



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

Personal

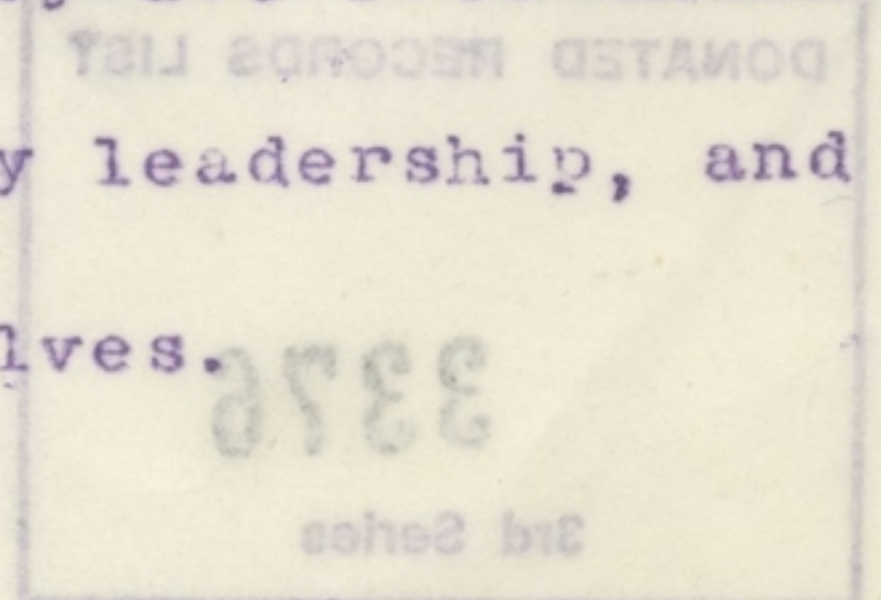
PRIME MINISTER

October 23, 1916

My dear General,

I was much touched by your note, delivered to me by Sir John Cockburn, and do hope that you will not be in any way distressed by the decision your men have come to about conscription. It is of course a great grief to us all that our men are not desirous of Australia putting forth her whole strength in the war but in some ways this does them infinite credit; it is characteristic of them that they should generously dislike forcing others to come to the hell of war, and they honestly doubt whether men are more needed at the front or in the land which they love so dearly. Moreover, there will always be a back-lash against discipline in every army, and soldiers will always take what chance occurs to voice their modest grievances by kicking authority. I think also that this was the worst possible time to poll our soldiers.

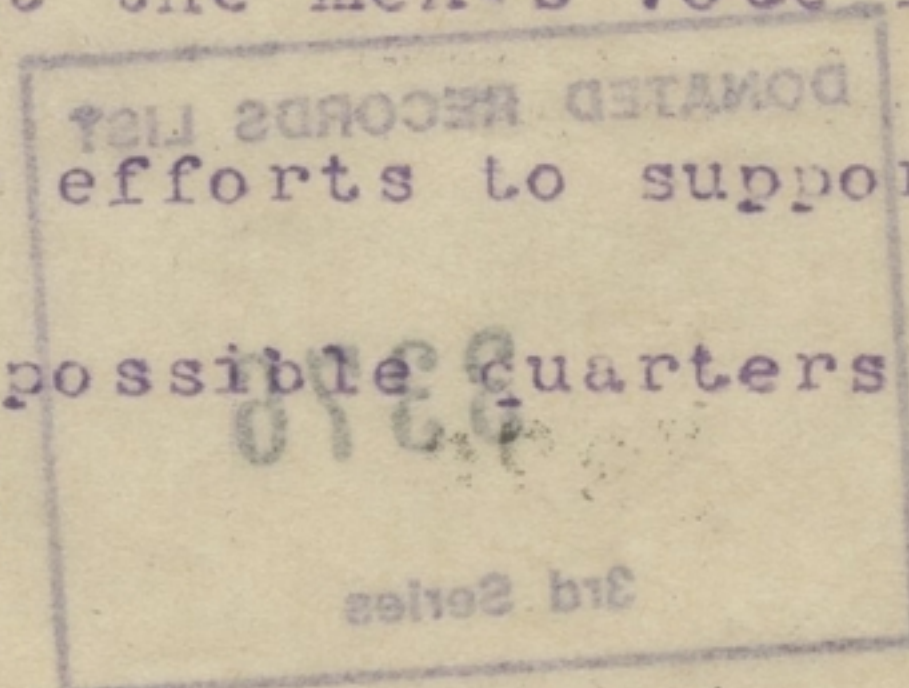
But whatever happens or has happened, you have led us as no other man could have done ~~so~~, and our men have great affection for you and trust in you, though they are free-thinking and highly intelligent men unaccustomed to any leadership, and well accustomed to deciding things for themselves.



I do not see why you should blame yourself in any way, and want to say how much we all admire your leadership of our boys.

It would indeed be a great tragedy if the magnificent heart of our men were broken, but a period of rest after a while will do great things for them. I wish some way could be found for this. We don't of course wish for any favoritism, and yet it is true that our men are not the same as the British soldiers, and are far from home, and possibly a very easy winter for them would be excusable. With the present shortage of men, all corps no doubt are overworked. Perhaps that can be remedied when supplies increase. You mention "grievances" as a reason for the adverse vote, but we know how well the men are fed and as for clothing they are of course entitled to all necessary for health, while on the question of leave the only thing the men could legitimately say is that being far from home and having seen so much service they are entitled to all they can possibly be afforded.

I do not know what Beale told you; he is a good-hearted Australian but I fancy may suffer from a very common sickness amongst civilians - that of shock at seeing for the first time war as it really is. Please do not think that the men's vote is due to grievances. We shall all redouble our efforts to support you in getting everything possible from all possible quarters to help and comfort them in their trials.

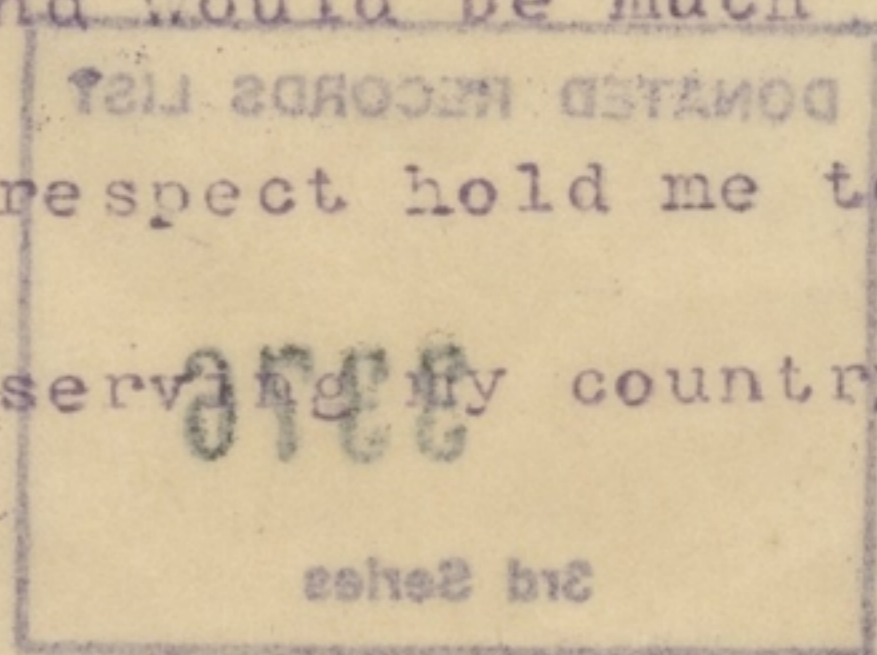


I do not for a moment think that 90 % of the men are against conscription. I have for some time held the view that the whole British army would like peace as soon as it could be honourably attained.

Now for a confession. I hope you will not be vexed, but I did not send your cable forward in exactly the way you gave it to me. I shall be very sorry indeed if I have displeased you, but General it weighed on me more and more that if you cabled "We are strongly in favour of conscription", in view of what I regarded as ^{new and} undoubted evidence that the majority of the men was very strongly against it, your relations with the men, so valuable to us beyond measure, might be injured; and even to gain effect in Australia for the policy we wish, that seemed too high a price. I tried to communicate with you by telephone but could not, and there was no time for wires. So I sent your opening sentence ~~h~~, "We are greatly in need of reinforcements", which was what General Haig had said, and was the limit I thought safe.

I know you are accustomed to obedience, and ^{can} can only say that I acted for the best, though perhaps misguidedly.

I wish a thousand times I was with the boys, taking my humble part in their hardships and efforts, and would be much happier with them. Authorities I am bound to respect hold me to my present task, but I may yet find a way of serving my country in the field.



