pay day I suppose I will survive this though

[3] Well Dad you people in Ausie ought to be getting some good War news at present from our front also Mesopotamia. I can picture Bonython making another small fortune out of hourly additions No doubt also you see in your papers what we dont see in the English & that is that the Austras are fair in this lot & are doing great work. It was the divisions that relieved us & another (One over ours & three under ours) that did the job of taking the place we have been working for some time. Its name begins with a b & finishes with ne. you might be able to guess where we have been I reckon by what I have seen in the English papers that it is the best news we have had since War was declared. & beleive that the big push has started, and very soon Fritz will know it even more than [4] he does at present. In fact Dad I believe the finish end of the finish has now started & will soon be in sight.

We are still getting every morning on the parade ground & the afternoons we usually spend at football Yesterday afternoon the 48 Batt played the Anzac head quarters team. they were supposed to be unbeatable & had a bonza record, but we put a very hot team out, & didn't give them a lookin They took their beating rather bad Our boys didn't half barrack them. Its funny but the boys here have no time for the Anzac I suppose because most of them are MP or on staff jobs also that they wont recognise any other Aust as being an Anzac except the chosen few consequently at times feeling & barrack ran rather high. I think the hottest I heard was Buck in Australia Go on French haters footers [5] Why you won't fight & you cant play football so you cant be surprised at their dropping a bundle & taking it bad.

Today has been wet again worst luck, as the ground was just getting tip top, & no doubt if it rains much it will interfere with the transport as the ground will soon get soft again and now they have got Fritz on the move we dont want anything to interfer with us. Infact I reckon it is up to us to have the luck now there always seems something to crop up in his favour if not a fog or sea rain on land. I dont know much, but am inclined to think the Russia trouble will be for the better instead of interfering Lets hope so

Will close now & get foresome tea & stew cook house has gone Hoping you are all well at home With fondest love to all I am your affect son Vic

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Item 20

France

April 3rd 17.

[1] My Dear Mother

A few more lines from another spot in France We seem to be always on the move, always in a different place to write a letter from No doubt the War News these times must seem a1 to all at home after so long of the same old news. I can imagine in Australia a lot being added to the news. But no doubt about it at present the Allies seem to have got him on the move, & I hope it continues so, as I for one want to be home for next Xmas. This country is no good to me A rotten cold wet foggy a hole I am beginning to think there is only one season here & that is winter, as soon as we have a fine day one can bet the next will be either snowing or else wet & windy

Since writing last we have been at two or three different places. We camped [2] a few days right near the place where the big push started last year, And to see it one can understand why the casualties were so heavy. Fritzs positions no doubt were very strong & in commanding positions On looking about at different graves I came across poor old Frank Langs I should say he is buried right in the spot he was killed He has a nice little cross over him I spent a little time trying to make the mound over him a bit straight I thought perhaps the his people would like to know so took a copy of what is on his cross It is this C R+U 3. In memory of Lieut F H Lang 5th Field Comp Aus Engineers Killed here 26.7.16. 34 years. C of E [A sketch of the cross here] He was killed just near Poziers. In another place I also saw Capt Jule Kayner cross

We stayed another couple of days in an old ruined Abbey : another one of Fritz strong holds that was It is like all other villages nothing but a mass of broken stones bricks & timber We camped in the old vaults villas & dugouts And were not sorry to [3] to leave it behind, as for a sleeping compartment it was no good too wet & to much company especially in the shape of rats, they squealed & galloped all over us all night long.

The scene has again changed & now we are up in the new country which has just been taken The towns are like all the rest in ruins Fritz seems as if he cant help but ruin everything he leaves behind even the fruit trees he has cut down & what buildings that were any good he left ruined. We are camped in an old stable Last night we had a very heavy snow storm, I woke up about 2 oclock this morning to myself in a pool of water & wet through It seems to be only \a/ trifle though & one has to get used to it

It is now three weeks since I have had any letters, and am looking forward to a mail very much, as no doubt in a few days we will be moving again up to the front. I will finish this later on & let you know if I get any letters during the next couple of days

[4] April 5th

Well mother I received two letters last night one from you & one from Dora both written on Jan 13th Three weeks ago I received some letters dated 23rd Jan so these two must have gone astray, nevertheless they were very welcome, some of the boys got letters dated 2 & 3rd Feb so perhaps there will be some for me in a day or so.

My word mother I could spend a very enjoyable hour amongst the fruit trees at present, they sounded very nice in your letter If as you said Bert expected to leave in the beginning of Feb I suppose he is now in England, also Will Smith. I would very much like to meet them, but it is like looking for a needle in a hay stack to look for anyone over here. Last night & this morning there has been a very heavy bombardment on not to far away from us I'll bet Fritz] knew it We have been doing fatigue work clearing, making, & repairing the roads there is a lot of work of that description now to keep up with the transports.

Au revoir mummy hoping everyone is well & best love to all I remain your loving son Vic

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Item 21

April 1917
Nº 9 General Hosp
Nº 7 Ward
France

[1] My Dear Mother & Home

You will see by the heading I have again shifted quarters this time into hospital, but thank goodness it is nothing very serious. I am not sure what hit me as the hole is a bit big for a machine gun bullet unless it was a dum dum. It went straight through my calf on the right leg missed the bone. It is getting on tip top of course it was very sore for a while, but not bad now as the bruise is coming out a1

On the morning of the 11th we Aust had rather an extensive hop over along our particular front, in places it was rather a hot shop as Fritz I think expected us, but all the same some of us-them got through and gained our objective which on our particular front was his two front lines of trenches no doubt by this you have seen accounts in the Australian papers. We went into the [2] the line on the 7th so I received a funny old birthday present.

We are getting the best of treatment here, & everyone is very kind to us all. Of course when here we all live in hopes of going across to England most of us are marked on our charts for there, but things are very uncertain owing I think to the submarine warfare on the hospital ships

I wrote to cousin Nellie the other day and asked her/ to cable to you so I suppose ere this you know. I couldn't wire before as I have no money here, & was frightened if I sent to the Bank for some I would be shifted across to England in the meantime as everything is very uncertain.

There is no doubt at present that Fritz is getting a bad time all along the line, May he continue to get it so I wont write anymore at present, infact their seems to be very little to write about, but will try & write more next time, I ought also to have some letters soon to answer.

Hoping everyone at home is a1 With fondest love to all From your loving son Vic

Item 22

[Cablegram postmarked received Brighton SA 26 which reads
"Pacific ETM London 25th 6.45 PM. 11 wds. ETM
Brown Brighton SA Leg better not serious improving tell Dora love Brown "]

Item 23

[Hospital Redirection Card sent to next-of-kin to inform them that
"No 2382 Pte V V Brown A Comp 48 Batt A I F has been admitted into England Hospital"]

Item 24

Richmond Military Hospital
Surrey
April 30th

[1] My Dear Mother & home

You will see by the heading I was lucky enough to get a trip across to England We were very dubious about getting here as the hospital ships were stopped running for a time owing to the Subs sinking some Anyway on the 25th we were informed our turn had come

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It was a big relief to some of us as our wounds were getting better to quick & the chances if we were kept there much much longer some of us would have been marked fit for the Con camp which would mean we would get no leave. As it is now we get a I think 14 days leave on coming out of the Con camp. My leg is getting on a1 it is nearly healed up, & in a day or so I will be up, of course it is still very weak, but a bit of practice will soon make it right so there is nothing at all to worry about

Yesterday cousin Nellie & Algy came to see me. They are very good & I like them both very much. cousin Nellie is writing to you so I. suppose you will receive this at the same time This hospital is situated in a bonza spot. In peace time it used [2] to be an old mans work house It has about 600 beds in it. The river is quite close & one gate opens into a big commons, which we can see through the windows At the commons are quite a lot of dear. I think I heard one of boys say it was the Kings park, so we are in one of the places as far as fresh air goes Everything is just beginning to look very pretty, in a couple of weeks it will be perfection. The weather to is just lovely the last fortnight it has been sunny every day

I havn't had any letters now for nearly a month, but ought to get some soon as I have written to the redirection department. Cousin Nellie brought a letter she received from Doll so I learnt also that Bert was in England at Codford. I thought somehow by the last letter I received he was on verge of leaving Ausie. I wrote to him yesterday Up to date I have not heard how the harvest panned out, but feel certain it is good from paper reports. I hope I will be able to see Bert, perhaps he will get his leave while I am on mine.

I will try & tell you my travel on leaving England if I can remember [3] On leaving Codford we were entrained for Folkestone where we went across the channel to Calaise we then marched through Calaise & put into a train again & arrived at Etaples on the coast of France near Paree Pa. we there are put through a final school of instruction called the Bullring. I think it gets its name on account of the way the instructors roar at us. (bull roarers or ringers) On leaving there we were entrained again for Albert on the Somme front we spent two days there and then left for a camp called Baratine near Longaville & Mamety. Here we were duly initiated into the Batt. After about a week we left for our first taste of the front line We went through Delville wood (This wood was taken & retaken 5 or 6 times by the tommies before Fritz was finally got out) to a village called Fleurs which was to be our particular front After about 8 days in we went out again onto fatigue work & then back through Albert to a camp at Hennencourt where we were for nearly a month when we went back again through Albert [4] to a place called the Abbey from there we went up to Bapaume onto the front line again. We were on road work again for about a week and then on the 7th we went in to a sunken road near Bullecourt & Reanicourt We spent each night until 10th carrying up ammunition & digging a small trench nearer Fritzes line to be used for a hopping off trench when we had to advance.

On the morning of the 10th about 3 am we were called up to make the advance. We went out and laid in the snow for about 2 hours waiting for the tanks to come up & go in front to do the work of the artillery, which is to blow the barbed wire entanglements in front of his trenches to pieces Owing to something going wrong they did not arrive, although we could hear them in the village behind us like big motors consequently we got the word to retire as it was now just on daylight It was here that a snowstorm saved us as when retiring it snowed very heavy, thus hiding us from view of the Huns otherwise he could have blown us to [5] pieces with schrapnel. Thanks to the cover no one was hurt & we were now back again in our dugouts in the sunken road. But the trouble was the Huns had seen us lying & waiting to go over also heard the tanks & would be prepared for us the night, which proved correct as the place next night seemed to be alive with machine guns Anyway we went through the same performance next night, the tanks came, but only one managed to get up to the line which did good work I would much rather go over with a barrage as the tanks draw so much heavy gun fire

CENTENARY OF ANZAC 2014 - 2018



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For your information...

Anyway to make a long story short those that did not get hit going up took the two front lines of the Hun a part of the Hindenburg line but had to retire again in the afternoon as they were not strong enough to stand his counterattacks I have got an Anzac Wa-Bulletin with an account of the affair I will send it along.

I finally reached a dressing station & then through Poziers to Rouen [6] to N° 9 General From there we were put on board the Hospital ship St George & steamed down the Seine to Le Havre coming across the channel on the night of the 26th arriving at Southampton next morning entrained again for Waterloo station & motored out to this hospital through Kensington gardens & Hyde park It is marvellous how all the work of A M C & Red Cross is done, everything is in order & no waits anywhere.

Now I think you have my little travels in a shell The Dr is just about to approach my bed Everything A 1. Am looking forwar now to the 14 days leave we get on leaving hospital. I think I am just about run out of news. I hope you dont get tired reading it. Will say Au Revoir once more Hoping all at home are A 1 With best love to all
From your loving son Vic

Item 25

Postcard captioned "Rottingdean Landing Stage and Beach". The message on the back reads "Dear Home. I have just written to May & guess you will see the letter so find I cant make up enough news to write another I suppose I suppose you four saw these G Cs in reality, if so perhaps they will bring back some fond memories "

Item 26

Postcard captioned "North Gate of Pavilion, Brighton". The message on the back reads "I had a letter from Bert this morning he is at Tedworth going well. Best of love to all From Vic"

Item 27

Unidentified cutting from a newspaper, headed AUSTRALIAN WARRIORS PRAISED. It reads

'The Commander-in-Chief pays high tributes to the great gallantry of the Australians at Bullecourt on April 11, 1917, in executing with the Yorkshire West Riding Battalions a very difficult attack across a wide extent of country. He adds:-

"While early in May the Australians beat off counter-attack after counter-attack in defence of this section, they were exposed to counter-attacks from every side through two weeks of almost constant fighting. It deserves to be remembered as a most gallant feat of arms." The despatch refers to the wretched weather conditions which hampered the Australians in the operation on the Passchendale slopes, between October 8 and October 12, and says :— "It is no disparagement to the gallant deeds performed elsewhere to say that in the stubborn struggle for the hills from Wytschaete to Passchendale, the armies who are shouldering to-day's burdens showed themselves worthy of the regiments which in 1914 made Ypres take rank for ever among the most glorious of British battles."

Item 28

Richmond Military Hosp
May 7th 17

[1] My Dear Mother & home

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For your information...

