

Derby Street.
Perith. $\frac{28}{9/17}$.

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The Editor of
The Sydney Morning Herald.

Sir,

Apropos of the sentiment so admirably expressed in the verses entitled "Ypres" appearing in this day's S. M. Herald, I beg to send herewith a letter received from my son some little time ago.

He was one of the "Contemptible Little Army", and took part in that first great heroic struggle right through from the beginning up to the middle of May, 1915, when he was severely wounded near St. Julien.

He is still on Active Service.

Copy of portions of the letter, which perhaps you may consider worthy of a place in the columns of the Herald, enclosed - also stamped and addressed envelope for return of original letter.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

your very obedient servant,

John Watson.

From J. Watson
701y Street
Perth.

"A" Squadron,
Beaumont Barracks,
Aldershot, 20⁶/₁₇

My Dear Parents,

I received three of your letters and five Sydney Mails during the past three or four days. One letter written on 12th April, one on the 16th & the other on the 30th April. I expect the submarine warfare has something to do with the Mails being late.

The papers are very interesting, especially the ones about the Shows. Mena enjoys them very much. Must let Ted Clare have them afterwards.

Those socks were just lovely. Mother and fit me like gloves. I am wearing two pair and keeping the thicker ones for the cold weather.

It is just lovely here now. Some days are awfully warm but that is better than rain.

Hope Dick has enjoyed his three weeks holiday.
Does he go to Queensland after all?

Am very glad to hear that the fowl
are getting along so well. Mena will be able
to help you with them when she goes out here.
She is just longing to go out and see you ^{all} and
so am I.

I certainly think it hard lines on your
father that you were denied the privilege of
seeing something of this big fight for freedom.
I feel sure you would have made a name
for yourself. It sends a pleasant thrill through
me when I read your letters referring to the
work done by the first little army of ours
against the German hordes. Some of the people
in this country so soon forget what we did
and dared in those days, but you have
not forgotten. It is so refreshing to read
what you think about "the first 100 thousand".
I should like to be back at Messines again
just for a short while to see what it looks

like after that big battle. Wasn't it just
glorious? The Irish ~~to~~ behaved like the
real men that they are - forgetting the past
and fighting side by side in that big
struggle for the coveted ridge which we
so doggedly retired from on that
memorable 31st October 1914. We left many
thousands of dead Germans on the fields we
fought over though - the flower of Germany's
millions. They thought they had wiped
out or demoralized our little army, but
soon found out that the few who were
left were all the more determined to
keep them back, and, although the line was
so thin, it was made up of well-trained
men with British hearts. I shall never
forget our lads retiring that day inch by
inch with their faces to the foe all the
time. Every time we got the order to
retire I felt a great big lump in
my throat and every now and then when

we charged forward it was with wild
 cheers. I felt as strong as a bull
 and fit to take on 10 Germans myself.
 When at last we settled down behind
 Messines, it was then that we began to
 think that we had been forsaken, for the
 reinforcements that had been promised us
 had not come up. We kept saying to ourselves
 "Will they never come?" It was not until
 afterwards that we had learned that French
 had sent them up on our left where our
 flank was threatened. It was a daring
 gamble of his but it worked out all right
 as it happened.

I'm afraid I shall bore you with all
 this which you have heard so often before; but
 our lads who are here now love to talk about
 it at times, and we were all genuinely delighted
 when we read the papers the other morning
 to see that Messines was ours once more.
 Fondest love to Dick & Selous from the Class Mine
 & self. Love yours, Sam, Jack.

"It sends a pleasant thrill through me when I read your letters referring to the work done by the first little army of ours against the German hordes. Some of the people in this country so soon forget what we did and dared in those days; but you have not forgotten. It is so refreshing to read what you think about "the first one-hundred-thousand."

I should like to be back at Messines again, just for a short while, to see what it looks like after that big battle. Wasn't it just glorious! The Irish behaved like the real men that they are—forgetting the past and fighting side by side in that big struggle for the coveted ridge which we so doggedly retired from on that memorable 31st. October, 1914. We left many thousands of dead Hunns on the fields we fought over, though the flower of Germany's millions.

They thought they had wiped out or demoralized our little army, but soon found out that the few who were left were all the more determined to keep them back; and although the line was so thin it was made up of well-trained men with British hearts. I shall never forget our lads retiring that day, inch by inch, with their faces to the foe all the time. Every time we got the order to retire I felt a great big lump in my throat; and every now and then when we charged forward it was with wild cheers. I felt as strong as a bull and fit to take on ten Germans myself.

When at last we settled down behind Messines it was then that we began to think we had been forsaken, for the reinforcements that had been promised us had not come up. We kept saying to ourselves "Will they never come?" It was not until afterwards that we learned that French had sent them up on our left where our flank was threatened. It was a daring gamble of his, but it worked out all right as it happened.

I'm afraid I shall bore you with all this which you have heard so often before; but our lads, who are here now, love to talk about it at times; and we were all genuinely delighted when we read the papers the other morning to see that Messines was ours once more."

Signed: *John Watson*
School Teacher, Derby St., Penrith.

28
9/17.

ALDERSHOT

21 JUN 17

Mr. & Mrs. J. Watson,

Bastereagh Street,

Pennith,

N. S. Wales.

Australia

Mr J. Watson,
Derby Street,
Perith.