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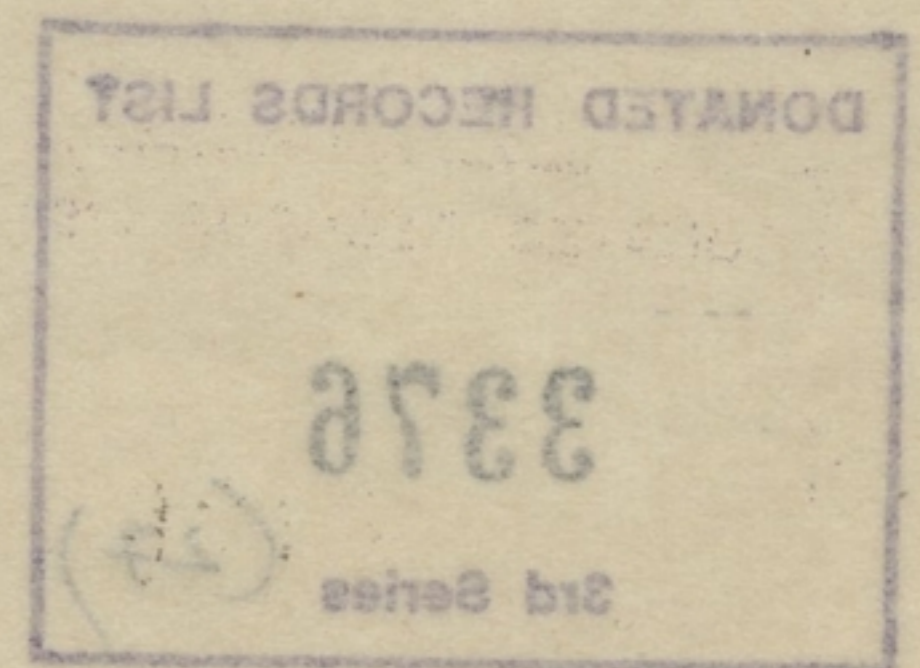
I have asked the Army Council to insist upon the merging of the soldiers' votes in the general totals, so that the results will never be published or known to anyone.

You have only to tell us ^{what} we can do for our army, and it will be done. Certainly command me, General, to the death.

With every good wish,

Yours very sincerely,

Keith A. Murdoch



The United Cable Service (Australasia)

SYDNEY
MELBOURNE
BRISBANE
ADELAIDE
NEW ZEALAND

CABLE ADDRESS:
"JAGANATHA," LONDON.

TELEPHONE: 6600 HOLBORN.

LONDON OFFICE, The Times,
162 QUEEN VICTORIA STREET.

November 5, 1916.

My dear General,

Your letter of October 29 is kind and wise, and just what one would expect from you, whose whole thought is centred on what almost all Australians most desire - (1) winning the war and (2) efficiency and good work in our own army. I am sure that Australians realise and will do so even more in future, how much we owe to you.

The soldiers' votes showed a strong majority against conscription in the first 60,000 counted, but this I am delighted to say has been gradually worn down and the 95,000 counted now show a small majority for it. I am informed that the Third Division polled a splendid Yes vote, 90 per cent., but I do not vouch for that. The Egyptian votes arrived at Marseilles yesterday and should be in London tomorrow, when everything can be cleaned up. Please regard these figures as confidential - I have no doubt you have got them already but the Electoral Department is very touchy and I have personally no right to pass them on.

I fear there was misunderstanding about the cable of which I wrote to you on the 23rd.. The wire I got in Paris read as follows:-
"From your first telegram I thought you wished hold meeting before polling. AAA I of course have no objection to meeting such as you suggest.... but you have to get Chief's sanction to allow men you send

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from England to visit areas where troops will be AAA of course only portion of troops will be seen AAA there are always considerable number of men at Etaples and perhaps meeting there will do but you may be sure I will arrange anything you wish as far as possible AAA Hughes manifesto has been issued to all AAA have sent him following message begins in response to request from mayor Kalgoorlie who specially asks Miners message the following has been sent begins Anzacs feel sure Australia will see sacrifices already made are not in vain which may be the case unless we are assured that men will be forthcoming to keep effective and up to strength the magnificent battalions batteries and companies which have made history and have established traditions AAA Miners Corps . . . send following message begins we are strongly in favour of conscription AAA all are wanted to finish enemy quickly so that we may return the sooner to those we voluntarily came away to shield clearly conscious of our duty to the nation dont delay message ends General Birdwood".

From this I thought that the first part of the message was the Miners' message to Kalgoorlie, and I took "Miners Corps" to be the signature. I then read "send following" as an instruction to me to send what follows to Hughes as cable from you. Lee who read the telegram said "With that message from Birdwood you will not need to trouble about resolutions." Personally I never had any other thought in my mind than that the last section was a message from you. I fear it was very foolish and I am exceedingly sorry.

When I dined with you at Abeele White said to me "You got the General's message", and I said I did not like sending it and he said it would have a very good effect. After dinner you may remember I spoke to you and said again that I did not like sending it as from

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you, and you thought for a moment and then said "Send it." White was beside us at the time. Of course I now see that you both were referring to the message you circulated amongst the troops, and I can only apologise for being such an idiot.

No harm can have been done. I sent the final section to Hughes as from you, omitting the word conscription and inserting reinforcements, and of course Shepherd would see at once that it was identical with the other message and he would not issue it. In the unlikely event of Hughes using it, it could do no harm, as it was no stronger than the other message. I sent it together with messages from Briard, Thomas, and others which I collected in Paris.

It is all over now. You will have seen that Outhwaite, a pacifist, has been trying to raise the question of your message to the troops in the House of Commons. Lest you have not noticed it, I enclose the facts. Outhwaite next day was howled down in the House amid shouts of "Pro-German". He is not a lovable personality and there need be no fear of further question of your action here, but of course questions will be asked in Australia.

I have very great appreciation of your action in issuing the message but personally, for what my opinion was worth, I did not think you should have been subjected to the risks both in the Force and in Australia of sending a message and you may remember that I twice expressed that opinion - in Mr. Lloyd George's room and at the Waterloo station. It is not at all likely that the anti-conscriptionists in Australia will make much of it; the small extreme section which may try to do so is so anti-national (quite distinct from the great bulk of the anti-conscriptionists, who are true Australians and not class-mad) that they are not worth having any truck with.

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I ~~have~~ had several long talks with Lloyd George on the Australian voting, and on Monday Bonar Law sent for me and discussed its Imperial aspects, especially ~~as~~ regards the soldiers' vote. Of course I spoke to both as I always do quite informally and unofficially, having no interest other than that of my country to which my whole life is consecrated, but I feel that I should tell you that Bonar Law in particular is worried and seems to think that the war is injuring the Imperial ties. Of course, I think so too, because victory has not ^{yet} come, and because in the process the Dominions and their armies have to go through ^a good deal of disillusionment. I always say how wonderfully lucky we are in having you and perhaps I overestimate some of our special disadvantages in having men so far from home, as compared with the other armies, and in such different climate and country from their own. I went so far as to urge simply from my own point of view that it would be excellent if we could be given a good rest during winter, and they seemed very much taken with this idea.

Of course we want no favours. But it is essential in the interests of the Empire that the best possible relations be established between British and Australians. The vote in Australia shows how self-centred a Dominion is likely to become.

Winter in England or the south of France may be a distant possibility but of course it is absolutely and completely a matter for yourself. I merely tell you these things because if you ever want anything you can rely upon Lloyd George and Bonar Law. Don't look upon me as having any wishes in connection with the Force which are not yours, as whatever you say we will follow, in London as well as elsewhere.

You must think civilians a curse so I shall end this letter.

*Your most sincerely
Keith G. Murdoch*

*...with some of the
...the Government
...the best possible relations
...the Empire
...the vote in Australia
...the Dominion
...the self-centred
...the winter
...the south of France
...the matter for
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BALLOT OF THE AUSTRALIAN TROOPS.

Mr. FORSTER, answering Mr. LYNCH (Clare, W., Nat.), who asked whether the vote in reference to conscription in Australia was begun but not terminated among Australian troops now stationed in England, said:—I understand that the voting was begun three weeks ago and was wholly completed by Saturday, October 28. The hon. member will realize that it had to be conducted with reference to the naval and military situation. Mr. LYNCH also asked whether the votes of certain Australian soldiers were torn up and other votes substituted for them. Mr. FORSTER.—I am not aware of that. I do not know that the War Office is concerned with it.

Mr. FORSTER, replying to Mr. OUTHWAITE (Hanley, L.), who asked whether his attention had been drawn to the fact that General Birdwood, the Imperial officer commanding the Australian Forces in France, issued a personal appeal by letter to Australian soldiers in France and Great Britain urging them to vote for conscription for Australia in connexion with the referendum; and could he state whether this action was taken by direction of the War Office or of the Commonwealth authorities, said:—I know nothing of such an appeal, and the War Office was not consulted on the subject.