I received your letter of the 23rd Feb about 3 days ago, also one from Kath Nell & Mary & the photos from Doll. Thanks for the birthday wishes. Up to date I have not received any parcels at all from home barr Mills fence pads, [?] & as they with all my equipment was left in a shell hole I suppose someone else has them now or most likely they are still in the shell hole It is rotten not being able to get any parcels, because I know you sends things I can always get the parcels the cousins send me from England so it looks very like the Australian Authorities are to blame I liked the three photos very much they are very good Jacky seems as big a little wag as ever on the old stool (what a famous old sight the stool seemed) Am glad to hear things are going along a 1 on the farm, am expecting a letter from M^r Green anyday. I wonder if the war will be over before our two years is up I hope it will. No mother I am not looking forward to another winter [2] over here., you seem to be having a very wet end to your summer in Ausie

I will make enquiries at Head Quarters G O for the socks, as I have lost everything I had now, & will have to get another lot together, socks are the main item. Yes about 2 months ago I received word from the Bank that the money you sent along was in England I wrote to Bert last Monday I got his address from cousin Nellie but up to date have had no reply I can't understand why. Dolls letter she wrote to cousin Nell for Bert was also forwarded on I will write again today & see if I can find him this trip

Cousin Nellie & Algy came again to see me yesterday, they seem as if they cant do enough for me, infact they do to much you know how I mean. Also cousin Mary came last Tuesday & her & cousin Nellie are coming again on Thursday next, that is provided I am still here & not away at con camp which is on the cards as I am getting better fairly quick. The wound is practically all healed, but my leg up to date is still very weak & I cant walk without a stick yet [3] I was very lucky I think, as yesterday I saw a plate of my leg from the XRays the bullet was in within a ¼ of an inch of the bone.

Tell Dad I believe he will have to take back all he used to say as regards the Russians. I have lost all faith in them a lot of rotters I think, but still you know I hope they will still carry on instead of accepting a seperate peace. I saw in yesterdays paper that Bullecourt is at last surrounded by our boys That is the place we were supposed to take on the 11th, so evidently by the time it has taken to get it, we were given a pretty hard task. Our Capt of A Comp was J Moyes the S Aus crickiter a St Peters boy he was amongst the wounded. Menzies the one that brought us over was still going strong the last I heard Lieut Jones another Adelaide man I think used to be a detective was killed It was his first time in action too.

Well mother I must give in and own up they can have nice weather in England as well as bad, because the last fortnight has been simply perfect [4] The sun has been shining every day and everything is beginning to look lovely & green It ought to be just at its best when I am on leave. I heard an old cuckoo the other morning the first I have ever heard, barring the old clock at the SH Rd.[?] I had a letter from Jack Malone he is at an officers school at Tedworth the same school as Earl Leary, he is going to find out from Earl where Bert is situated & let me know.

Will now close hoping you are all in the best of health & fondest love to all
I remain Your loving Son Vic

This is a real Devon primrose Our matron gave us all a bunch the other day [Flower attached]

Item 29

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE
Base Records Office, Victoria Barracks MELBOURNE
12th May 1917

CENTENARY OF ANZAC 2014 - 2018



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For your information...

Dear Madam,

I now beg to advise you that information has been received to the effect that No. 2382 Private V.V. Brown, was admitted to the Military Hospital, Richmond, England, 27/4/17, suffering from gun shot wound right leg.

His postal address will therefore be: No. 2382 Private V.V. Brown, 48th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, ABROAD.

Any further reports received will be promptly transmitted.

Yours faithfully J.M.LEAN. Major. Officer i/c Base Records.

Mrs. E. Brown, Sturt Street, BRIGHTON, S.A

Item 30

Richmond Military Hosp [To KATH]

May 12th 1917

[1] My Dear Sister

I have received another nice batch of seven letters also photos. I thought I had better write to you this time as you mentioned I didn't write you as many as I received, all the same when I write home kid it is to you all so don't look gloom Now before I forget I must tell you I did receive the photo of the last Sunday at home I thought I had mentioned it, but seemingly I did not but you know what a good head I have for remembering. And it has not improved with military life (As it pays sometimes to forget in this life) I have also received all birthday letters & photos, thank you all for wishes. The photos are bonza. They have all been on view around this ward I like mothers & dads much also army & navy sweethearts infact I like them all It is bonza getting snaps from home sweet home What a difference between today & 12th of last month. If I remember right about this time 10.30 am on the 12 of last month

[2] I was getting dressed & examined by a pig of a Dr who delighted in using the prob & draging bit of rag through my calf, seemed to me he liked seeing me jump. It was real funny too, as the chap in the next bed to me laughed at me jumping & of course I laughed & jumped at the same & at the same time. And the Dr asked me if it hurt. And to make things worse, I asked him if he thought I was jumping for fun Then the sister caught my eye, and evidently her sense of humour was something like Dolls, as every time I caught her eye she had to hide her face from the D^r & finally had to make an excuse to leave the ward for something & returned just in time to finish putting the bandage on.

Tell Doll I have had a letter from Bert, he seems a1,& none the worse for his sea [?] trip, evidently they had an exciting trip towards the finish, especially all the Ballarat was such, anyway alls well that ends well. Am looking forward to seeing Bert at first opportunity

Tell Mary I received her letter & photos will write her very shortly

[3] Last Wednesday afternoon Cousins Nellie & Fanny came to see me they arrived in a taxi & took myself & a boy Jessop of the 48th for a bonza ride Jessop was the Corp in charge of the section I was in He has been hit hard & as regards war in the future he has finished with it as he has lost his right hand, also a big back wound.

Anyway Ill tell you where we went in the motor perhaps you saw it all & will guess how we enjoyed it. All around Richmond park over Richmond bridge through Bushey park where the famous chesnut avenues are, along the river through Hampton Court, also over another bridge where there is another court (nearly as bad as France for courts & ville) through several town and county roads. It is very pretty at this time of the year All the blossom is out now & the bigger trees are just about at their best, as the leaves are just thick enough to cover the wood & not old enough to be a dark green We saw the red deer in Bushy Park No doubt at this time of the year England has something to be proud of And how different to the dreary winter



[4] It makes me think after seeing France what ever would have happened if the Huns had got their way at the beginning of the war It would be a sin to see England in the same state as France because really one cannot imagine the devastation over there until seeing it. It will take a generation to get it back to before the war stage. All the same there are some villages over there which to my mind wanted pulling down. As they were very old dirty ramshakle places. It is common to see a big underground tank in the middle of the yard with stables horse & cow pigsties & fowls sheds all around the sides not to mention the manure heap along side the tank.

Yesterday five of us got a boat for an hour & went down the river by Richmond bridge it was a 1 I suppose it is a mile away from here, so you can judge from this I am getting along a 1 Well Kath I can never remember your birthday but think this will just about hit it, so will say Au Revoir wishing you many happy returns
With fondest love to all From your loving brother Vic

[*There follows a full-page photograph reproduced from "The Anzac Bulletin" captioned "The King inspects Australian Troops on Salisbury Plain"*]

Item 31

[*Three whole pages from "The Anzac Bulletin" as follows:*

The Hindenburg Line

Australian Division's Grand Attack. Diary of the Battle.

By C.E.W. BEAN

April 11

It is four o'clock in the morning. We are sitting on the slope of an open hill. Around us the snow surface stretches into the night. To the north-west the guns are continually rolling and drumming, with flashes like summer lightning over the horizon. The Battle of Arras, which started the day before yesterday, is blazing over there.

Straight before us there rise continually white flares, like the stars thrown from a Roman candle. You can see them drop over like graceful lilies and fall on to the snow-covered side of a distant hill a mile or two before us. They are the lights fired by the garrison of the Hindenburg line. One hour from now, at dawn, an Australian division will attack that fortress, of which the Germans have spoken and written so much.

We know it is a tremendous task. The Germans are holding the Hindenburg Line with a normal garrison – not with a few companies of rearguard. There are at least two battalions in the small sector which the Australians will attack, and other battalions in close reserve. And the wire in front of the line is something that has never yet been seen in modern fortification – German prisoners boasted of it months ago, and their generals are boasting of it still.

There is a chance of a great success by the breaking of the Hindenburg Line at once – 4.30 a.m. Our guns have started to fire very much faster. This bombardment must be not on the German wire, but on their trenches. We wonder whether our Tanks have started yet.

4.35 a.m. A green flare has just gone up from the German trenches at Bullecourt – a village to our left around which the German trenches run. That is a call to their guns to protect them.

4.36 a.m. A second green flare has been sent up from Bullecourt.

4.40 a.m. Green flares and gold flares have been going up in pairs from Bullecourt and from the left. White flares are going up in sheafs all along the line – as thick as we ever saw them at Pozieres. Two, three, four great bursts as of an explosion have just broken out towards Lagnicourt on our right.



4.45 a.m. These slow explosions still occurring – twelve or fifteen of them by now, always two at a time. Must be shellbursts. I have never seen the like of them before.

4.50 a.m. Our guns have suddenly ceased fire – the Tanks must be close to the enemy by – now – still too dark to see them. A red flare has gone up on the right.

5 a.m. The attack must have been launched by now. The flares have suddenly ceased.. Have the Germans run ?

5.20 a.m. Our supports are going up over the snow in extended order. A party of cavalry has passed. The German flares started again soon after they stopped, and ten minutes ago a whole line of red flares went up suddenly from the right. The German shrapnel has since started bursting there – we can see the line of pinpoint flashes. The fight is growing fast.

6 a.m. Just now, across the snow in front of Riencourt, we saw the figures of men moving. They are still there – half a dozen of them – walking calmly across the snow. Some of them seem to be picking their way carefully through a dark belt which runs there across the hillside. We can see other men on the hillside past it moving in threes and fours, obliquely – some towards the top of the hills, others away from it.

That belt is the Hindenburg wire. The men cannot be Germans, They must be Australians. Sometimes they stop and speak to one another. Then they move on.

Through the Hindenburg Wire

They are Australians. And they are through the Hindenburg wire. No sign of a Tank – perhaps the Tanks are over the top of the far rise beyond.

6.5 a.m. Watching closely the men who are now moving through and beyond that wire, we notice that many of them in their walk suddenly break into a run. Sometimes they drop for a minute, your heart goes into your mouth, and then they run on again. Sometimes I think they drop and do not go on. At the end of their journey those who finish it drop suddenly out of sight – clearly into a trench. We can see one small group of dark heads just above the snow half way up the slope towards Riencourt – well beyond the Hindenburg line, I should say. There is no sign of movement in Riencourt, but a single red flare has gone up from the further side of it. It looks as though the Germans had retired right through the village ; and yet those men in the foreground are clearly under fire – the way in which they cover parts of their journey at a run is a certain indication of that.

There are actually three horsemen up by the wire – they have come back at high speed – so they must be under fire too.

The Tank Appears

6.20 a.m. Just now, close up by the wire, we caught sight of a black oblong shape. Since then it has gradually veered to the left and is now moving up to the wire. There is no mistaking it. It is a Tank. It shifts gradually up through the wire and then stands there hesitating with its nose in the air exactly like a sea lion. There is a party of a dozen infantrymen which started to go forward and then hesitated as if uncertain about its direction, and then came back towards this point. One or two of them go back to meet the Tank and step up to the side of it, as though whispering in its ear. Someone comes round the side of the Tank – apparently someone from inside of it; joins them for a moment and then goes back to the Tank again. The infantry start to walk forward, extending as they go to intervals of a few paces and in a most perfect line; the Tank edges on again just behind their flank and then –

Flash !

From the front of the Tank there has burst a brilliant stabbing flame. She has fired her gun. Flash, flash. There it goes again – flash, flash, flash. It is firing obliquely across the front of the infantry as they go forward. So they must see a German machine-gun or strong post in that dimple to the left of them. The infantry go on quite confidently over the slope and into



the depression, where we lose sight of them. The Tank moves on too, firing at intervals – sliding along the ground like a slug, nose in air, tail dragging through the snow. Presently the bend of the hill beyond the Hindenburg line hides her from us too.

It strikes me that I saw another flash just now – up amongst the trees on a further hill. An angry flash like a gun flash. It could not be – and yet there it went again and again. There was [second page begins] no mistaking it. It is no shell burst.. It is the flame shooting from the barrel of a German gun, The Germans must have a gun there firing direct over the sights – straight at its target.

There is infantry moving through the German trenches on the left now, nearer to Bullecourt. You can see the men continually hopping over the broken down places in the trench – appearing for a moment and then bobbing down again. All along the line of the German wire you can see at intervals men coming or going. Those coming from the trench puzzled me at first, till I noticed that some of them were stretcher bearers carrying wounded. The other figures are always without rifles. Sometimes they are limping, sometimes walking, sometimes over certain distances running for all they are worth. In those overcoats it is not easy to run either. They are the wounded. A stream of them, ones, twos, threes, is beginning to reach us also.

I notice that wherever the infantry go you can see the stretchers also. Men carrying those long poles over their shoulders are dropping into the further Hindenburg trenches – you can see them working in the wire; it seems to me that the infantry are moving out beyond the Hindenburg trenches in that depression and one can see the stretcher bearers moving there also.

The Tank put out of Action.

8 a.m. The Tank which we saw in the depression is moving back from some voyage out into the green country beyond the line. Outwards in the direction from which the first is retiring there is moving a second Tank. Suddenly there is a spurt of grey-black smoke thirty yards behind it. Fifteen seconds later another shell bursts in the ground as far in front of it. The Tank zigzags to avoid the bursts, but they are beginning to rain around her about one every ten seconds. The sixth was just under her chest – then two at once beyond her. She has stopped. Suddenly, as if by a miracle, a number of men appear round her – a dozen men in khaki overcoats, and trot away from her sides. A couple of hundred yards away they stand calmly looking on. The Tank is there motionless – shell after shell still bursting around her. And on the grass about her lie three or four bundles of khaki. Either those shells or some machine-gun must have caught the crew as they left her.

A few minutes later I saw two men with a stretcher go up to those men lying in that deadly area, stoop over one of the men on the grass and slowly life him on to the stretcher and carry him away.

“Tres Bon.”

8.20 a.m. Across the far hillslope about threequarters of a mile beyond the German trenches there is approaching a line of men in open order. There are about thirty of them, marching at accurate intervals steadily across the front towards Bullecourt. They seem to have come over the hill behind Riencourt. They must be Germans surely, and yet none of them fall. It looks as though the Germans were reinforcing their left for a counter-attack. They move steadily across the hillside until the same depression hides them.