WOUNDED SOLDIERS AND

United Cable Service

(Australasia)

SYDNEY
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CABLE ADDRESS:
"JAGANATHA, LONDON"

TELEPHONE: HOLBORN. 6600

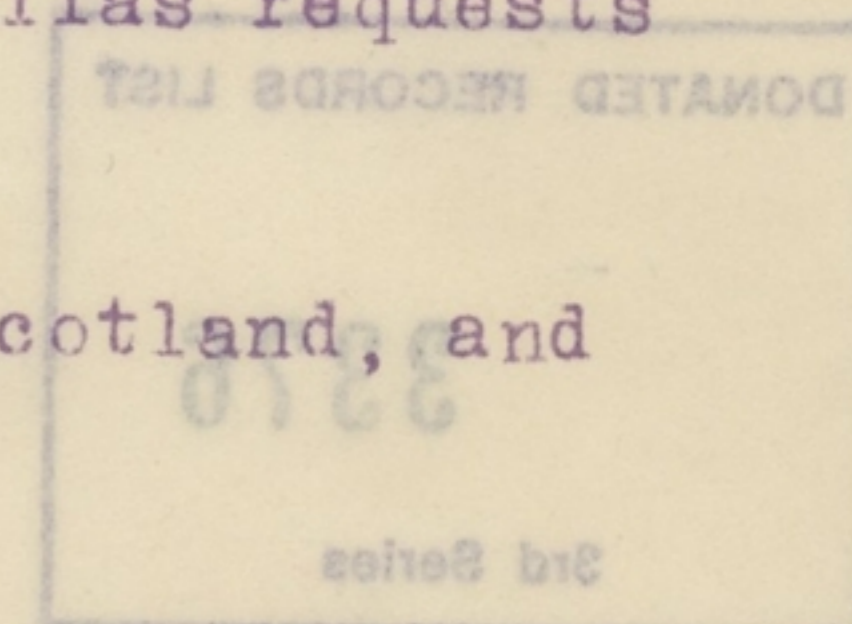
LONDON OFFICE,

162. Queen Victoria Street.
E.C.

My dear General,

Very many thanks for your excellent Christmas message, which I am sure will be highly appreciated in Australia. All the boys say they are having a pretty sad time at present, owing to the mud, and I still think it is a great pity that the War Office has not pulled out a whole division at a time for a thorough rest under a sunny sky. We all know how well you always stick up for us, and I am sure also that it would be an insult to our brave lads if we asked for all were offered any special privileges which the other divisions under the British Command could not be given. At the same time the Australian soldier is very different from the stolid, phlegmatic British Tommy, and considering that we have such diverse interests in a number of things, I do wish our government would at once offer you the highest possible command in the Pacific over a term of years, so that your future would be assured apart from anything the War Office might think of Australia's requests while our men are in France.

I have just been up to the North of Scotland, and



was much impressed by the unanimity of the expressions of full faith in Lloyd George. I think we can say that the great change has at last come with an enormous majority of the people of Great Britain behind it, and all the stalwart opinion in Ireland and neutral countries admiring the return to a strong policy. The Dominions except New Zealand have of course long desired this change, and we in London have worked for it. Personally, I am an admirer of Milner and Bonar Law, as well as Lloyd George, and am confident that we can depend on them for fair play. Arthur Henderson is also accessible and useful, and Walter Long has promised to help us whenever he possibly can.

I do hope you get over soon, and that I will be able to see you. Unfortunately this terrible climate has had me on my back for considerably longer hours than on my feet during the last four weeks.

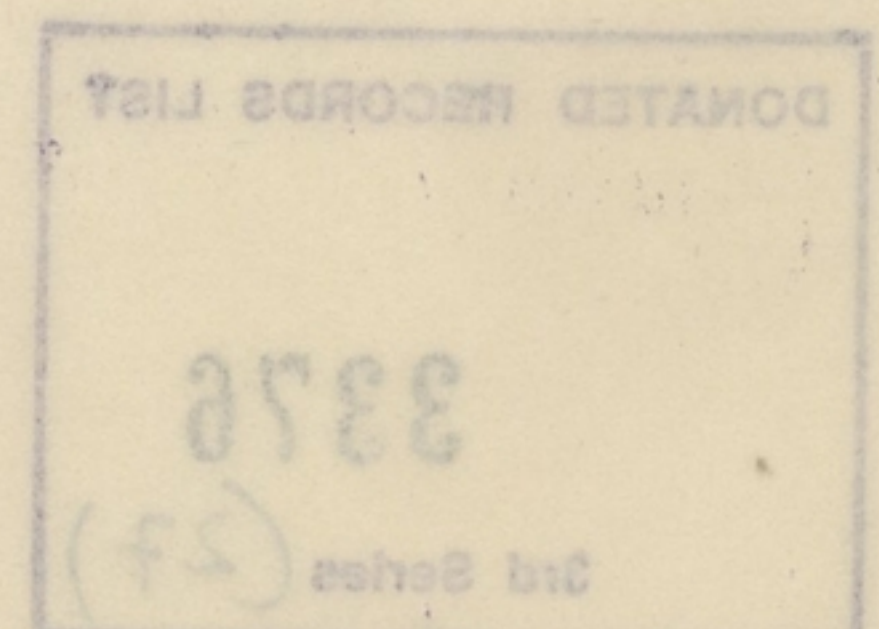
With the best of wishes,

Yours very sincerely,

Samuel

P.S. I wonder if you could find time to give a word to my brother Lieutenant Alan Murdoch, 37th Battalion, if and when you see the 10th Brigade. He is a very good boy, and is always cheerful and reliable.

Lieut General Sir W.R. Birdwood,
Headquarters 1st Anzac Corps.
B.E.F.
FRANCE



United Cable Service

(Australasia)

SYDNEY
MELBOURNE
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CABLE ADDRESS:
"JAGANATHA, LONDON"

TELEPHONE: HOLBORN. 6600

LONDON OFFICE, The Times,

162. Queen Victoria Street.
E.C.

February 12, 1917.

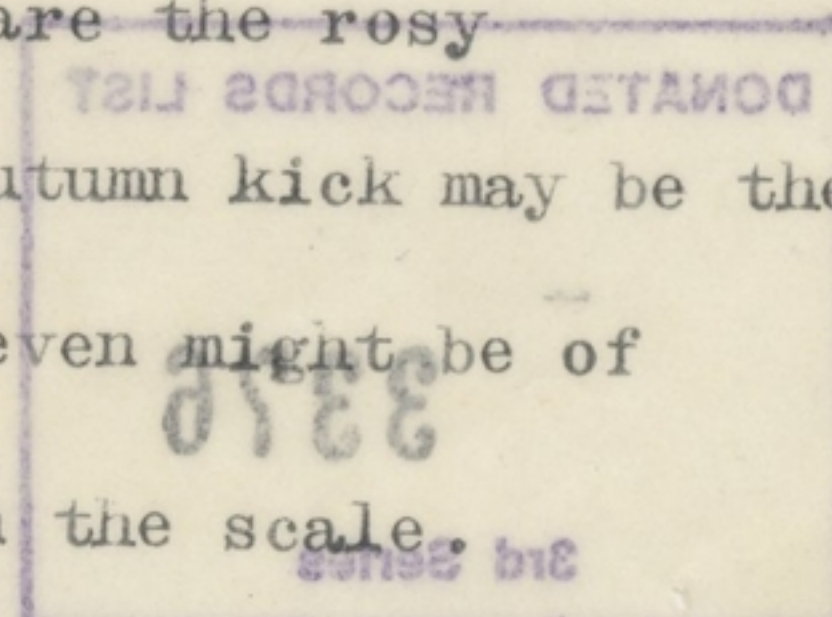
My dear General,

We are all very sorry to hear of your bad cold. Do get right as soon as possible - if I dared to say so, I should suggest a good rest say in the south for a while, so that all will be right for later on.

On the question of honours, I think I may now safely say that Australia will not leave it until something thoroughly satisfactory has been done. Fisher and Hughes are both acting, though the latter may wait to make the exactly right representations ~~until~~ *when* he comes here next month.

If Watt comes, it will be a pity for Hughes. But Watt is one of the sound young men we have and provided that he allows Hughes full play as premier representative, it will work out all right for Australia. Watt is a forcible and straight speaker and a master of affairs; I am sure you will like him and that he will be with you as long as you will have him.

The more one thinks of a sixth division the more one is impressed with the duty of Australia to put all men into the field in the course of this year. You know I do not share the rosy anticipations about the west, but no doubt the autumn kick may be the final one, and another three or four battalions even might be of great use, whilst a full division might even turn the scale.



I simply long at present to be one of your "dear brown robins" and feel more than ever that whatever one has done during the war, ~~if~~ a young man he should be some time in the actual work at the front. As you know I have always been unreservedly at the disposal of my Government and you may be sure that I will take up the question once more with Hughes as soon as he arrives and urge him to send me into the firing line.

Unfortunately the conscription campaign has left a nasty aftermath in Australia and the Interstate Labour Conference passed some foolish resolutions which almost stamp one-half the people as anti-war. One hates to write pro-German, but that is the logical meaning of their resolutions. You would not think that any of your men could pass such resolutions, would you? I don't think they would - their labour bosses have got out of touch with the people and are following a selfish policy which conflicts with national interests and will assuredly be crushed - though Australia ~~might~~ ^{may} do some queer things in the meanwhile.

My last word from Hughes was very hopeful. He is still full of life and eager to do his utmost to make life unbearable for those who turned against Australia!

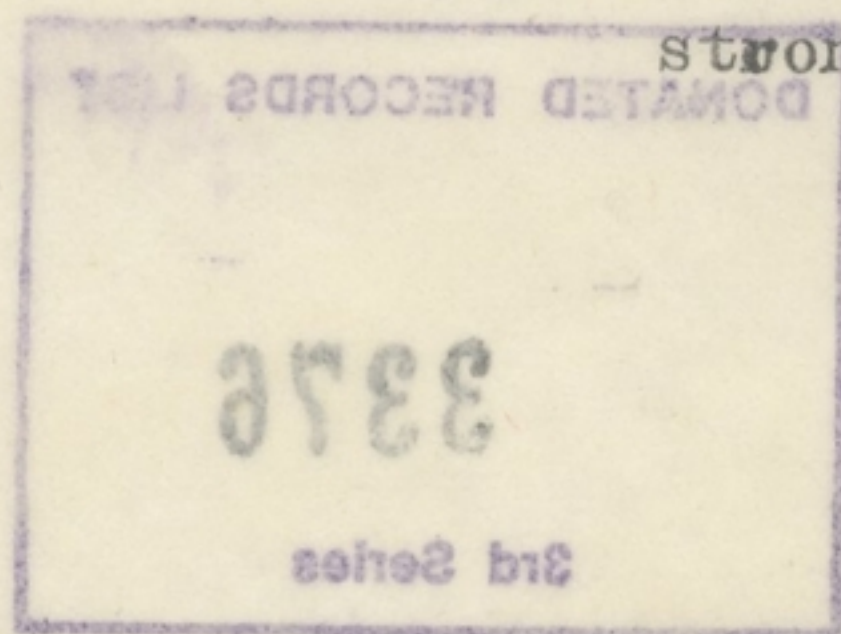
Kindest regards - we were delighted to find White looking so ~~well~~ well and speaking so happily. We think him as white a man as walks. Legge goes back fairly contentedly, convinced that he has been ~~called~~ called back because Australia is on the verge of civil war and requires a strong man. But poor Legge has some good points.

With all affectionate wishes,

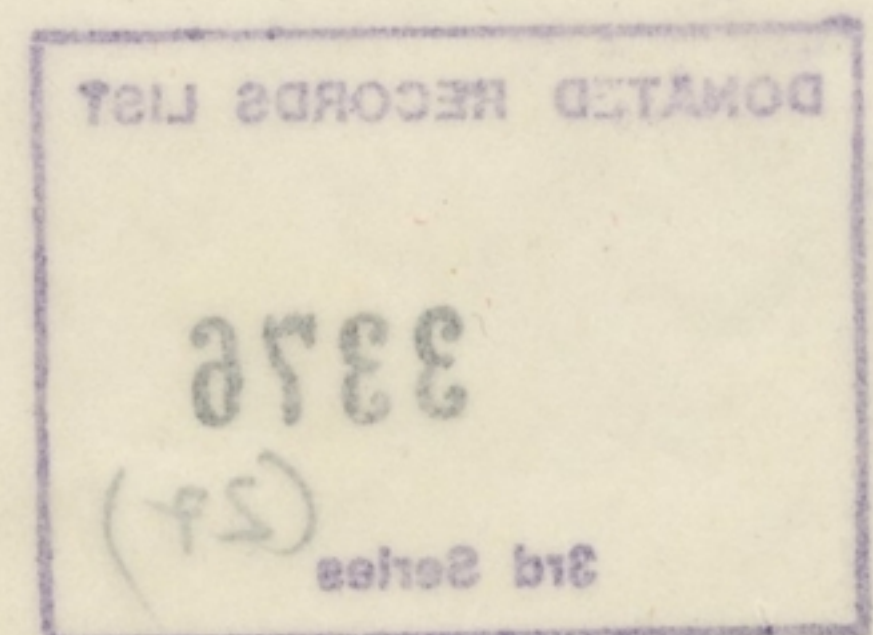
Yours sincerely,

Keith Murdoch

P.S. →



P. S. I had to go before the Dardanelles Commission last Monday and had a row with the acting-chairman, Lord Justice Pickford. My friends tell me I did quite well. But I did not scruple to let the attitude of the acting-chairman be known and for the present at any rate the confirmation of his appointment is held up. I have often wished to talk over with you the part I took about the end of the expedition, and I know if you knew all the facts you would say that at any rate I acted in pure good faith. There were things about it I often regret, but there is nothing I would not do over again if the same need came. It is some consolation to know that the old and the new Cabinet gave me credit for a considerable public service.



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(Australasia)

SYDNEY
MELBOURNE
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CABLE ADDRESS:
"JAGANATHA, LONDON"

TELEPHONE: HOLBORN. 6600

LONDON OFFICE, The Times,

162. Queen Victoria Street.
E.C.

April 8, 1917.

PRIVATE

Dear General,

Many thanks for your telegram and letter re the elections. Personally I have always disliked any political disturbances in the Army and therefore cordially agree with your attitude. I thought however it would have been alright for us to send over some men merely to watch the distribution of literature, for I cannot see how distribution will be effective in the only channels you are allowing us to use. However, I am sure the men this time will vote solidly for the National Ministry. I am myself in much the same position as yourself, in a very humble way, for I cannot and never have allowed myself to be identified with any party; but of course I feel so strongly that the National Party is the right thing in Australia until the war is well won that I am doing all I can in a quiet way; and I think we have now everything organised as well as possible at this end.

Mr. Hughes has been sending me frantic cables about, among many other things, Ozanne. He has found out that Ozanne was technically and I think in spirit also a deserter from his division when the latter was being sent to France. I tried to hold Hughes off it because it rather involved Anderson, but a letter from Monash narrates facts that put Ozanne in such a bad light that I have little doubt that the party will try now to get Ozanne's seat.

You will I am sure be pleased to know that reports from Australia are very good. Hughes is getting support everywhere and in all sorts of unexpected quarters, and will I am sure be stronger than ever after the elections. I may say that in case

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of accidents I today sent him another reminder as follows;- "Strong feeling amongst soldiers about British Governments persistent ignoring of Birdwoods services stop despite Asquiths promise in Commons after evacuation he is still without any honour since 1914 stop word from you would compel certain authorities here to recognise remarkable services and do tribute to Anzacs work ."

You will perhaps have seen that the British Empire Order is now something more definite than mere suggestion and that it is proposed to have women Knights! Personally I do not think the Order will be worth much and I do hope you get proper recognition - as of course you will some day, for Australia will see to that. Did you know - I forget if I told you - that Fisher had a word with Bonar Law recently on the subject, and I spoke to Milner too, so all the Cabinet has been judiciously informed by representative Australians.

There is a good chance of finding sufficient assistance here in a few weeks, in which case I shall not only visit you - since you have been so kind as to invite me - but also go on to the French and Italian fronts.

We are all expecting great news soon.

There seems to be no doubt here that United States will get an army across. Of course submarining has been bad - especially along the southern coast - and it is quite extraordinary how ships are hit near Plymouth time and again and got to the beach.

If you are writing soon I would be greatly obliged if you could add a few words I could cable to Australia, before the elections, merely about the Corps' present work; anything that keeps up the military spirit is useful.

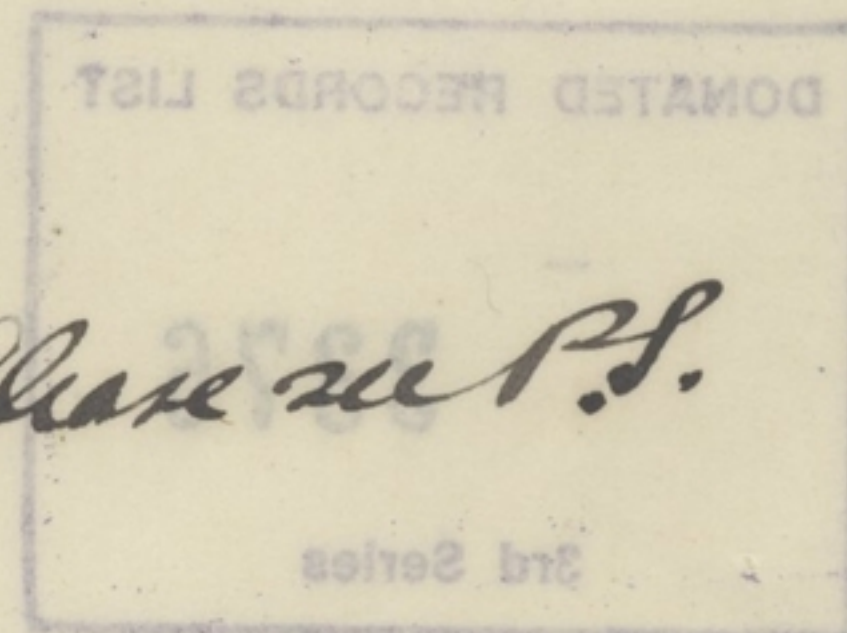
With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,

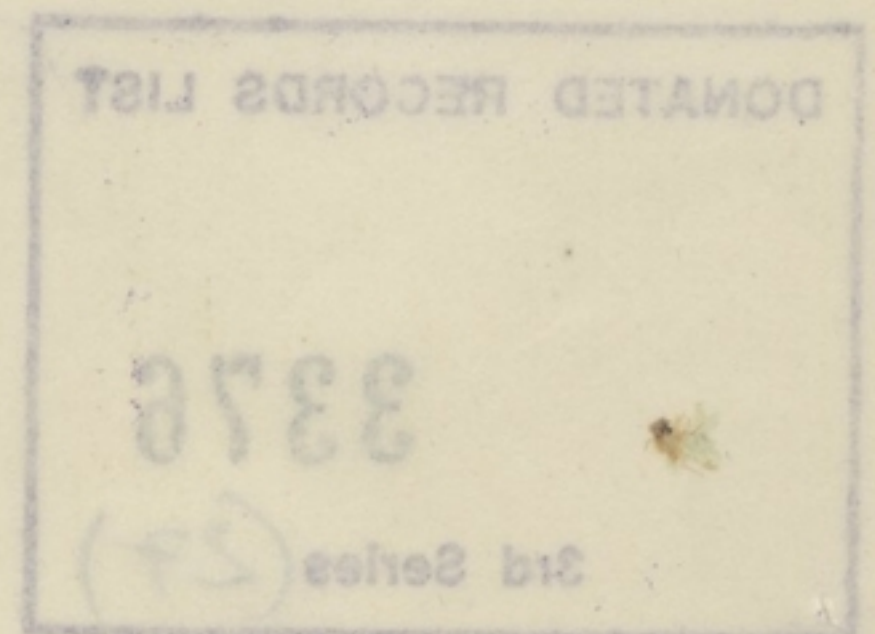
Keith A. Murdoch

Lieutenant-General Sir W.R. Birdwood, K.C.S.I., &c.
First Anzac Corps.