There has been no movement for a long time upon the snow slope in front of Riencourt. The isolated men whom we earlier saw moving there are no longer apparent. But we have seen men working up the trenches as far as the horizon on our right and other heads bobbing along the trench towards Bullecourt on our left. Clearly we have carried the whole of the Hindenburg line in front of us. How it was done we cannot guess. It was almost beyond hoping for.

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Later. We moved up at about ten o'clock to a headquarters where we should hear what had happened. On the way a battalion passed us. A subaltern waved a cheery hand. "Tres bon," he shouted as he passed.

And it was "tres bon" – almost past belief. As far as they knew the infantry had reached the line before the Tanks and had broken through it somehow – found the gaps or struggled through the scanty shell-holes; they had got well behind Bullecourt – they had reached every point they had been told to reach. And a message had just come in from one officer whom everyone could trust, saying that all was well and the line could hold provided it had the necessary stream of supplies. They had suffered in breaking through, but they were in grand heart.

It began to dawn on one that this infantry had done something extraordinarily magnificent – something that no one had dreamed that infantry could do. One was afraid to think of the possible cost, but the great chance seemed to be realising itself. There was no sign by which to tell of what had happened elsewhere. But the infantry seemed to have done for itself what nobody even proposed that it should do – to have got through without a bombardment and without the Tanks first breaking the wire. That was certainly what had happened nearly all along the line, though there was some evidence that one or two Tanks had given great help at one part. The youngsters commanding the Tanks were extraordinarily game – straining to go anywhere and do anything. But most of them were foiled by the fall of snow, which was the last thing to be expected at this season.

As we walked back we turned aside to have a last look at the line.

It was just on twelve o'clock. The sun had melted the snow on the Hindenburg slopes almost to the colour of the brown wire. But we noticed at once that from the far right of the line a few men were coming back across the open from the trench on the horizon. They were probably wounded, and they were certainly under fire, for from time to time they ran. At no time did these slopes seem free from constant fire.

As this trickle of men kept up one looked at the trench to see the cause. And there it was – all too clear. Near the right of the position from the parapet of the trench came a constant succession of snow white puffs of smoke – blown away in the wind, but always recurring almost as constant as the escaping steam from an engine. It was a German bomb attack. For half an hour we watched it written on the skyline as plainly as in a book. Down the trench came the German bombs; sometimes stationary for five or ten minutes, but always working forward in the end. Twenty or thirty yards nearer to the Germans we could see the bigger smoke bursts of our own bombs, fewer than those of the Germans, but never ceasing. You could hear plainly the bumping bursts of the bomb-showers. All the time the figures of men were running along the parapet at the side, clearly throwing down bombs into the trench. Sometimes you could see them jumping in after their bombs. There were Australians on the parapet too – but it looked only too clear that they were making a last few throws and then moving back across the open with all their bombs finished. All the time there were appearing from the far side of the trench men and more men, and, jumping in behind the German bombers or on top of our men who were engaged in fighting along the trench.

It was a most gallant, stubborn fight, but our bombs were far fewer, and a stage was reached when the German broke in at other points along the trench, and we saw our men driven from them. We thought we could see bombs bursting in the trenches for some while after. But it was hopeless then. One of the most wonderful fights that was ever fought and been won and lost. Victory or defeat – it has achieved one invaluable result. It has broken the fame of the Hindenburg line at one blow.

[third page] GENERAL AUSTRALIAN NEWS

Senator Lynch says there are too many leaders in the Labour movement. This is correct. And most of them are after the job of the man next in line above. "Globe," Sydney



Father Dwyer of Katoomba (N.S.W.), who has doffed the robe of the cleric and gone into khaki as a fighter, is the fifth son of his parents to respond to the call of the colours.

It is stated officially that the ships bought for the Commonwealth by the Prime Minister during his visit to England have earned over half a million, carrying wheat for the Imperial Government. On these figures the purchase is a good one.

A member of a deputation to the Minister of Education of Queensland objected to the practice of saluting the National Flag – which obtains in the schools. He referred to the flag as a piece of coloured rag of an emblematic nature.

Mr. Fraser told a deputation that the New South Wales Railway Department was face to face with a situation which was causing much concern. If the situation became more acute, he said, they would either have to reduce the service, or raise the rates.

In the world of Labour things are bad in Victoria – and not much better out of it. Carpenters and other skilled workers have expressed their willingness to go, as fruit-pickers, to Mildura, where, in the season – which lasts about two months – the rate of pay is 9s. 4d. per day.

The question of immigration after the war was the dominant note of the speeches at the annual meeting of the New South Wales Immigration League. It was pointed out that the Northern Territory would be challenged unless Australia rapidly developed her population.

Mr. J.A. Wigg, now chief of the Hansard staff of the Parliament of W.A., formerly of The Star and Telegraph, of Sydney, is the holder of a record, unique in its way. His two sons-in-law, members of the 32nd Battalion, A.I.F., attained to captains' rank about the same time, both have won the Military Cross for gallantry in the field, and both won their distinctions in almost the same conditions. Captain Geddes, who was in the employ of Millars' Timber Co., before enlisting, was awarded the Cross for bravery before Pozieres, and Major A.R. White – promoted on the field for leading a gallant charge of his men at Pozieres – who enlisted from the Lands Department of the State, was given his M.C. for his bravery in the presence of the enemy.

[Reproduced in the middle of the page is a photograph captioned "Snake killing in the Northern Territory: A Roper River blackboy killing a non-venomous snake with his teeth."]

A Fighting Team..

In a speech at Armidale (N.S.W.) Sam Brown, a returned soldier, said he has ten brothers at the front, and his father and father-in-law have been killed in action.

A "Searcher" for the Red Cross.

Mr. William Oman, of Bonnie Doon, Derrinallum, has been appointed by the Red Cross Society as a "searcher" in hospitals abroad for missing soldiers, and will sail for London at an early date.

Not for the Films.

In a big drapery store recently in Perth, a woman, after an altercation with her husband, caused a scene by disrobing her child and partially disrobing herself.

First Australian-born Premier.

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Mr. Frank Farnell has presented the United Grand Lodge of Freemasons with a portrait of the late James Squire Farnell – the first Australian-born citizen to become Premier of his native State.

Father's Dangerous Visions.

Alarmed by threats of killing, Mrs. Hogg, of Walla Subdivision Farm, near Culcairn, N.S.W., and her nine children were found recently by Constable Morris hiding in the bush. Robert Hogg, the father, is thought to be insane. He states that he had a vision commanding him to kill his wife and children.

East-West Railway.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes), replying to questions by Mr. Foster (S.A.), in the House of Representatives, said that the matter of holding a searching inquiry regarding the construction of the East-West railway was now in hand. The Joint Committee of Public Accounts would inquire into the expenditure on the line, and Senator Lynch, who recently travelled over the whole length of the line, would report to the Ministry on the subject.

Lady Organiser of Recruiting.

Miss Georgina Temperley has been appointed first lady organiser in connection with the State Recruiting Committee's efforts in Victoria. Miss Temperley is an elocutionist of some note, a bachelor of arts of the Sydney University, and a native of Melbourne.

Chinese Tomato-Growers' Profits.

The Chinese tomato-growers of Echuca have sent 50,000 cases of fruit to the metropolitan market this season, and as prices have averaged well they have made good money. One company of Chinese, working south of Echuca, where they got water by gravitation, and where there is most suitable soil, is stated to have made £2000 for the season. Quite a number of Chinese in the Echuca district are taking a trip to China out of the profits from tomato-growing there.

[There follows a used envelope postmarked "Richmond Surrey 7 May 17 and addressed to "Mrs J.A.V..Brown "Wiluna" Sturt Rd. Brighton South Australia" plus "Tel. Brighton 48M"]

Item 32

Richmond Military Hosp
Surrey
May 19th 1917

[1] Dear Jack

I think I must owe you a letter the last one I had from you was a bonza long one. No two ways about it that to receive letters over here especially in France is just bonza, & I can tell you the boys don't half look forward to a mail

Last time you wrote you wanted to know why it was the troops in France did not vote for conscription. I told you as short as I could perhaps it was censored so will tell you again. To cut it short the boys in France have had such a doing of it, that they consider it murder (or near enough to it) to compel anymore to come from Ausie. And then again they consider once conscription is brought in it is the end of a free Australia (No doubt about it John Australia is the finest country in the world to my idea. When the vote for conscript took place I was in Codford & I voted Yes, but dinkum I am like the rest now I have seen it, & wouldnot compel anyone (barring the few rotters of single chaps that wont come. And of course to

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get them one would have to get a lot of others, so under the circumstances let them stop at home

It is no good for a peaceful life over there [2] & I can tell you I am not looking forward to the next dose. Was dead lucky to get off with what I did, because it was hell let loose while I was there, & afterwards it was worse, & of lately has been the very devil it self. Our men have been cut to blazes. They have been right in the worst hanging on to Bullecourt. I dont know why but it seems to me they always pick out about the hottest slop they can for the 1st. 2nd 4th & 5th Div. The 3rd have got their share around Armentieres, they have been around that part ever since they left England, take it all round though it is very quiet up there to what it was on the Somme

I heard the other day it was some of the 4th Div artillery that Fritz broke through & broke up about 3 weeks ago. Was talking to a visitor who works in Horseferry road (A I F head quarters) the other day who told me the the 12th 16. 28. 45. 46 48 & 50th Bat got about knocked right out especially – [*those underlined*] All the same there is not the slightest doubt in my mind that we are wining slowly, but when the end will come I cant even tip It may be in a month or it may be another two years There is no doubt that Fritz has got hell itself from our Artillery, & am sure for every shell he sends over he gets 10 in return, at times our guns fairly make old mother earth tremble, when perhaps 100 guns will start to bombard on the same particular front, especially if it is to stop a counter attack (when it is often rapid fire [3] They say some of his regiments got completely cut up, anyhow I would sooner chance a barrage from him than go through one of ours.

That is the one thing I dont like from the infantry point of view, is that the artillery will throw young iron foundries over at the infantry which perhaps is miles away while all one can do in return is duck his head & keep to the dugout if one is handy. Of course both sides are the same. That is one thing which the military do not do by numbers (Duck their bloks Every body does it from the Colonel to the private & never notices the next chap. One old Sgt when I first went over \told me/ to take no notice of anybody else, but when I thought the shells were getting to close to be comfortable to duck & keep ducked)

Well brother I am getting along a 1, the leg is still a bit sore, but doing fine. Am expecting to get sent to the convalescence camp any day now some are getting sent straight to leave & some are getting a short leave, both silly things to stop. because instead of their 14 days the men say oh well I'll go now till you get me, don't blame em either I haven't thought one out where to go yet, have got Scotland on my mind at present.

This week I have received another mail from Ausie tell mother I have received to the socks she made also a pair from Kath. & another pair from I dont know who with some tobacco & toffee all I could make out is Renmark [4] on the stamp & Name & Address of sender Chowilla St perhaps the girls will know of someone. It was a 1 to get them now as I have lost everything I had The first thing one thinks of when hit is to get ride of the harness & load he carries & get out to the dressing station. Of course we will be issued with a new kit when going on leave but the socks are nothing like the home made ones.

I hardly ever get a paper although Doll says she sends one every fortnight All I have received from Australia up to date is a parcel from Marj one from Walkerville road, a pair of knee pads from Mill & the three above mentioned socks. Of course one does not expect to get any parcels which reach the Batt when wounded as it is an understood thing that should one arrive those that are left st-in the platoon share it up among them.

Am lucky at getting to England at this time of the year, the weather is just a 1 for a holiday, & the country just looking at its very best.

I hope you & yours are keeping in the best, tell Jack I have received the photo of him on the stool also of you & the kiddies it is very good also you & mable & according to photo everyone of you still look blooming Remember me to M' Haddrick, also the Pocock family when you see them Will close now wishing you 5 the best of good luck & wishes

From your loving brother Vic

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Item 33

Stationed at Weymouth
June 12th 1917

[1] My Dear Mother & home

Don't get a shock to see my writing in ink. I have not got a pencil with me or I think I would soon change it feel just about as awkward as can be. I forget whether I have written you from here but think I have. Anyhow I am not to keen upon it It is a sort of convalescent camp, every one upon coming here goes before the Dr & is classified quite a lot are in C3 that is unfit & will go in the next boat for Ausie some are bad cases others not so bad. So it go on C2 C1 B2 B. B2, B2. B1 B. B1 BRC, B2A & B1A at present I am in B1BRC, but expect tomorrow when I go before him I will be in another class, & then I will be able to have my furlough, as the class I am in now we are under observation, & until getting worse or better are not allowed to go on leave.

[2] Yesterday I had a wire from Bert saying he was in London on his four days leave. & wanted to know when I would be up, bad luck for us I could not get away, but all being well I will go down to Codford later on & see him. He had been in isolation for 12 or 14 days owing to mumps or measles breaking out.

I got a surprise the other day to see Tom Bennett down here, he told me he was sent down marked C3. but when he went before the Col for a final examination got put on home service in England, hard luck for Tom wasn't it. He seems about the same as ever. Maurice Beckwith Tom told me is also here on house service, up todate I have not met him.