Please see P.S.



P.S. - With regard to Moore, I hope you do not suspect that I had anything to do with the matter. Beyond answering inquiries on two specific points I did nothing - & I assure you that I would never touch any A & F matter even at the request of the Government without telling you all about it. The thing against Moore in the eyes of Australia is that he is a pensioned politician & not a soldier, & that for him to rise on the backs of our soldiers is not to be thought of. So I trust he will not endeavour to get the Home command, because almost certainly Australia will again refuse it. But please in any case be assured of my personal loyalty to yourself & hold me always at your service.



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(Australasia)

SYDNEY
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CABLE ADDRESS:
"JAGANATHA, LONDON"

TELEPHONE: HOLBORN. 6600

LONDON OFFICE,

162. Queen Victoria Street.
E.C.

June 11, 1917.

My dear General,

Very hearty congratulations on the new honour. If the Empire gave you the Grand Crosses of all the Orders it has it would not be too much.

I restrained myself from coming down to see you during the week-end, because I know how precious every minute of your time is when you are in England. I do hope you will have a thoroughly restful and ^{happy} ~~helpful~~ time in the country and that you will have nothing to worry you. You will, of course, get all the inside news from your friends. I do not know what is being arranged about the Egyptian command. The story is that Murray is in London. It seems certain that, in any case, he will not be retained in his command. He advocated the Palestine expedition so strongly that at last they let him undertake it on condition that he got through with his available forces. I believe he was told quite frankly that ~~it~~ was make or break so far as he was concerned. I hear that Hamilton says that you are to be

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3rd Series

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offered the command, but I also heard~~d~~ that it has been offered to and refused by a very distinguished soldier, probably Smuts, so I don't know what to believe about it.

If you come back to London earlier than you intended and have five minutes in which you are free from all demands, I should of course be highly delighted to steal them from you.

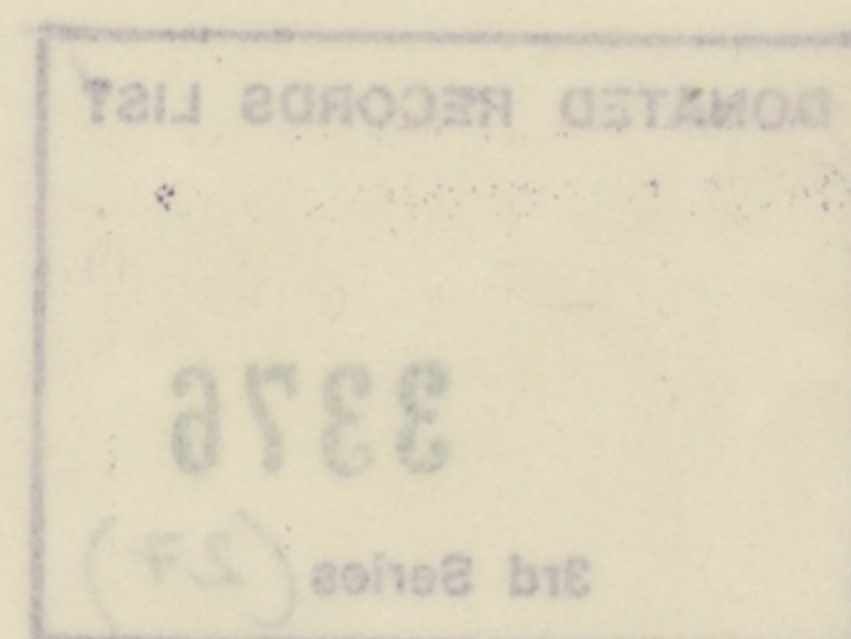
I expect to be going across to the Front again in the middle of next week, with a small party of South African, Indian and Canadian pressmen. I shall certainly hope to see you then.

Yours ever,

Keith A. Murdoch

P.S. Hughes has cabled me expressing great delight over the soldiers' vote, which won him from six to eight seats, and he is talking big about conscription again.

Lieut-Gen. Sir W.R. Birdwood.



United Cable Service

(Australasia)

SYDNEY
MELBOURNE
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NEW ZEALAND

CABLE ADDRESS:
"JAGANATHA, LONDON"

TELEPHONE: HOLBORN. 6600

LONDON OFFICE,

162. Queen Victoria Street.

E.C.

July 11, 1917

My dear General,

I was on the point of writing to you several times about the Mesopotamian report. I gather that the attack upon Lord Kitchener's work is a sustained offensive and will be maintained by influential persons quite apart from the Commission's report. I hear occasional rumours that Munro will not stay his full term but on the other hand there is no doubt he has a special mission and is being encouraged to make drastic recommendations. There is no friend of Lord K. in the Cabinet. Milner never liked K. but bears no animus, Curzon feels he owes it to his pride (which is most of him) to wipe out K.'s work. I am informed that some big changes in the Indian system are certain to come. As for the report itself, I think you will agree when the final Dardanelles report comes out that there is a surprising difference in the temper of Commissions! Even Stepford is whitewashed and no fault is found with the medical transport. Hearing that Howse had not been examined on this score I spoke to Fisher and Mackenzie and evidence was reopened yesterday in order to get his story. Of course Mesopotamia had many worse features than the Dardanelles. I can't help thinking that with these Commissions a good deal depends upon whether they can hit safely. The Dardanelles men are still powerful, the

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DRL

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Mesopotamian military men and politicians can scarcely even get a chance to defend themselves.

Your two letters were interesting and informative and I passed on the enclosures to those who can best use them. Geoffrey Robinson will be printing your letter as soon as the theme becomes prominent again, and he and the leader-writers read the general statement you sent across, and agreed with its main points. By the way The Times has been much less violent than other newspapers. I suppose you know that Lovat Fraser as a rule writes our leaders on Indian matters. He certainly hits hard and unscrupulously and I don't think will ever do justice to anything Kitchener has done. He says by the way that the Cabinet and the War Office are determined to make drastic changes in the Indian Army and that a change of Cabinet would not affect the situation. He is I think quite discreet but I did not tell him you had sent me the first epistle.

For two evenings at Hesdin I enjoyed the company of Sir George Arthur and was very happy in hearing all about your close friendship with Kitchener and his warm affection and great belief in you. We have always known of course that you were great friends and loyal co-workers, but I had not before realised the depth of the friendship and the great affection and admiration with which you supported each other. It must have been a wonderful experience to have the friendship of such a man. Have you ever thought that faraway Australia has been more loyal to Kitchener's memory and work than

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JRD
JFE

any other part of the Empire, great as is the respect and admiration in these other parts? The slightest attack upon Kitchener's memory causes a disturbed feeling. Knowing this, I have always avoided mentioning any of the British attacks, and I got a cable from my newspaper principals the other day saying that my rivals had done themselves great harm by cabling a personal attack from the Weekly Dispatch, which the Australian public bitterly resented.

I saw Lloyd George last week on an Australian matter - export of flour - and wanted to say a few words about getting our divisions together, which I am sure that unofficially you would approve. All my time with him however went too quickly. I have therefore cabled very strongly to Hughes and hope that in this you will also unofficially approve. I do not see how we can get the standing of an army but at least they might put us all together. Several other things also I urged Hughes to take up, and I am sure that he will do so. You I am sure appreciate the extent of truly Australian feeling in our force. Personally I hope the tie between Australia and yourself will not be broken after the war.

Helmes is indeed a great loss. We are all wondering whom you will select and our wishes for Gellibrand though we expect you will no doubt for excellent reasons select MacLagan. Perhaps you say, Guess again.

Hughes seems to be only just finding out that the fifth division will have to disappear unless he moves quickly and to some purpose. We should see the year through but what then?

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By the way two boys in whom I am interested - partly because they gave me a good scoop and partly because they seem to be the right sort - are in some trouble. They escaped from a German prison camp some six weeks ago - you will remember the story - and they seem to think a promise was made that as they cannot be used on the west front again they are to be returned to Australia, but they are kept here without funds and without knowledge of what is to happen. I have financed them of course but they are being held here indefinitely.

When you are next across I do hope you will give me 15 minutes - I want to take you along to Mrs. Fenwick's officers' club in Piccadilly. It is always full now with our youngsters, who appreciate it very much, and Mrs. Fenwick could do with the encouragement your visit would give her.