I had to suddenly stop yesterday to go and draw the dry rations for tea, and today could not procure a pen in the Y.M.C.A. so came back to the hut & am writing with the old pencil again Yesterday I had two photos sent along from Richmond of Ward K5 that was the one I was in only some of the patients are in the photo I will send one to you & the other one [3] you can guess where that is going to I hope Kath does not say I am getting uglier than ever I suppose you have seen the accounts of the last push at Epres according to report here it was hell let loose, but what a great success. It seems as if we used every device to kill & frighten at our command. It is rumoured in the papers that another push is starting any day now where we dont know. If only the Russians had made a push instead of argueing like they are what a difference it would have made I believe it would have been over this summer but as it is goodness only knows anyway I am still hoping to spent Xmas in Australia I received a letter from Kath the other day dated March 29th I think some have gone astray lately but I wont growl as up to date all through I have been lucky with letters if not with parcels Now Mummy I will close hoping everyone at home is well.

With fondest love to all I am Your loving son Vic

Item 34

Weymouth
Sunday June 17th

[1] My Dear mother & home

Just a few lines this time in answer to Kaths letter which she wrote on May 1st through cousin Nellie I also got one from Mary It is a bonza improvement to save time as the last two letters I got a couple of days ago were written about April 5th. anyway we will see how much longer Dads takes to reach me I am looking forward to getting it, just to hear how things did turn out on the farm up to date have only had the little snaps here & there in letters, but from those I have felt sure things were allright.

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Also M^r G going to buy 2 more horses & a cow sounded good enough. Was glad you understood my first wire I tried to make it plain but they cost to much 2/- a day wont run cables

I have been shifted once more to another camp [2] one more step to being fit again At least so the Quack days, but up to date I dont feel as good as I would like. Both my legs seem to have gone mad, they ache something rotten & at night sometimes they nearly drive me mad, they also seem very weak. I dont know but I think from what some of the chaps tell me that came away with Trench fever it is either that or screws. They dont swell so have nothing to show & such a lot are swinging the lead with nothing wrong with here. Anyway I wish they would either get better or else get that bad I couldn't walk.

To make things worse this morning I was once again innoculated goodness knows how many I have got in my blood now, but hope I get no more, as they make me feel very rotten always.

[3] Am now in a class that can go on leave & next Friday I will (all being well) start on my furlough 14 days. I think I will spend a few days at Brighton & Raglan, also put the best of a week in Scotland I am tired of London it is too big for me I get lost to easy.

I suppose you have ere this seen an account of the last air raid my word they did some damage very heavy casualties also damage at Liverpool St Station It seems hard for the children that nothing can be done to stop them, but surely it will not continue much longer It must I think have reached its zenith as far as awfulness goes. And if it is a punishment well surely all the powers engaged had had enough sorrow put upon them Yes Kath there will be something doing alright when the boys come [4] home again.

Cousin Nellie told me Bert was out near one of the places where the Air raid was taking place, he was looking for a Blighty rather soon 'Eh' she said he seemed to enjoy himself in spite of hurry.

Will close now with fondest love to all & hoping you are all A1 I am Your loving son Vic

Item 35

June 24th 1917.

No 2 Command Depot

Wertham

Weymouth.

[1] My Dear mother & home

Well here it is another week gone by & up todate I have not had my furlough I am looking forward to it, but have not felt good enough to take it on I can't see the use of going on furlough & putting in half ones times lying down. The last 5 days I have been in hospital again with one of the new complaints the war has brought along The Dr's call it Trench fever It is not dangerous but very painful It is something Rheumatics only no swelling & all the pain is in the bones principally in the legs & arms I think Thursday & Friday night were the worst two nights I have ever put in But today am feeling a bit better Am undergoing a course of electric massage as well as medicine so perhaps in the near future I will be alright again.

I met Maurice Beckwith the other day he seems to be fair & is on a home service job down here I don't think though the winter [?] be any [2] good to him, he wished to be remembered to you all Old Lou Bennett is also here working on in the P O I would not be surprised if Lou were not sent home. There are a tremendous lot of chaps down here booked for Ausie & from what I here they will not be very long now before they are leaving these shores (I wish I were going with em)

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I received Kaths letter also Mary which they sent through cousin Nellie also had two from Walkerville Rd written on the same date, but up to date Dads has not come along I do wish it would as I am quite anxious to know just how every thing is going along on the farm.

I heard from Bert the other day he is at present also in hospital with the measles he said it was a very mild dose he had so suppose he will soon be out again. You will remember when I went over to France before Our Base was at Etaples I hear [3] now that Etaples has been taken over by Canadians & our Base now is at Le Havre

I think during the last few days the news from the front has been a good deal better If only the Russians would come with a big push I believe we would have a chance of getting home for Xmas now, because I think in the East at present Germany is very weak owing to shifting such a lot of troops on to the Western front for

Well mother I will try and write more next week but news seems very scarce down here
With fondest love to all & hoping everyone is well I am

Your loving son Vic

Item 36

LETTER CARD Containing 8 Photographic Views of Australian Base Depot, Monte Video Camp, Weymouth. Addressed to M^{rs} J.A.V. Brown. Sturt Rd Brighton South Australia

No 2 Command Depot
Wertham July 6th

Dear Mother

This will serve instead of a letter this week. I don't know whether you will like them. They are very like the real thing, but of course it is a photo, & you can guess everything was in order for the Camera. Lou Bennett has just given me two of them Am sitting in the P O talking to him you can guess Brighton is well to the fore

I came out of the hospital yesterday feeling fair I think on Monday next I will be one of a draught of about 500 recovering from wounds & sickness to go either to Parham Downs or Hurdcott no doubt there we will receive some training again. As soon as I get there I will apply for my furlough, so with ordinary luck I ought to be seeing a bit more of England the latter part of next week. I was talking to a chap yesterday from Karoonda out of the 27 Pte He told me that both Harry & Norm Collins were wounded going into the line for their first time. He said they were both wounded by the same shell. He seemed very sure so I suppose it is true. Anyway I hope it was not serious wounds I had a letter from Nell dated March 29th the other day Up todate I have not received Dads Best love & wishes
From your loving son Vic

The 8 photographs which follow are captioned :

A Scene Near the Camp. Australian Base Depot, Monte Video Camp, Weymouth.

The Regimental Barbers at Work. Australian Base Depot (as above)

Group of the Officers. etc.

The Canteen. etc.

The Sergeants' Mess. etc.

The Early Morning Tub. etc.

The Regimental Tailor at Work. etc.

The Reading Room. etc.

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Item 37

Nº 4 Command Depot
Codford
July 11th 17

[1] Dear Doll

Well what do you think of the heading. here I am back in Codford again. I was real pleased to know I was coming here not that I like the place, but I knew that boy of yours was here & I was looking forward to seeing te him very much. It was like a big ray of sunlight to meet him & hear just how you \all/ were when he left. The last two evenings we have spent together I am sure the first night Bert was sick of answering my questions. Anyhow Doll he is looking just tip top & I think has every chance of being in England for some time to come Hope I am lucky enough to do likewise anyway it will be a month or more before I get back to France. I went up this morning for another classification [2] Went in BA1 came out BA3 so that is two steps nearer France, as soon as I am marked A4 I will be sent to Parham Downs for a bit of hard training & as I have my 14 day furlough to come yet it ought to be some time yet before I get on the war path again I have just made an application for furlough so ought to be enjoying myself during the \next/ fortnight.

Things have not altered much in this place since I left as regards things military, but of course as regards the appearance of the country there is a big difference when I left it was snow everywhere & the trees very bare now every where is as green as grass, crops everywhere especially spuds I think they must intend to feed us on them next year. The old cockies are out cutting their hay or rather grass

Bert seems to have got over his measles [3] A1 he tells me it was very slight in fact he does not seem sure it was measles I have met quite a lot of 48 boys here all like myself gradually drifting back to the Batt

I suppose you have got accounts of the last Air Raid on London They seem to have come over in force this time & did a lot of damage. I believe one bomb was dropped right on Post Office. What beats me is not them coming over but they seem to always manage to get back again nearly as strong as they leave Hun land Tonight Bert & I intend to get swapped so in due course I suppose you will see the other half of we four My word there will be something doing when the boys come home 'Eh What' Ah well let it be soon.

Au Revoir for the present. With best love & wishes to all From Your loving brother Vic

Item 38

Nº 4 Command Depot
Codford.
July 18th 17

[1] My Dear Dad.

Just a few lines in answer to yours of May 3rd. It took about 8 weeks longer for yours to reach me than those written on the same date & sent to Kings Rd. so I hope you all continue to send letters that way as I am always in touch with Nell I think in my last I told you I had heard that Harry & Norm Collins had been wounded About an hour again I saw a letter from a Karoonda chap in the 27th saying they were both killed I am sorry as they were both good fellows & seemingly they did not get a run at all but were caught going into the line for their first time.

I am in as big a fog as ever as to when it is going to end sometimes I think it is getting closer & can't last through another winter, at others I cant see any signs of the end Think it must be just how the [2] papers news reads. I am feeling fair again now, but I think I will be a good old weather prophet in future as when a change is on I get it properly, but perhaps it will

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work off later on anyway let us hope. I was up for my weekly classification this morning I think I am now marked fit for training so suppose when I come back from leave & which I think I am starting on tomorrow I will be sent to Parham Downs to do a bit training in earnest Am getting full up of this parade red tape & discipline & wont be sorry to get away to France again if only to get away from that Three mornings now I have been spoken to for not shaving & buttons undone.

Up to date I have not received Greens letters, and as saw in the papers that all letters that left Adelaide on May 20th had gone to the bottom I suppose Greens was amongst them. But judging from yours things seem to be going along A 1 You said you had squared up with Drgt releif [3] I suppose you remembered the certificates for that I paid in to them before leaving & got them back again as there is still a chance of some more to come on them It is bad luck not getting a bit of hot weather to burn the stubble off & no doubt Green had a bad time ploughing It seems to be one of the fortunes of some farming though to have something to contend with every year All the same I am looking forward to the time when I will once more be back on the block.

Have been wondering if it should close up suddenly, how a chap can make a cert of getting home among the first lot. A man wants some one among the heads to work it for him. All the same I think they will get us home as soon as possible as we are the highest paid mob over here My word there will be some thing doing alright when peace is declared The troops will go mad. Am expecting to hear of some thing big happening in the near future I feel certain [4] they are going to push him hard on every front with a particular hard push along the Belgian coast It would not surprise me to see the navy play a big part in it along there

Tell Doll her young farmer boy is looking in the very best of nick I don't know how he will be here but think for some time yet. I have not heard anything about young Alf but suppose he is alright. Jack Malone is over in France. I heard he was A 1 also Bob Hayman was still going strong [...] the boys I have seen of the 32nd tell me Bob is one of the best in the line, game & cool

Well Dad I will close for the present Hoping everyone at home is real well
With fondest love to everyone From your loving son Vic

P.S. No one has ever said if you are drawing the 3/- allotment money A while ago we were issued with new pay books. It was rumored that they wanted to stop paying the 3/- to all they could So nearly all of us have in our books that our people are dependant on us.

Sounds funny in mine you are dependant on my 3/-. Eh What

Item 39

N^o4 Command Depot
Codford
Aug 4th 17

My Dear Mother & home

Well here I am back once more at Codford after having 14 days freedom It was just A 1 to know I was free to do as I liked for a few days. I had a bonza good time while it lasted and saw quite a lot more of old England. First I spent two days at Chelsea or rather slept there From there I went down to Brighton for 5 days to see the cousins down there I liked them very much Will spent quite a lot of time showing me the country side and everything of any importance. In fact he would I think have walked the legs off me if I had been willing Had to crack sore just to stop him. One day he walked me away around the race course golf links & over the Downs Down Down do you heed me I reckon when one is walking they were all jolly ups I also had a swim every morning forgot how many under shirts I found.

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From Brighton I went back to London & spent a day & half with Bert [2] he managed to get a couple of days off before going to Candahar Barracks to another school. We spent one evening at the Opera I dont know whether Bert has seen Earl or not, but up to the time of me leaving him he had not done so

I then went \down/ to Raglan for 3 days What lovely country it is down there quite the prettiest I have seen I think it must be the hills they seem to slow everything up Rosa seems to be very well & hearty looking but Fred seems very poorly He is selling everything up in about 2 month & settling in place not far from Monmouth. The first day I was there I went to the sale yds with him he was selling some sheep I dont what price sheep are in Australia, but the 13 that Fred took in averaged 72/- per head I seems an enormous price doesn't it. The other day I spent looking thru the farm or fields meadows of whatever they call them He seems to have the place stocked well and some bonny good stock

I was very taken with his horses Rosa also took me over to see Raglan Castle what a fine old building it must have been at one time Needless to say how interested I was in it all [3] What a rotten place to travel that is though I had to change trains 3 times to get to Raglan at Gloucester Ross & Monmouth And coming back at Pontypool Rd & Newport

The last few days in London it rained & rained infact for 2 Days it did not stop at all It made things rather rotten but never the less I managed to fill in time very well The rain did a lot of harm to the crops Some I saw on going out to Raglan on coming back were knocked right down. In places everything is under water.

One night I went to Oscar Ashe & Lilly Brayton in Chu Chin Chow. It has been playing in London for 12 months. It was just lovely It is weird story of the East thrilling & interesting with some bonza singing. If it goes to Australia be sure & go to see it.

I arrived back here last night & this morning received two letters one from Doll written on May 28th & one from Dora of May 20th I should think from Dolls you have been having a rather wet winter I hope it continues & Australia has another bumper harvest. I heard the other day that a lot of the wool had been sunk by subs. The subs still seem to be getting a good number of boats of all sizes

[4] Was glad to hear Mary is still getting along well tell her I will write again to her in few days Am feeling very fair again now & hope I continue to so I dont half like the thoughts of the winter coming along The last few days make one think it is coming early. I hope not as the longer it keeps off the better the chance of blowing the Huns out. There has been some very hard pushing of late, but I think from what I heard the wet has stopped it for present, but I think it will soon be going hard again. I suppose within in a fortnight I will be leaving here for Parham Downs From there the usual thing is to go on draught for France I dont know how long we are kept there, but suppose they will give it-us some training, any way I hope so as I am as soft as putty at present

Must close now with fondest love to all And hoping you are all just A 1
From your loving son Vic

Item 40

No 4 Command Depot
Codford
Aug 19th 17.