I hope of course to get over about the end of August even if I have to sleep with one of my brothers in the trenches and suppose I will not see you till then.

The air raid shook London and the Government. But they both take a lot of shaking. Anderson writes me that he does not expect to stay in the Defence Department. Pearce has had to appoint a commission of business men to examine the business side, and Anderson may get a shaking. I suspect however he will come back here as a sort of commercial adviser and business expert for the High Commissioner. *No doubt Pearce will employ him in the meantime.*

Kindest regards and warm wishes, Yours ever
Keith Murdoch

P.S. I hope you notes that Repington who saw you memorandum makes most of your points strongly relevant in today's Times.

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United Cable Service

(Australasia)

SYDNEY
MELBOURNE
BRISBANE
ADELAIDE
NEW ZEALAND

CABLE ADDRESS:-
"JAGANATHA, LONDON"

TELEPHONE: HOLBORN. 6600

LONDON OFFICE,

The Times,

162. Queen Victoria Street.
E.C.

November 7, 1917.

Personal

My dear General,

I was very delighted to get your letter of 4th inst., which confirmed the good news I had already heard. It is indeed a great thing to have at last the Australian national striking force concentrated under your command. I think you misunderstood my letter of October 24, which was based on fairly good information. I did not mean that Mr. Long had not mentioned the matter to the War Office - of course he had sent along all the cables to the Secretary of State, but he had not taken the necessary steps to have the matter brought up at the War Cabinet's meetings. I believe he had a good hint from the G.H.Q.

that our request was to be granted, and that this was very largely due to the evidence that we meant to fight the question to the end. *The soldiers did not want the matter to go to Cabinet, where they were certain losers.*

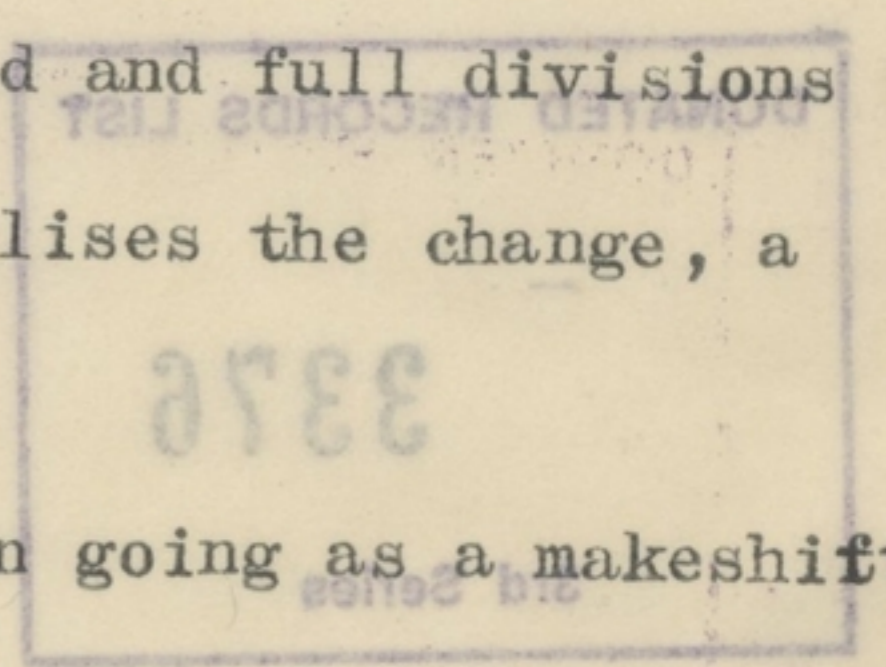
I wish I could think that it is not necessary to break up a division. But my dear General I cannot see how you are to carry through on the lines you have for the moment adopted. Nothing, not even the adoption of conscription, can save all five divisions. I have not yet had the opportunity of studying the official figures as to reinforcements, but I am quite confident that if you have any fighting, or even if you hold a single division front, during the winter, you will be unfit for any heavy work in the spring. It seems to me that it will be difficult enough to save four divisions, and that to try to save five will inevitably mean that some units will go into serious work with insufficient numbers, and will have to do more than they should.

Nothing will be gained, except the postponement of an evil day; and this postponement will involve also a good deal of needless expense, even if the Corps base is incorporated with the resting battalion, as I presume you intend.

I have a cable today from Mr. Hughes, which tells me that the Government will almost at once announce a new conscription campaign. Mr. Hughes is already anxious about the soldiers' vote. He says "Probably another referendum or alternatively election held and if so almost immediately. Anzac vote vital to success....Everything is to be kept very quiet until public announcement Government policy made about fortnight." Mr. Hughes says that the fate of the Government hangs in the balance, and so on, but the point that at once strikes me is whether it would not be better to have it announced right away through the force and in Australia that a division will have to be broken up; commence its breaking up, always with the proviso that conscription will enable you to reform it some day; and strike hard with a referendum campaign before the military situation finds a level again. As soon as the level is found, as you know, the public will get dull and hopeful again, though that level alas! will be lower than it was before. *The men will vote against splitting any division up.* I am most hopeful that the referendum will be carried. It will of course be for a limited form of conscription, probably sufficient to keep the A.I.F. at its present strength. I do wish that we had been able to get a promise from the War Office that it will not disturb the present grouping of the A.I.F.. I so much fear that when drafts come forward again, the old antipathies will show their heads.

It is indeed a great thing that all the boys are now under you, and we all hope sincerely that eventually you will have five good and full divisions for a sound victory. I am sure that as soon as Australia realises the change, a huge sigh of relief will go up.

Reverting to the scheme for keeping one division going as a makeshift,



W. R. B.

- 3 -

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my opinion is not of course representative, but what does strike me forcibly is the certainty of failure in the effort to keep five divisions going; the fact that there is nothing to be gained from the Australian point of view in trying to smooth over the break-up of a division; and the experience that it is always best to face ugly necessities and get them past. Moreover, I do truly fear that if five divisions are kept, there will come the day when some mere maimed remnants of battalions will be sent to do the work of full battalions.

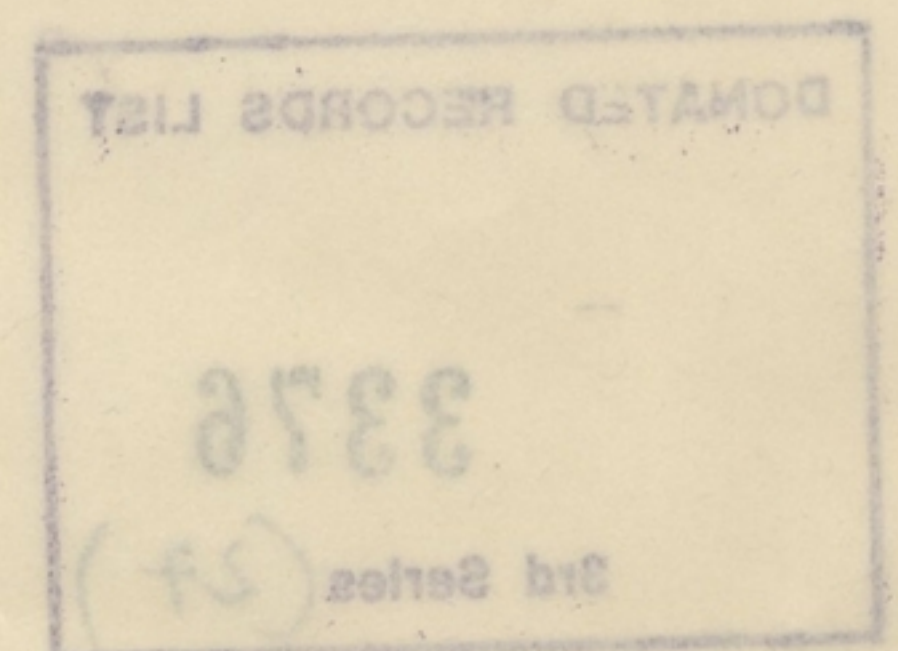
We all trust you of course to do the best for Australia, and our main thought now is one of relief that you are commanding the whole force. Some day, I will be able to tell you of some things that past during the negotiations, not of course directly concerning yourself, but some little things which will interest you. At present I am rather tied.

Kindest regards and best wishes,

Yours ever sincerely,

Keith A. Murdoch

Lieut.-Gen. Sir William Birdwood, K.C.B., &c.
G.O.C., Australian Corps.



United Cable Service

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SYDNEY
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CABLE ADDRESS:
"JAGANATHA, LONDON!"

TELEPHONE: HOLBORN. 6600

LONDON OFFICE,

162. Queen Victoria Street.
E.C.

November 8, 1917

Private

My dear General,

As you know I am one of the very last to ask for anything in the way of personal favors, but I am sorely tempted to ask you now whether anything can be done in the following case:- A young Melbourne lad, public school boy (Melbourne Church of England Grammar School), brother of a lad killed at Anzac, is with the Fourth Division's ammunition column. He has brains, a good education, ambition, and I think many of the best qualities for good work as an officer. His father, the Hon. Theodore Fink, is member of the Victorian State War Council, one of the most influential and best known of Melbourne men, chairman of directors of the Melbourne "Herald" and other companies, and a good Australian patriot. The boy has been doing his part at the Front and would I am sure like his chance to go to an O.T.C.. He has not been long at the Front, but was at Ypres. He had stripes in Australia but gave them up like others on arrival here. He has shown his keenness for artillery work by using his spare time inventing various devices, which I suppose are useless. Altogether he is a most likable, gentlemanly, and worthy youngster.

If it were thoroughly fair, and a just thing, we should all like immensely that he should be sent to an O.T.C., and I am sure that any promotion would amply

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repay the Artillery, as he would make an ideal officer. My friend's name and unit are :- Gunner Thorold Fink, No. 33148, 2nd Section, 4th D.A.C., A.I.F..

I have never asked anything of a like nature before and I am sure you will understand that I would not make this suggestion to you if I did not think the boy well worthy of nomination.

I wrote at some length yesterday and trust that you will have had my letter and will not think that my views are foolish. So much now has suddenly become subordinate to the conscription campaign. It is our last hope of saving the Force, as a real Force.

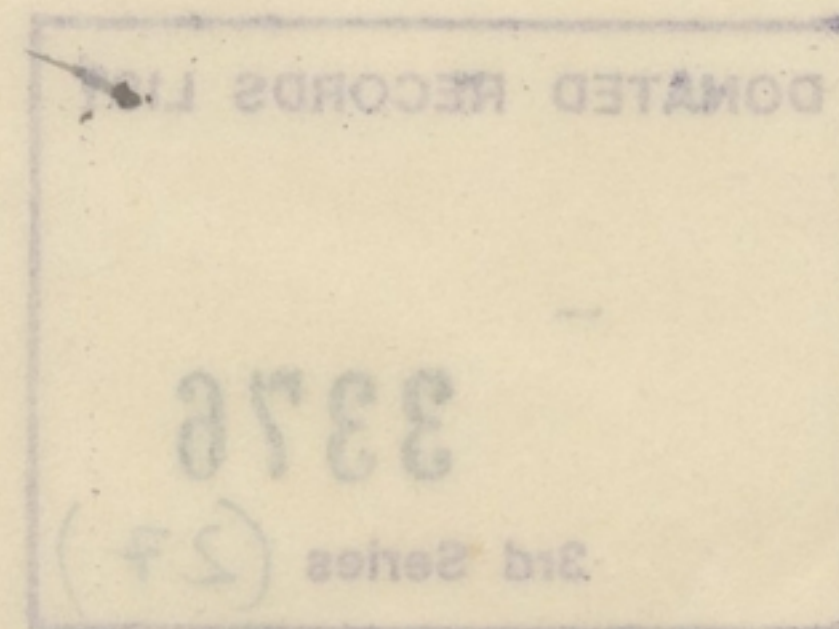
With regards,

Yours sincerely,

Keith A. Muddah

Lieut.-Gen. Sir William Birdwood, K.C.B., &c.
G.O.C., Australian Corps.

*P.S. Northciffe will be back in a week.
We will certainly get the medal, but if
and Lord George will know of it at once.*



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CABLE ADDRESS:
"JAGANATHA, LONDON"

TELEPHONE: HOLBORN. 6600

LONDON OFFICE,

162. Queen Victoria Street.
E.C.

November 8, 1917.

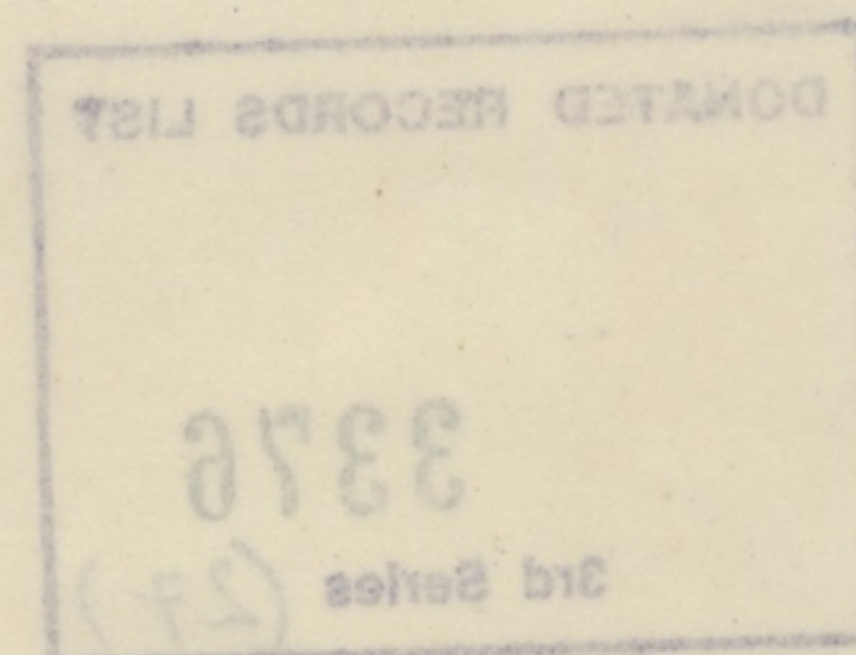
My dear General,

Another line to put another little idea before you. I understand that the Commander-in-Chief has promised that the Australian Corps shall be out of the line for a month during winter to rest. The conscription vote will probably be taken about the middle of December. I expect that Mr. Hughes will announce the actual dates within a few days. Do you think it likely, or feasible, that the Corps will be given its rest before this? It would have an excellent effect on the men if we could get them out, have them rested, and spend plenty of Red Cross and Australian Comforts money on their winter comforts during this time. I write very frankly, knowing that you will regard this as confidential.

Yours sincerely,

Keith A. Munderh

Lieut-Gen. Sir W.S. Birdwood, K.C.B.,
K.C.M.G.,
First Anzac Corps, France.



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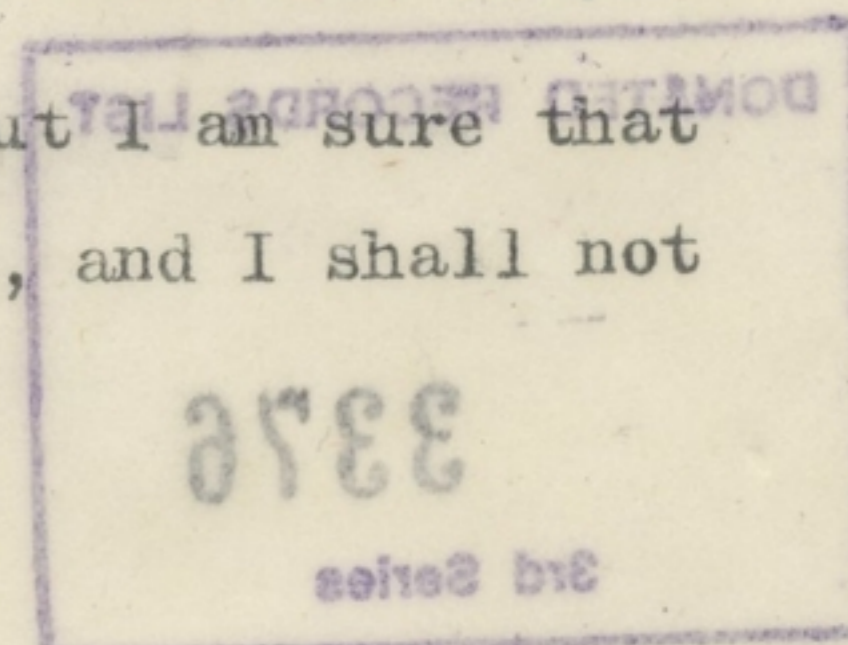
November 12, 1917.

My dear General,

Many thanks for your letter of November 10, which reached me to-day. I am afraid I have not done justice to you either in the little article I wrote for the Overseas Journal or in the much more formidable efforts in Australian newspapers, some of which I am always on the point of sending to you, but this I am afraid I have overlooked. I had promised the Overseas Journal to do something for them a month ago, and they reminded me most inopportunistly when I could give only half-an-hour to the work.

I was most delighted to find last night, when scanning an advance copy of the Gazette, that you had received at last your merited promotion. This is indeed good news, and you may be sure I have lost no time in letting everybody know. I hope that it will not be long before we will all be congratulating you again on another step up in rank! I am sure the boys will highly appreciate the honour done to them as well as to yourself.

I believe that the question which the Government has framed for the Referendum is as follows: "Are you in favour of the proposal of the Commonwealth Government for reinforcing the Australian Imperial Force Overseas?" I wish they were more frank and definite. No doubt they hope to catch a large ignorant vote by this question, but I am sure that a more open stand would be more acceptable to Australia, and I shall not



General Sir W. S. Birdwood, K.C.M.G., K.C.B.