[1] My Dear Mother & home

Am still in Codford, yesterday I had two teeth stopped, so expect tomorrow I will be on draught for Parham Downs I hear it is usual there to get at least 2 weeks training before going again across to France I hope we do get some as at present I am as soft & out of condition as one could be. Have had no letters again this week, no doubt it is owing to the Aus mails being sunk. I asked you sometime ago to address all my letters to cousin Nell

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It is a fortnight quicker at the least so I hope you are now doing so.

Do you know I think I have only received one letter from M' Green since I have left am sure not more than two another case I suppose of the tin fish.

You mentioned in one letter of hearing of me through Harry Heddle of Salisbury. He was reported killed last April but in the Anzac [2] Bulletin of Aug 1st & 8th I saw his name amongst a lot of wounded & prisoners of war in Germany.

Perhaps about this time you have been paid a visit from L C Jessopp, he promised me he would go & see you. If he should tell him I heard Sid Kerwan is at Pareham Tom Read at the T Bts for six months also Sgt Shipman [?] with a star up. Old Bill Russell still here but expecting to leave for Parham any day.

One day last week we had Major General M^cKay down here to present the sports prizes to the winners For the occasion there was a gaurd of honour of a 100 men It was A 1 The best guard I have ever seen

Last Friday night about 50 of us went to Warminster about 12 miles away from here to a concert, needless to say as we see a concert nearly every night in the camp (& good talent too) not many arrived at the concert, but instead enjoyed one nights freedom.

I see by the papers you people or rather Sydney is enjoying another big strike, gets on my nerves to think they cant wait until [3] this lot is over At present in this country things seem to be only middling also It seems right on the cards for a labour trouble to start here

Goodness only knows what is going to happen after the war if they keep on striking now

Have heard nothing of Bert during the last week, so suppose he is going along A 1

Of late we have been having some very heavy thunderstorms over here It has been playing up a lot with the farmers some of the crops are laying flat. I saw in the paper the other day that 10,000 extra hands would be wanted to able to use the sythe for harvest so you can imagine it is bad when they have to resort to the sythe (or I think it is the hook & crook they use) cousin Fred did show me rather a slow job I should think no good to Borrika

Must close now with fondest love to all at home & hoping everyone is well

From your loving son Vic

Item 41

Sunday Morning
Codford
Aug 26th 17

[1] My Dear Mother & home

Yesterday I received a bonny surprise I received a letter from you & one from Doll also the socks from you & Mill The ones you sent through cousin Nell It is much the best way to send letters & parcels much quicker & surer They were answers to my first from hospital how the time has slipped along since April & what a difference there is in the front line since then & yet in spite of all the fighting, the Huns seem as hard as ever crack If only Russia played the game I feel certain I would have been home for Xmas & now well no one knows still I am living in chance of it coming off yet.

Doll asks me in hers if I had come across young Wright who came away in the 5/48 Bt I know him very well he used to be in the same hut as I here before went across to France. I have heard he is reported missing (In most cases you know what that usualy means. I will try & find out about him from any of the boys I meet from France. He was a fine [2] lad When we were on draught for France he & another chap were called of the draught young Wright because he was under age & Bowden on account of having no teeth anyway in the night we left they had every thing ready, & when we moved off they fell in with us & went over too, after we reached the Btn I did not see much of him as he was in a different corps.

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It is a bit of a change to get a mail like that from me, but really I am sure since I have left I have written every week bar on one occasion in France I think a lot of letters go astray both going to & from Australia M' Green seems to be getting along A 1 by his letter to Dad I hope he clears a bit more on my block this year especially to as he has cropped all the cleared land I should think he would have a chance of some take all this year He is evidently getting his share of the mice they seem to be a big trouble this year anyway I hope it turns out a good year again as you can guess I want the banking account to grow a bit for when I get back. Did you smile & smile You seem to be having some wet in Australia We also are getting our share. It is interfering a lot [3] with the cockies here At present they are at it full swing cutting the wheat & practically day it is raining on & off so you can guess they are not \to/ pleased

I hope Kaths cold has gone & she is A 1 again. Rather a good scheme the telephone We will have to grow good crops Doll enough to run a telephone at Bovrika Am looking forward to the box of biscuits turning up perhaps you sent them through the Military Cousin Nell is at present enjoying the sea air & water at Brighton according to her letter yesterday They are very good to me & am making Kings Rd my English home If I run short I know where to borrow I will let you know if this happens & you can forward to her

Have had another little thrill enter my military career Was on gaurd over the detention [...] the other day & while escorting two of the birds to get some hot water they dropped their buckets & footed it for all they were worth. My bird gave up consequently I got him back The other one got away but has since been caught. The other escort was up for trial for neglect of duty for allowing him to escape, but managed to get him out of it Yesterday we were up again to give evidence [4] on the case of Jones the one that got away He is now remanded for a D C M so suppose I will have to stop a bit longer as at witness It is a funny old thing this military discipline how I love it

Have not heard of Bert this last week he is still away at Ledworth so suppose he is doing alright Earl is here somewhere but up to date I have not met him.

I think I told you our base in France is now at Le Havre instead of Etaples It is a much better place than Etaples the camp there I think I told you was amongst a lot of sand hills

Have been to the dentist again this morning to have my teeth fitted It is a [...] a [...] as I don't suppose I will wear them when I get them as they are for the lower jaw.

Will close now with fondest love to all at home & Hoping you are all A 1

From Your loving son Vic

Item 42

[Postcard which features a butterfly with the caption THE BUTTERFLY HAS WINGS OF GOLD., a firefly with caption THE FIREFLY WINGS OF FLAME., and a flea with caption THE FLEA IT HAS NO WINGS AT ALL BUT IT GETS THERE JUST THE SAME !

On the back of the postcard is the following:

Codford
Sunday Sept 2nd 17

Dear Kath

Received your letter yesterday. This P C brought back memories of certain places in France, not fond ones either. Am still here but expect to leave for Pareham anyday. Would like to stop another week as next Sunday Bert ought to be back from his school Am getting properly fed up of this place & will not be sorry to leave It is about the slowest place in England But a quiet spot is the usual place to find an Aust camp.

Best love & wishes from Vic Hope this does not stop you from sleeping

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Item 43

Nº 4 Commd Depot
Codford
Sept 13th 17

[1] My Dear Mother

It must be time I wrote you a few more lines There certainly doesn't seem much to write about. Anyhow for a start you will notice I am still in the old Codford doing fairly well Now don't burst out laughing or crying when I tell you my present occupation I am learning the very old fashioned art of cooking Up to date I have not poisoned any body certainly I have only been in the cook for one week up to date Now I suppose you will all say that is quite long enough to kill a whole Btn You know I can see visions of me being the Col of the Cook House All the same really it is just A 1 to get away from the Parade ground & not be hunted here there & everywhere on a different job every few hours One does know just how he stands & what is in front of him for the next few days

Just a present here it is raining again so suppose at the very least we are in for another week of wet weather I wish this place had [2] a roof on it It would not be half as bad then The wet weather interferes such a lot with things in general in France also besides making it so uncomfortable for the troops Arn't things just rotten at present In Russia it seems a certainty a civil battle is taking place right now I can't see Russia being of any good to the Allies for at least another 9 or 10 months Sounds rotten doesn't it but of course y that help at that time may not be wanted lets hope it wont

I had a letter from Jack Malone a few days ago he seems to be well, but is complaining of such a lot of unpleasant comps [?] in his clothing & blankets. He told me about [...] being on the Mooltan when she was torpedoed It must have been an anxious time until the news came through telling them that all hands were saved. I beleive at present they are all in Egypt. Jack had heard this through Charlie McCann.

Just at present in this every day there are about 100 interned Huns painting this camp they are a mixed lot sure enough Huns Austrians Turks & Bulgars I was talking [3] a couple of them while they were painting the cook house My word they have had an easy time up to the last 8 or 9 months they have done no work Have spent their time in camp sports etc in the day times concerts amateur theatricals etc at night And now they receive 8^d to 10^d an hour for working and have to pay 15/- per week for keep Slightly better than Tommies 1/- a day.

I saw Bert last Tuesday evening he has arrived back from the school he was at in Ledworth He seems well satisfied with the result & I think has a chance of going to another one in the near future, failing another school it seems on the cards he will soon be in France I hope he gets the school as one going over now stands a big chance of getting there just in time for a winter

Bob Hyman is now at Hurdcott with the T B he has been crook for some time consequently was sent over here for a spell out of the line C Proctor was the Lieut that censored Jack Malones letter to me I reckon he noticed my name & signed his name in full I suppose Harry is also in the 32nd Bert told me Earle [?] is also over in France

I received a pair of sox from Flo I wrote to her last week & thanked her for them

[4] There was another big draught from Weymouth came in to this Depot last night like me slowly dwindling back to France To give you an idea of our job at present we are cooking for about 850 men There are two other kitchens cooking for about the same number of men Bert told me that Nell had a letter for me from SA so I suppose tomorrow it will come along I do hope you are sending everything through her It is much surer also a lot quicker Tell Kath I am glad to here she has not yet gone to live with the Nuns in Old Beach Rd. Talking of Brighton reminds me I met Herbert Whitehead here the other day he seems well & is in the 4th Division Artillery

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Must close now mother I have to be up tomorrow morning at 6 am
Goodnight all Best love to everyone From your loving son Vic

Item 44

Nº 4 Commd Depot
Codford
Sept 26th 17.

My Dear Mother & home

I was going to try and write a letter but can't see much chance now, as when all hands come home to roost in the hut there is some row & they have just arrived, so you will have to be contented with a very short one I have just written John a fairly lengthy one so you will have to get any news from him.

I am still going strong as a budding cook. how long it will last I dont know but really it is much warmer than France so until I am put on draught I suppose I will still stay to spoil the spuds.

No good mother It cant be done tonight being about, rows weather and looks like row in earnest Anyway mother I am keeping fairly well I will write a longer one next time Am expecting some letters from home any day now as some of the boys have some late July one so mine must be near at hand Needless to say I am looking forward to them Goodnight mother Best love to all Hoping you are all well

From your loving son Vic.

Item 45

[Postcard captioned Rising Sun Misery Hill Codford and written on the back (dated 29.9.1917) is the following]

This Rising Sun represents the energy of some of the 4th Div Reinforce No doubt it stand as a land mark for years to come Notice the name of the hill. It is very steep & long and on the top a big parade ground for training. It was out first parade in Codford We knew it under the name of Hill 60 I believe Bert had something to do with the start of making ~~making~~ it And knows the hill as the Pimple so evidently each Brigade has a different name for it & Misery Hill is the name the 4th T B know it

Am also sending a P C photo of the boys in the hut I am in here perhaps you wont know me as I have a mow on also sadly in want of a shave. Vic

Item 46

[Photograph "P C photo" referred to above which shows 18 men in uniform. Written across the bottom right corner is "Nº 4 Command Depot A.I.F. England". The back is covered with a haphazard signing of names and numbers, of those in the photograph. They are as follows

6331 Sapper C Grant Telegraphic Section 9th Field Engineers
4410 Sig. R Welch. 30 Batt
6734 Prt E, Eloner 1st Batt
5808 T J.L. Carr 25 Bn
134 ??
4095 Pte W.H.Dixon Lewis Gun Section 21 Batt
Pte Kelly 10 Batt

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4233 Pte H R Scales 25 Batt
2819 Pte A S Hughs 2nd Batt
5748 Pte G Soonig 25th Btn
No 6308 G Edmonds 21st Batt
No 2382 Pte V V Brown 48 Btn
No 2026 Pte T.C.Clifton 27 Btn
4410 Sig R. Welch 30 Batt.
6547 C J McIlroy 1st Batt
6845 Pte H Harris 1st Batt
5114 D' B Hosking 16th Batt
Pte Heaver 23rd Btn
Pte Falkner 28th Btn]

Some of the above represent best guesses. In particular, the entry beginning 134 which is illegible is probably not a name, as there are 18 names without that]

Item 47

N°4 Commd Depot
Oct 2nd 1917

[1] My Dear Sister

Yesterday I received a letter from you also one from Kath Via cousin Nell yours was July 9th Kath's July 26th that is the difference in the time saved I saw some photos Bert had sent from Doll one was of you three girls I think it was just bonza It was the first time I had seen you in uniform & now no kidd stakes at all you look just A 1 & I quite agree with the reports I have heard as to how the nursing agrees with you Will I flatter you N° I won't Doll & Kath might pull my nose if I do or else say the camera lied. I believe some were sent to me but think they must have gone to the bottom, anyway I want one sent along again by the way the cousins all of them say they have no photos of you girls so you had better get them taken together again as I promised [2] I would ask you to send them one of you all dont send them all in one mail as they might go down

Just fancy it is 12 mths this month since I landed in England The time flies doesn't it and yet sometimes it seems ages since I left good old Ausie shores. The country is now beginning to get its Autumn tinge on again some of the trees seem to be quite ready for winter to come along Not so this child I wish it was the summer just beginning

Now that is funny there are three chaps in the hut at present just started to talk N° 1 The only thing that bluffs me is the winter. N° 2 It is one d——d big night mare to me. N° 3 I put in all of last but I hope I never see another. You know my thoughts I agree with them all. Bert is still here I think still standing a very good chance of going to Oxford at any time We had a letter from Earle the other day I think from his letter he [3] he was in this last stunt, also Jack Malone was in it I am expecting a letter from him any day now as I had a Field P C to say he was still going strong.

No Mill I havn't heard the nightingale very few have I think from what I have heard, bit of a joke I think only sings at a certain time of the night & certain places, generally have to go a few miles to hear him sing & wait an hour or so if he doesn't sing he must have moved his quarters. but I heard the cuckoo.

Sorry to hear of M' Smith being so ill I hope the old chap pulls through A 1. Things have been very lively in London this last week every night Fritz has been over raiding he has been going to some time The papers are just full of him & the people are just about mad & full of indignation letters wanting to know why we do not [4] retaliate in the form of raiding German towns also to know why we are not ready to do so I am expecting in a few days to

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hear of our machines paying parts of Germany a visit, as the people here at present are practically demanding it

Glad to hear you have been receiving some of my letters you know I dont love writing & to think some of my letters go to the bottom nearly breaks my heart. You know I have never written so many letters in my life. Tell Kath I will answer her letter in the near future
Hope you are still all A 1. Best love from your loving brother Vic

[Used envelope attached addressed to Miss S.M.Brown c/o Miss Lawrence's Hosp Wakefield St Adelaide South Aust]

Item 48

[Written on Y.M.C.A.paper and undated]

5th 48 H Batt. A.I.F. O.S.A.

[1] My Dear Sister

Just a line in answer to yours which I received yesterday, needless to say how welcome it was. I do look forward to mail days now a days. This is too far away for my liking, & as soon as this lot is settled I can promise I wont be to long getting back to S.A.

Was glad to hear you had some rain in Sept & hope it continued later on & gave the required finish. Was also glad the extra sixpence came along at last. Funny but to day I read in an Australian paper that the next mail boat to arrive in Aus was the ill fated Arabia, which was sunk on the return journey, no doubt with some letters for me. That is the first direct hit M' Hun has got on to me. And as you said [2] in yours there are a few more to remember I hope I can get the chance. When one hears of different things over here that has happened it makes me feel very bitter towards Germany. It is I think quite true about the Australians with their usual dash going too far on the Somme I think Mill from what I heard they are best fighters in France & I am very proud I am a true born one. I have heard a lot of different things direct from the front over here, but cant mention them, they are I think just what we hear in Australia

It is Autumn over here now or rather the beginning of winter. And the scenery is just beautifull, All the trees are a beautifull colour, gold, brown, & yellow. It will soon be over though as the leaves are falling very fast. I suppose very soon now we will know the dreary winter really is. Up todate it any amount cold enough for me, infact to cold for my liking.

Dora said in a letter [3] I received yesterday that Ella was making Berts hold all I hope that does not mean that he all so is leaving in hurry Leave is very scarce over here we dont even get the week ends, consequently we cant see too much of England. The London cousins all want me to go & stay with them at the 1st chance. I like them very much & hope to see more of them.

A lot of the 3rd & 4th Reinforcements are leaving for the Front on next Saturday to join up with the 48th Batt. who like most others suffered heavily on the Somme.

My greatest trouble over here is my washing washer women are rather scarce & it is always dark & cold when we knock off at night. One thing here we have splendid hot & cold water showers for bathing, any amount of water. I usually wash my socks while having a bath The food also has improved a little the last fortnight, & not before it was needed. At present we get porridge for breakfast. (The boys don't half relish it. Eh what) Of course no milk but we dont notice that

[4] We are getting a fair share of drill since coming back from London. I am afraid we can do with it, too, in some ways. I can honestly say I simply hate the sight of a pack, it makes my left shoulder ache every time after about half an hours carrying. And as practically all the drill in our Battalion is done with a field pack, I get my share of ache. It goes away as soon as I take it off so perhaps I am too soft for this country.

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Now sister it is getting near bed time so will say Au Revoir
With fondest love and the best of wishes for the New Year to you and all at home
From Your loving brother Vic
PS Do you remember last New Y Day.

Item 49

Codford
Oct 23rd 1917

[1] My Dear Mother

This letter ought to reach you just about Xmas time so it will serve as my Xmas letter to wish you all a bonny happy Xmas I wish I could be with you I did think a while back that some of us had a chance, but now well it looks as if it is going to go another 12 months any way a cert for the winter, but that is rotten talk lets hope it will stop all of a sudden & make all the tipsters out to know nothing Self included I hope.

I had a letter from Winnie Smith the other day she is in Salonika & seemed to be well I thought all along that lot of nurses were on the Mooltan [?] when she went down, but learn now they had all been landed safely some days beforehand

I have not heard from Bert since he left but expect to during the next few [2] days. Things have only been middling of late in London with the air raids Some Zepps paid a visit the other day or rather night Five of them were brought down by the French on the way back. About ½ an hour ago I was talking to a chaps who had just come back from leave he told me their were two huge craters right in the strand and one in Piccadilly Circus so you can judge from that he was over the heart of London It makes me wild to think they are so long winded about the reprisals

Another batch of boys left here the other night bound for Australia They ought according to report get home in about six weeks as now they go Via Panama Canal It will be a fine trip for them & I'll bet a very interesting one I also met some new reinforcements the other day they also had come that way. It is marvellous where all these chaps come from they still seem to be arriving over here [3] inspite of all we hear & read to the contrary

Just at present we are having another nice little spell of dry weather & according to the paper this morning the British & French have made another advance & have taken all their objectives Isn't it a pity it would not keep fine for another four months I believe then something would really be doing to bring things to a quicker finish

I am still in my job but have been choked up with a rotten cold not feeling the best in the world my word colds do take some shaking off in this country but are very easy to get.

The times over here will not run presents for Xmas Not even to Dora It takes me all my time to make the 2/- bob hang out you can bet we are all stoney getting near pay day & looking forward to it when it comes.

[4] They are starting here today to issue everyone with winter clothing also waterproof capes, at least they are supposed to be waterproof so as I have said before it looks like going through the winter Must close now I seem to be stuck for something to say and cook house has just blown for tea

Hoping everyone at home will have a happy Xmas & a jolly New Year
With fondest love to all From your loving son Vic

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Item 50

Nº 4 Commd Depot

Hurdcott.

Nov 8th 1917.

[1] My Dear Mother

One more letter from old England but from another camp & place We shifted camp last Tuesday it was some shift also some work cleaning up in the new camp We are now in the lines the reinforcements of the 32nd \were/ camp in It is a jolly fine camp easily the best laid out & drained camp I have yet been in, but it was some dirty for a start.

It is a lot better than Codford for getting a few hours leave as Wilton is only about 3 ½ miles and Salisbury about 5 miles. Wilton is one of the very old places The leading gentleman of the place is My Lord Pembroke and as usual owns more than half the country side It dates back to the early Saxons & Danes of later years Salisbury has outplaced Wilton & I suppose is quite the leading & biggest town for miles around.

I have had no letters from Australia for quite a long time now infact I have just written head quarters P O to try & skake them up so perhaps in [2] a day or so some will turn up.

I met one of Johns pals here the other day I think he said he left last June his name is Sgt Dover I think he is Quartermaster in the 32nd I.B

I have not heard of Bert either since he left Codford I suppose by this time he is back with his Btn I hear all the Australian troops are now out of the \line/ for some months to reorganise No doubt they have been chopped up properly during the summer I often wonder if all the casualties are sent home The push the Huns have made against Italy during the last fortnight makes one begin to wonder what old Italy is made of No doubt they are a marvellous nation \but/ I think they are running to the end of their tether. This lot is going to finish on the Western front, that is if fighting is going to finish it, which I am doubtfull about.

We are now having a lot of wet dirty weather I suppose you people are complaining about the heat & M^r Green well I suppose he is as busy as a dog with two tales I wish I was back helping him I have got no [3] time for cold I feel about as big as a mouse some mornings. It certainly looks at present as if my chance of being home for March is very remote but I suppose as far as the farm is concerned M^r Green will carry on until I do get home. Isn't it funny but I can't seem to get a letter at any price from Green.

We have just this minute heard we have to shift our camp again tomorrow Oh the glorious army I do love getting hunted about I think once I get back to the Mallee I will take a lot of moving.

Will say Au Revoir for another few days Hoping everyone at home is A 1
With fondest love to everyone From your loving son Vic

Item 51

Hurdcott

Nov 20th 17.

[1] My Dear Mother

Yesterday I received two bonza letters from home one from Doll & one from Kath. So I wont answer either of them but to you all through you instead Well Kath I was pleased to hear you had at last got your turn in the Elder Hall & Doll said you were good but not quite as good as you can sing I am waiting for the mail to come along just to see what the critics have to say But I know it will be A 1, so cheer up & go your hardest to pass the year. I know you can if you like.

I have just received two letters from Dora & one from Ella also a Field card from Jack Malone, he says he is A 1 I was pleased to hear from Jack as it is over two mth since he

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wrote. & I have written two or three times I felt sure he was either a prisoner or in hospital. From all accounts it is very wet & muddy over there at present I can just imagine it up to ones knees day & night. I think I am sure for hospital as soon as I get a bit it, as I can't get rid of the pain in my [2] legs & back I was down to go away on draught last week but was told to go back to the rotten old job in the cook house out of the wet. Ah well I am not growling as it is certainly more healthy than France in more ways than one

All the letters & papers we get at present are full of the strike that was in Ausie. I cant for the life of me understand how they could all come out like they did in these times I dont know the full strength of it but should imagine it must have been something very wrong for every one all trades to come out or was it just the railwaymen If any of you are talking to any N of them at any time just tell them If they had one night under one of Fritzs barrages Ill guarantee they would never strike again in war time I should think the very least they could have done was to \have/ worked under protest until this lot is ended up.

Tell M's Green when you write I don't for one minute think they havn't written as I know they have but the letters like a lot more have found a resting place in Davi Jone's locker before getting to me I will write them in the near future You seem to be getting a few more letters from me than [3] than you did Quite a change And according to Loyd George you ought to a lot more in the near future as he said straight out He was frightened of Subs but now he is not Last Saturday we sunk 5 Subs I was wondering if Edisons 10 weeks at sea with some of the navy experimenting has Anything to do with it . Myself I am building great hopes in him.

Give my love to Mary I hope she is going along A 1 I will write them also in a few days I am just getting over another innoculation have been off duty about 5 days now It went of course this trip to my legs but is a bit better now It is a lot better getting my letters Via Cousin Nell they come much better & quicker and don't forget to keep it going

I seem to have done a tremendous lot of writing this last month for Xmas I do believe I have written more letters during the last 12 mths than ever in my life before [4] And all with pencil I cant write at all with pen.

Also had a letter from Bert the other day, he was well but up to date of his writing had not seen Earle as he was away at a school I here my Btn has been cut up again just about as bad as when I left it but are now out of the line for some time as all the other Australian Bts are.

Mummy dear Doll says you are still looking forward to me being home for Xmas It is just about impossible now, never mind though where ever I am I will be with you all in thought So cheerio And best loves & wishes for the same Xmas

From your loving son Vic

Item 52

Hurdcott

Dec 1st 1917

[1] My Dear Mother

Yesterday I had a letter from Kath Spt 21st C/o of cousin Nell but it had the bad luck to be sent with some of Berts to France but arrived back yesterday with one from Bert He seems to \be/ well according to Bert the 4th Div is out of the line for another 3 mths so I can see a lot of Training for him during that time getting ready for the next spring push

Next Friday I am going on 4 days leave that is provided It is not cancelled in the mean time Another chap and myself intend paying a flying trip to Edinburgh he is a jolly fine sort of chap he is in the 10th Btn & like I an S A cockie named Wilson from near Georgtown somewhere, he has [2] cousins in Edinburgh. Four days does not seem very long to go to Scotland, but you know if I don't go while I have the chance I may miss next time

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In Kaths letter she sent me two snaps one of Doll & one of my/her/self with a fine looking tripe hound – also got hawled over the coals for not writing as Doll had a letter from Bert, but none from me It was evidently while I was on furlough, but I should have received a P C as I sent one from Brighton, but no doubt long ere this you have received a good many so hope I am quite back in Kaths good books

You say you have had plenty of rain should do we poor old cockies a good turn I do hope things turned out A 1 I suppose [*page 3 of this letter is missing*]

[4] I am feeling pretty fair at present hope I can keep so The cold has got me properly bluffed though. Cold I reckon I will have nightmares about when I get back

Must close now With fondest love to all

Hoping you are all A 1 From your loving son Vic

Item 53

Hurdcott

Dec 20th 1917

[1] My Dear Mother

A few more lines just to show I am still in the land of the living Since I last wrote I have had 4 days' leave in London And mind you what I want to impress on you is that this 4 days was good conduct leave So you can guess from that my military conduct has been at bursting point with goodness And this time I did not arrive back & have to go before the orderly room for being A W L. I had rather an enjoyable time while it lasted of course quiet as funds won't allow it to be anything else I stayed at Chelsea with the cousins Kings Rd is no doubt my English home I feel quite at home while there both cousins Nell & Algy are very easy to get on with & are very good to me. We went to see two plays The Better Ole a take off about the front line It was very funny and real good. The other one was a Comic Opera called The Boy I think it was [2] the best & funniest piece I have ever seen. I laughed that loud once or twice I had people looking at me & I had to think of John & what a horrible row he makes when laughing at a play.

On my way to Waterloo to catch my train back to Salisbury I was just leaving the Strand to go over Waterloo Bridge when the Air Raid Alarm went to warn the people to take cover You can't imagine what London is like when a raid is on The people rush & run everywhere to get under cover especially the Tubes are literally packed with women & children, also men. The poor little kiddies I did feel sorry for them they look so frightened hanging on to their mothers It was quite a big raid about 20 Goths came over they did manage to fetch two of them down the others as per usual managed to get back. They did a fair amount of damage to property & killed 10 people & wounded 70. I had to wait at Waterloo from about 6.30 until 12 midnight before my train left. And finished up by having to walk from [3] Salisbury home to the camp only about 8 miles and started from Salisbury at 3.30 am cold Oh I nearly froze, as it was had been snowing & at the time it was freezing hard The ground at present is just frozen hard for at least a foot down

I am writing this along side of the fire one half of me is warm the other side is shivering Oh my this country is a fine place for one thing only cold & wet Also for a holiday in the summer time But wait until I get my civic clothes on again Oh won't I have a holiday but it will be in good old Australia Oh what a time is in store for me Let it be soon.

Only about a week now before Xmas will be here I did have visions at one time of seeing this Xmas with you all Never mind though I will be with you in thoughts if not in the body. Goodnight mother Bed time Best of love to all From your loving son Vic

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Item 53a

No 4 Command Depot Menu for Xmas Day 1917

Breakfast

Porridge, Fresh Milk, Golden Syrup
Savoury Rissoles & Gravy, Mashed Potatoes, Marmalade, Bread, & Margarine Coffee

Dinner

Roast stuffed Goose, Turkey & Chicken, Brown Gravy, Roast Pork & Apple Sauce,
Baked Potatoes, Baked Turnips, Boiled Turnips Boiled Carrots
Plum Pudding & Brandy Sauce Walnuts, Brazil nuts, Almonds & Raisins
Fresh Apples, Sweets, English Beer, Lemonade, Ginger Ale, Lime Juice & Soda

Tea

English Ham, Beetroot Salad, Bread, Margarine, Raspberry Jam, Mixed Fruit Jelly,
Christmas Fruit Cake, Jam & Custard Tarts

Ceylon Tea

(Sgd) D.S. Wanliss L^tCol C.O. N° 4 Command Hurdcott Wilts England
(Sgd) P. Caro L^t Officer i/c Messing 25. 12. 17

Item 54

Hurdcott
Jan 19th 18.

[1] My Dear Sister

Well Kath I dont know what I am going to write about nothing of importance has happened over here except a lot of snow & rain has fallen, & as we can get along a lot better without that it is not very important is it ? I received a letter from you about a week ago also one from Doll was very pleased to hear you had passed your singing exams I knew you could if you stuck to it. My word A M U A that ought to be some swank I guess but I dont know what it stands for but seeing what a musical bird I always was I know you will excuse that wont you ? Anyway you can sing home sweet home to me the first night I am home again [2] That is if are a good girl.

I'll tell you who I met last Sunday Bert Tillbrook I know the old man will be pleased to hear I have seen him He is a Sgt in the Artillery & I think with ordinary luck ought to get his pimple in the near future And I should think he deserves it as he has had three years of it now. I'll tell you what I want you to do for him. He told me he has no photos of his Dad & Mother & he wants one, he wrote to them asking them to send him one but does not think they will get it taken Get father to find out from Mrs Tillbrook & if they do not send him one to make yourself spend an hour one Sunday afternoon with camera and snap the old man when he is out walking or else around the house any day Then to give him a couple & tell him [3] to send one Lough

Seacliff must be getting a place of some importance managing to £250 for the Cheer Up I suppose Jack is going to live in his house at Seacliff. Another case of like father like son Joh evidently wants to come back to the old place to settle Was glad to hear from Doll you had at last received a decent mail from me I think a good number of mine must be in Davie Jones locker because I have written regular ever since leaving Ausie

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You say or rather Doll does you hope I am still (preparing the food for the troops) (Sounds better) I am glad you think that because I have no liking for France these times N° 1 To cold N° 2 To many Iron foundries getting thrown about the air. Don't smile because its true. [4] No Kath I did not know LMB had been married I dont think he was while I was at Weymouth & since then I have not heard of him I am not surprised though as a tremendous lot of our boys are getting married over here Some of them are making big mistakes both the men & the girls from what I can hear Give me my Ausie girl every time In my opinion the Australian girl is head & shoulders above anything I have seen over here especially as regards a bit of common sense

I heard of Bat through Nell the other day he sent for some more woollens from her he was OK but evidently feeling the cold Also heard of Jack Malone through Bob Hyman they were both well

Best of love to all & hoping you are all well From your loving brother Vic

[Attached envelope addressed to Miss Kathleen M Brown Sturt Rd . Brighton South Australia]

Item 55a

Hurdcott
Feb 3rd 18

[1] My Dear Dad & Home

I received a bonza letter from you a few days ago I was looking forward to it as the girls & mother told me to expect one

Was glad everything on the farm has been going on so well. As you say I had complete trust in Green before I left. am glad you think the same way. I dont know what to say as regards the end of the two years I hope myself that Green will continue as in the past, but still if it cant be done well it is no use grumbling is it What I would if he does not go on is a couple of hundred odd acres put in well some of it oats on the old [2] .ground The long paddock near Greens well fallowed The other paddock near the town left out all together for a spell As you say the land we have been cropping must be in need of a spell But for a start I am still of the opinion one has to crop for three years to cope with the shoots I should think after this crop provided you get any sort of a burn the shoots must be well under now

It does seem hard to think of the wheat in Ausie that cannot be sent away when such a lot in these lands are in such urgent need of it. As far as the military is concerned there is no shortage what ever I can honestly say of late we have been getting the best food I have ever seen since I joined up either in Ausie or England Of course when in France [3] one does not expect to get much & is prepared to put up with it. Then again when on leave I have found provided one has money there is also plenty That is the unfair part of it as it makes the suffering fall upon the poor class When a soldier goes on leave now he has to have a sugar card, which gives him power to go into any grocer & draw 2 oz per day for the number of days he is on leave Of course everyone draws it & but gives it away as nearly all of us go to hotels or food shops of some description

I see young Alf Alf nearly every day he is I think not the best in the world the gas he got in France is still holding him back It is rotten stuff to get near I dont like it at any price I got one taste of it one night soon after I went France needless to say I said nil & laid low until I was [4] sure it had gone before taking my gas helmet off. From what I can gather from Alf it has more or less affected his heart. I am tipping during the next 40 or 50 years a big percentage of the men to die from heart trouble

Lough Tillbrook is also still here, he is coming over to see me this afternoon Don't forget to try your hand at getting old M^{rs} Tillbrook to send Lough a photo of himself & M^{rs}

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Also met George Harris the other day you will remember him he used to be the baker the one I think that married Lucie Benfield He seemed fair but I think it will be awhile before he is sent back to France.

You know Dad I am beginning to think this lot is nearing a finish I am expecting another big push by Fritz & then one by the Allies which will stir the tar out of old Fritz & the finish to follow in the [5] in the very near future after it (Around a table by the heads.

What I want you to do supposing it should end suddenly & I am still going strong is to try & get some influence to get \me/ home quickly for instance I think Peake is still Premier in S.A. & if I remember right you are good pals. Then again there is an S A. Agent General also an Agent General of Aust With a little push from Peake perhaps a good deal could be done. I dont want to hang around here a moment longer than is absolutly necessary. Of course I am looking ahead a bit, but still I have thought of it for a long while, perhaps even now I am a long way early, but I think & hope not A few pounds in cables provided it can be worked would be money well spent to me.

Must close now I think I have told all Hoping all at home are A 1 With fondest love to Mother yourself & the girls From yr loving son Vic

Item 55b

Dear Mother

Just a note I wrote to father this afternoon but forgot to put one of these photos in. hope you will like it I think it is tres bon Also forgot to tell Dad that I had received the parcel containing Balaklava socks & mits they are just it I think I had better keep s the soxs for fancy nights they are fine & flash.

I saw where the mail leaving here Jan 28th with letters for Ausie has gone down & I know it had some of my letters on it quite a lot I think Isn't it terrible to think any of mine should go down I am keeping a couple of these photos incase these should go down

Very Best love Mummy & Goodnight with love from yr loving son Vic

[Attached envelope addressed to J.A.V.Brown Esq Sturt Road. Brighton South Australia]

Item 56

Hurdcott

Feb 16th 18

[1] My Dear Mother & home

A few more lines from this side of the world Perhaps in the near future when we arrive back on your side I wont have to write so many letters Ask Dora if she will write to you for me (Except some times) when I come back.

Great excitement I received a parcel from home this afternoon The one you sent me for Xmas It is I think the 1st of its kind I have been lucky enough to receive from you And it was addressed to the Btn so I suppose I was luckier still Needless to say I am smoking an Aust Three Castles with the almonds & raisins near at hand

[2] Young Alf is still here I see him nearly everyday He still seems about the same, he was like myself very disgusted that the last three mails to Australia had been sunk, as he told me he had written quite a number of letters And my usuals with a few extra have also gone to the bottom It is to horrible for words to express

While out for a walk yesterday afternoon, \saw/ two aeroplanes out flying One of them had the misfortune to run out of petrol and started a rather quick downward passage It fell about 200 yds away from us It was smashed to pieces One of the men inside had to be carried

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away on a stretcher [3] seriously hurt The other managed to limp away not quite so bad. The plane itself was bent & broken very badly I think a few letters back I told that up to date the troops had not had their rations cut down It is now about a week since a new order came in to force cutting nearly every thing down shorter One God send at present is their seems to be a big supply of potatoes & other vegs on hand otherwise the shortage would be very marked Their seems to be no doubt that the food problem in my mind is as big a factor the British have to face as the Hun himself And as soon as one is solved the other will be beaten.

[Whatever remains of this letter is missing]

Item 57

Hurdcott
Feb 28th 18

[1] My Dear Mother & home

Another week has gone along so one more few lines to write just to show I am still on this side of the channel At present feeling a bit on the cold side We have had lately some beautifull weather the sun has been shinning nearly every day quite strong & bright Today though is just the opposite dull & overcast & trying its hardest to snow Some of the old people in this district seem to prophesing on account of the end of the winter being so mild some very cold & wet weather March & April I hope to goodness they turn out bad tipsters

I had a letter from Doll a few days ago dated about Jan 5th telling me how you spent Xmas Day & the New Year It all sounded [2] quite familiar to me but you made me wish I was one of the happy throng, never mind though better days in store or else I am a very poor judge Young Alf is still here I see him nearly every day, needless to say my pals that come along to see me are always on the right track for an extra good meal. Alf seems to me to be just about the same that is could be a lot better

I have not seen anything of Harris you know who I mean the baker that was I have an idea he has gone to hospital as he was pretty crook last time I saw & he was then going on a sick parade Of course I am not sure.

Had a letter from Bert a few days ago He seems to be still going strong But my word Doll he is [3] more unlucky that I was I mean in the shape of getting a nice wound good enough to fetch one back to Blighty Suppose you think that sounds funny but it is a fact nearly every one at times almost prays to stop a good one.

Nell also heard from Tessie They had just come out of the line Just fancy Will Smith being home again Only the day before I received Doll's letter I wrote to Bert & asked him if Will was still there to try and find out what had become of him. At the same time he was at home again The same thing happened as regards Dar Clarke I did not know he had been wounded

I am due to go on another four days leave in about a fortnight I suppose I will find it bit different this trip as regards [4] food as at present everything is on rations & one has to have a ration ticket for everything It is funny to see the fatigue parties here out digging up all the vacant land getting it ready for next years potatoes One sees about 60 men in a row all with a shovel digging Needless to say it is a real government stroke Have had a spell here A good one too To go down and get my pay 30 lovely shillings Doesn't sound much does it ? Still it has to run a fortnight Hard to do it and save enough to go on four days leave Au Revoir Mother And best love to all From your loving son Vic

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Item 58

March 24th [1918]

Sandhill Camp

[1] My Dearest Mother & Doll

I wrote some time ago to you for your birthdays, but I think the boat never reached home, so as today is mother's birthday & Dolls tomorrow you will both know I am thinking of you & wish you all the nice things possible for today & tomorrow.

You will see by the heading I have made another move I arrived over here the day before yesterday & since then I have done nothing but chase around from one hut to another. The glory of the parade ground will start again now I am not looking forward to it much. This camp is the last one we go to before going over to France We are supposed to get 10 days here.

I arrived back from 4 days leave a few days ago, as per usual I had a very fair time theatre and sight seeing One play I saw called Romance has been playing over 1000 nights & still gets crowded houses every night Spent another afternoon [2] at the Zoo No empty cages or else I may not have got out again My word though it is a fine Zoo quite worth the time spent in seeing it. Spent another hour looking over the King's stables And came away disgusted at the number of fine horses (about 100) doing absolutely nothing and all as fat as mud It is a shame when one thinks of the shortage there is in fodder in this country

Just at present we are having some just lovely weather The sun is quite warm & strong with a nice gentle breeze blowing It cheers one up & makes one think of Australian Spring Time By our papers the big push has started The Hun is pushing very hard in places with a certain amount of success, but I feel sure he won't last at the pace he is going & in the very near future it will be our turn to push him And surely not to far off the will be.

Best of love Mother to you and all at home I will write again soon

From your loving son Vic

Item 59

Sutton Veney

April 7th

[1] [*The end of this 3-page letter is inserted at the beginning of page 1 as follows.*]

Au Revoir Mother dear and the best of love & wishes to you all

From your loving son Vic

Dearest Mother

Look at the date of the heading of this letter It is my birthday & this morning I received letters from you Doll & Mill for my birthday They were written on Feb 13 or at least yours was The photos taken at Xmas time were in the letters

Now mummy what had you been doing I think you had been working very hard & were tired by your photo Were you ? Still I was very pleased to get & see you all even it was only photos once again Arn't Johns kiddies growing & they all look real well too Infact everyone looks nearly the same

By your letter you seem to have had a rather hot time in Feb & were feeling the heat a good deal Now I will be a cocky again Feb if I remember right is the month to burn the stubble [2] Now you will see I am thinking of the profits.

Was pleased to hear M' Green seemed to be quite contented at Borrika and was going along well I had a letter from both little Mavis & Gwen two such nice bonny little gir letters & they have got on well for only two years at school

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You say in your letter you will know in March whether Wiluna has been sold or whether it is still home I hope in one way it is still home then again I know it is a lot of work for father so I dont know what I wish If you do sell it where are you going to live surely not away from Brighton & hope not that also. I have just read your letter again and I beleive by the way you speak of it that Wiluna is no longer home perhaps even now you have made a move out to another spot.

I am thinking of sending you a cable for some money It will [3] be a week end to wire Nell direct to Nell some money most likely £15 so I hope you wire it straight to her in stead of the Commonwealth Bank I have got no time at all for the Bank – not to many have they keep one fooling around for months sometimes & sometimes for ever

I am now at N° 1 Commd Depot in Sutton Veney I was at the O L B for about 9 days on my way to France again & was sent down here so in the near future I think I will put in for a transfer into something else I just could not carry the pack My back & shoulders just went crook properly with screws

I have not heard of Bert lately I know our Division have been in action lately so was am hoping to get a letter from him any day now from hospital over here. The fighting I think has been the heaviest of the War We have heard some wild rumours about the Australians but nothing definite so hope it is all untrue what we have heard

Item 60

Sutton Veney

April 19th 18

[1] [A postscript is inserted at the beginning of this 2–page letter as follows.]

Give the cutting to Mill I told her about it & accidently came across it again I know she wants it so thought I would send it on

My Dear Mother & Home

A few more lines to show you I am still in the land of the living The last week has been very rotten weather over here It has been very cold & wet & last Tuesday it snowed all day & again last night a real heavy snow, but owing to it being wet it did not get a chance to accumulate If it has been the same in France I ll bet the boys have felt it especially as things have been so warm in the sh fighting

You said in your last letter When is this war going to end I wish I could tell you mother we can only go on as in the past living in hopes it will be in the near future I do think at present the deciding battles are taking place that is as far as big fights are concerned It is a matter of hanging on Things don't look to cheery do they but still I feel sure we will be the [2] winners in the end It does get on our nerves at present to get a paper and read where our government here is still squabbling among themselves & instead of all to win the war they keep showing signs of party politics Even Loyd George at present is in the bad books.

I saw young Alf again last night he is now down here also he seems fair but could be a lot better, he sent his love to you & all at home

Also had a Field card from Bert the other day he has been right in the big stouch & up till the 6th was still going strong I heard from one of the boys here yesterday that Earle had gone to Mesopotamia with three stars up, he seems to be one of the lucky ones doesn't he

Ar present I am on a job as hut orderly to the Orderly room staff. They tried to work me into a cook house again I was not having any this trip.

Must close now mummy Will write again in a week Best of love to you all at home
From your loving son Vic

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Item 61

Sutton Veney
April 24th 18

[1] My Dear Mother

This morning I received a letter from Doll also one each from Mill & Dora. You know how pleased I was to get them. I am answering yours or rather Dolls straight away & Doras on Friday after Anzac Day which is tomorrow There is going to be a great day here Sports and boxing galore to suit all a good spread at noon and the evening is to be taken up with concerts in nearly all the camps, so really it should be a good day At present the weather points to being a really fine day but one can never build on tomorrow in this fair England I have heard so much about You know that dont you ? You people in Australia seem to have had a particularly hot summer this year I wish we got a bit more sun than we do over here It would suit me a lot better Still at present I am feeling pretty good again & provided I keep on going I will soon be back again helping to crush the detestable Hun again In one way I wont be sorry as I am just full up of this life in England [2] I was not half bad while I was at a constant job

I heard the other day from good authority that the 4 Div had had a special French distinction placed on the whole Division for the good work done in stopping the Hun in his advance on Amiens Good old Ausie

Now Mummy dear Doll tells me you have not been to well at time of her writing If you go getting sick I'll get quite cross with you I know though you will be better again by now In fact Doll said you were improving when she wrote You must not worry about me mummy I will be quite alright and I feel sure in \the/ near future I will be back again with you all And then for a happy time again For you, for me, for someone else, in fact all at home

Do you know at present I feel as if home is in another place I wonder if it is You know I hope not because I did love the old house But I expect father has found it to much for him to do and in that case perhaps it is for the best. I wonder what you are going to do If you intend to build again and where. I hope not out of old Brighton

I was pleased to hear the Aunts are keeping so well Poor old dears How they must miss dear old Mary

[3] No Dorothy Brown you must not worry about me running away with an English Princess I am quite safe Doll to return home to Ausie as I know someone else will return. That is happy and full of thankfulness to think we were spared to come back again to those we love It is quite true though Quite a lot of our boys are getting married over here, but I dont think to the extent you think so Some of course are quite all right Others enough said from both sides of the argument. Tell Mill who also had a word to say on the same subject that the piece of poetry she sent me fitted me to the T

Will close now and go and get some coal for tonights fire With very best love to all and hoping everyone is quite well From your loving son Vic

PS I have just written to Nell They are good to both Bert & I. I am wiring tomorrow or rather Nell is for me for you to send me £25 pounds I have made the others hang out well, but at present I am getting very low and leave is always on the cards over here if one is lucky.

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Item 62

Sutton Veney
April 29th 18

[1] My Dear Old Dad

I hate to have to write to you now I know how you are missing dear old mother God I will to when I come back I cant realize it is true let alone \think of/ home without mother She was Dad a guiding star to me right through my life Perhaps you guessed that Dad. It seems hard to think it was for the best but we will try Dad to think it was and be brave I know she would have us think that way And her memory I will always keep dear to me.

I wrote to the girls yesterday poor kids how they will miss her dear face to You dont know how helpless I feel over here I seem as if I know nothing at all except the bare fact that she has gone & I will have to wait six weeks for letters How I curse the B — Hun you dont know. I did not get your wire until the evening of the 26th It was in the camp all day & a few hours of the 25th And yet the miserable hounds in our P O were to lazy to fetch it to me That is our army or rather those that run the show for us all over though One gets disgusted at times with the whole show.

[2] I dont know what is going to happen me at present Sometimes I feel pretty good at others no good at all Allthough just lately I have been pretty good so very likely in a month or six weeks I will be back again in France It will either be France or Australia I am sick of the camp job I was asked to go into a cook house a couple of weeks back, but refused So it will either be France or Australia.

Things in France at present look very rotten Fritz seems to be winning but I dont think he can continue with the present push much longer And I feel certain provided we can only hold him about where he is he must eventually come a big croper I feel certain of this as with America sending troops we will not get any weaker & he must get weaker So we will hope for the best

Perhaps at the time you receive this you will be in another house I dont care much now Dad although while dear old mum was alive I did not want to see you move It is different now somehow

I will close now Dad With best love From your loving son Vic

Item 63

Sutton Veney
May 10th 18

[1] My Dear Sister

A few lines only to let you know I am still in England but I think in about 4 or five weeks I will be well in France once again How are you all I wish I could get some letters from you I seem as if I know nothing at all I know though sisters mine you are all very miserable but cheer up old dears & keep dear old Dad a smiling We know our loss but his we cant realize at all And keep on writing me a letter every week just the same as ever wont you

On next Tuesday I am going on four more days leave I don't know at all where I will go but for a start it will be London & perhaps as per usual & not away from London I have had such nice letters from the cousins No doubt about them is there being good people In case the last letter I wrote did not reach you dont forget to send £30 to cousin Nell for me as at present I am nearly stony broke & to save a the price of a cable Nell would have me send [?] for it by letter & send it [2] straight to her as the Aus-Commonwealth bank is to slow & behind the times for anyone at \all/ to have any dealings with I think the military sort of run that show so perhaps that accounts for it

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I have had to stop here & go over to the Pay Office They have a habit in the Commd of findings little debts owing to the military Mine was the first cable I sent home from here when arriving in England They tell us when arriving to send it through the military at a cheap rate & it would stopped out of deferred pay. But change their minds afterwards & stop it from the 2 bob a day. so at present instead of being square I am in debt to them

I had another letter from Bert a few days ago dated May 3rd He was then A 1 & still going strong, he is having a rather a hard & long run of it over there I think our boys have had it as per usual more than their share of the hardest places in the line. I will write again soon after I come back from leave

Best of love to each of you And Cheerio From your loving brother Vic

Item 64

Sutton Veney
May 22nd 1918

[1] My Dear Dad

I have just had four days leave & while in London I received a letter from both Doll & Mill March 19 & 29th telling me how dear old mother was getting along If only I had not received your cable how different it would be to read the letters as they are both full of hope for her to get better again We must all cheer up though Dad as it had to be & my memory will always be of how lucky I was to have had her for a mother

I was sorry to hear that Uncle Will had had news of Douglas Lakie dying in France of consumption Dad there is one of the little arguments come nearer home as regards conscription in Australia Was it right to send that lad to France being in the stage he must have been in With any fair examination from a fair minded D' do you think he could have been legitimatley sent into a winter in France. I know your views Dad on conscription but Dougs case is one of many more we know of but Australia knows nothing+

At present I am an orderly for the men coming in & going out of this Depot for how long I do not know as at present I am expecting to go [2] to the O L B for a bit of training before going back to France as lately I have been feeling tip top again This warm weather suits me right down to the ground We are having just perfect days The sun feels extra hot It is quite a different heat to Australia, a more moist heat I think if by any chance it could get up to say 110 we should die. The country too at this time of year is just perfect It is just what pictures & stories tell us it is, only the reality makes it quite a lot more enjoyable

I suppose at present you people in Australia are like us expecting every day to hear of the big push starting again I think though this time Dad he will find it a much harder job to get through The Yanks must make a big difference there are about 600 000 of them in France I am expecting great things from them during the coming year

Am expecting/ to hear from you next mail Doll said in her letter that M' Green had just finished up with the harvest Evidently you have come to a satisfactory arrangement for Green to carry on for another year or more likely I should think owing to what should be followed this & next year a two years agreement, but of course I dont know I am only surmising

[3] Well Doll I am sorry I could not fulfill your dream you told me of in your letter, but never mind that good day is to come lets hope it is a lot nearer than we think it is.

The last two letters I wrote home I mentioned the fact I want you to send Nell £30 send it straight to her I can then get it without any trouble at any time Lately I have been stony broke It is no good at all these times over here as everything is very dear

I will write again next week & let you know my movements so for the present Cheerio And best of love to you all From yr loving son Vic

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Item 65

Sutton Veney
May 30th 1918

[1] My Dear Sisters

Just a few lines this time to let you know I am still in Old England When I last wrote I told you I would very soon be in France again, but at present it looks as if I will be here for some months longer During the last week I have had a medical board quite unexpected to me and at present I am classified C 1 which means home service in England At times C 1's are sent home to Australia but I dont think I was born under a lucky star so dont build any hopes, but of course should the chance arise I will not let it slip You can all guess that though can't you ? Of course one is liable at any time be classified again but it usually stands goods for a few months

Just fancy it will be two years next month since I first enlisted. When one looks back it seems a long time and yet it seems to have gone very quickly Am I Irish but you know what I mean dont you

[2] [This page is numbered 3 in error] We are having a lovely spell of good weather here at present During the middle of the day the sun gets quite warm At times when it is cloudy it is a very rotten heat to stand You know one can hardly realize this is the same country it was a few months back Then it was cold & dreary Now every thing is at its best colour in every direction bright & cheery If it was not for seeing so many soldiers about to remind – One would never think there was a war on

And yet at present things are at their worst in France but I hope & think so too In the very near future things will take a big turn in our favour

When I heard of Bert last he was still going A 1 so take it N° news is good news I saw in a paper the other day that Bob Hyman had been wounded & gassed but I dont know which hospital he is in

One of Kitty M'Caleys pals was in this camp up to a few days ago His name was Roy Donal from Nth Adelaide I think he was marked B2B & was sent to Weymouth for Australia But last night I saw a wire to say he was marked up again and instead of Australia he would probably go back to France It is rotten hard luck for him isn't it After about five D's telling him [3] him he was unfit & was to be sent home One D' can with a stroke of the pen ride over all the rest I should think it must make the other D' feel very wild to be practically told they dont know their work. Rather an insult I should think And rotten hard luck for the man isn't it.

Now sisters mine I must draw to a close Best Wishes for you all
And Cheer Up Better days & knights to come Best love from Your loving brother Vic

Item 66

[The final page in this collection is numbered 3 and there is no other clue as to its location. It may be the missing page 3 from a letter dated Dec 1st 1918 but pages 1, 2 and 4 of that letter are written on different paper.]

just at the present time M' G is as busy as one thing It should be about 7.30 am You may have had some wet, but I'll bet you have not had any cold like we are getting just at the present moment Am sitting by a fire at present doing a shiver.

Expect to get a P C photo about the same time as this of self & two pals One you will know or remember me getting a photo taken of the wedding group at Broken Hill Harry-Stu Stewart was his name I think he will soon be back in Australia again as he is crippled in one foot & was shell shocked as well In fact he ought to be at home now as he can do nothing over here I get properly disgusted at some of the quacks we have in our army Harry was in

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the 8th Btn The other fellows name is Kingston out of the 24 Btn we were all knocked at Bullecourt

Wasn't the last push A 1 just fancy catching old Fritz napping & getting in about 9 miles on him It has been very hard fighting to hold it all since taking it as Fritz has been counter attacking ever since