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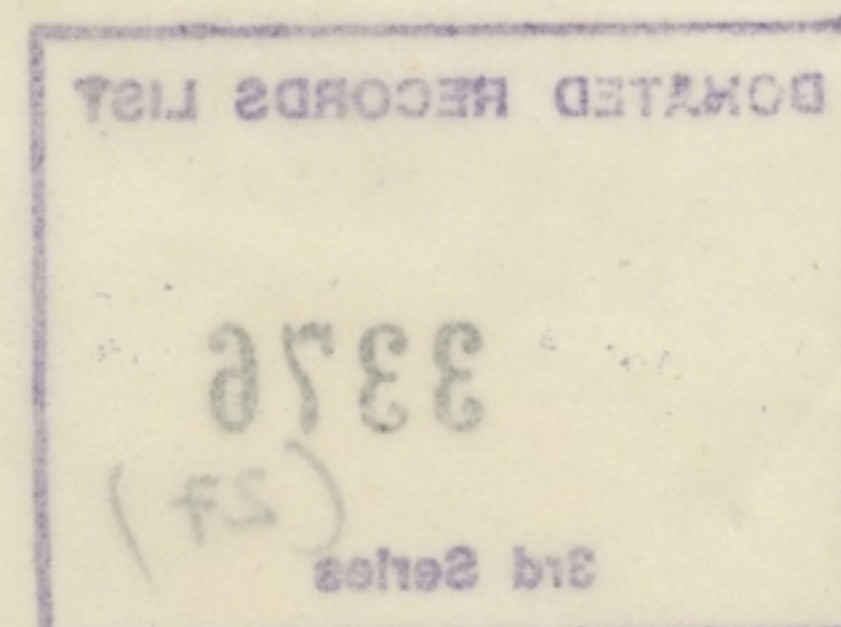
be surprised if the Government is forced to go the full length of a general election, which would make the conscription issue easier to carry.

We are busy here now on organising the soldiers' vote, and I hope to write to you fully on this subject in a day or two, as I am sure it will interest you.

Yours sincerely,

Keith A. Murdoch

General Sir W.S. Birdwood, K.C.M.G., K.C.B.
First Anzac Corps,
B. E. F.,
France.



United Cable Service

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LONDON OFFICE,

CABLE ADDRESS:
"JAGANATHA, LONDON"

TELEPHONE: HOLBORN, 6600

162. Queen Victoria Street.
E.C.

November 29, 1917.

My dear General,

I received your kind note from Lincoln. Please do not think anything of such a trifle as the game I had sent to you. I happen to have a small shooting for the year in the north of Scotland, and it was merely a question of ^{telling} ~~telephoning~~ the keeper to post on to you as much as the regulations would permit. I hope he will be able to send you some more in the future.

I hope that when you write to Mr. Hughes you will only refer in a guarded way to our conversation, and if it is possible to hang your letter on to previous correspondence, perhaps that would be the best way of tackling the subject. Of course I will write fully to Mr. Hughes on the matter, but what I feel is that he would not have desired me to mention his name to you, although, as I told you confidentially, he asked me to ascertain your views. I am sure the matter could be arranged in a way that would benefit Australia, and I venture to think, satisfy yourself for at any rate a short term. But, of course, before anything formally could be done, or before Mr. Hughes could be officially

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General W.S. Birdwood.

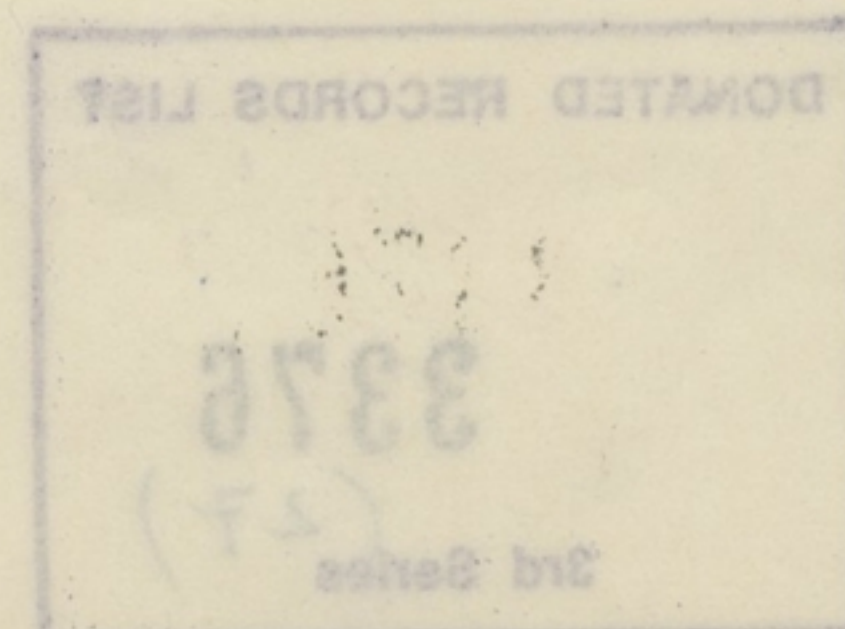
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brought into it, there would have to be careful consideration and discussion by the whole Cabinet. I hope that we will have a further talk on the matter very shortly, as I should like to be able to state very fully whatever we think is necessary, and I am confident that that decision will be favourably weighed in Australia.

I hope you have had a good rest and are as fit as ever.

Sincerely yours,

Keith A. Murdoch



United Cable Service

(Australasia)

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LONDON OFFICE, The Times Office.

CABLE ADDRESS:
"JAGANATHA, LONDON!"

162. Queen Victoria Street.

TELEPHONE HOLBORN. 6600

December 27, 1917.

E.C.

General & confidential

My dear General,

The vote has been indeed a disaster. Even Fisher expected a small majority for conscription. I cannot say that Australia has humiliated itself, because I am sure that the feelings which prompted the vote were manly, although from this end of the world they may not appear to be so. Hard experience has compelled Australia to take, on many questions, what would be regarded here as a sectional view, but the view is always honestly held. Lloyd George asked me to write a memorandum for the Cabinet on the vote, and I hurriedly jotted down some notes, copy of which I enclose. They will possibly not add to your information, which, with Dodds at your right hand, is doubtless always accurate and complete; but I send them on ~~the~~ chance they will be of some service to you in grasping the true meaning of the vote.

As soon as the figures became hopeless I sent out a number of articles and paragraphs to the British press, some of which, such as those in The Times and the Reuter's service, you will probably have seen. We Australians here have ~~to~~, above all things, ~~to~~ keep up Australia's name, and as true patriots we have to accept any decision of the Commonwealth as the best and make the best of it.

Anything may happen now in the Australian parliament. There seems to be a desire to make Hughes a scapegoat. Forecasts are mere traps in such a strange situation. The National Party is most likely, however, to stick to Hughes and follow him into ~~op~~position where he will remain for **only** a brief time. If the Labour Party secures 7,000 recruits a month it will doubtless be left in power. It may do so if the Unions come in solidly behind a recruiting campaign. On the other hand, it is more likely that Tudor will be given very short shrift in office.

Whether he can secure a dissolution will then depend, I should think, upon the intentions of the National Party, which, as you know, has large majorities in both houses. If Mr. Hughes says that he will not carry on

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without conscription, the issue will again be put in the form of a general election. It is possible also that Mr. Hughes will secure dissolution at once on the question. In any case, I do not think that he will long be out of office.

Poor ~~Fourth~~^{Fourth} Division ! Some of their fine old battalions will take your verdict badly. Their argument that the Third, being the last into the field and ~~the~~ junior division, should have gone first will, I am sure, shake the whole force.

You ask whether Mr. Hughes could bring in a bill for conscription if he returned to office. This could only be done after a general election, as the present House was elected without any mandate on the question.

If Mr. Tudor takes office, the administration of the Defence Department will be wholly changed. You will probably think some of the new Government's ideas thoroughly unsound, but I am sure that Tudor himself is a thorough patriot and an honest and fearless administrator, and if his lieutenants do foolish things it will probably be owing to ignorance.

I hear that Lawrence, an old cavalryman, is to take the Intelligence Department, and that Kiggell, Maxwell and another on the G.H.Q. staff are shortly to disappear. My sources of information are such that you may absolutely depend upon the truth of Kiggell's retirement. Over here the old machinery rumbles along. The final cause of Jellicoe's dismissal, which, by the way, carries with it the retirement of Admiral Bacon, was the loss of three destroyers, which were trapped in a new German minefield the other day when sent out from a decoy to pick up some Dutch merchantmen. A fourth destroyer was, I believe, badly damaged.

We cannot but be anxious about the new year, and personally I am always hoping and longing more and more to help the force in every way I possibly can. The difficulties of carrying ~~war~~ through 1918 and 1919 will be very serious, because certainly a force fighting so far away from home requires special handling. It should be recognised, although it is not pleasant, that Australia and Australians do not and cannot feel the same toward the war as Englishmen. They are prepared to go on helping all they can, but the instincts of self-preservation and all the old frontier ~~incidents~~ which fire the English in this war do not come into it as regards the Australians. I know you are confident that the men will keep their high morale and go through to the end, but personally I think that the position of our force is one of the great tragedies of the war. They have nearly all been away from home now for two years or more, striving against an

27/12/17

General Birdwood.

-3-

27/12/17

enemy who is not to them nearly as great an object of enmity and dread as the Japanese. My view is that at all costs the men should be rested as much as the strategic position allows, and that many of the old hands should be sent home for a few months' holiday. This may not be according to any theory of warfare, but with so much trouble ahead we should prepare for it in every possible way.

With kindest regards and every good wish for 1918 to yourself and my friends of your mess,

Sincerely Yours,

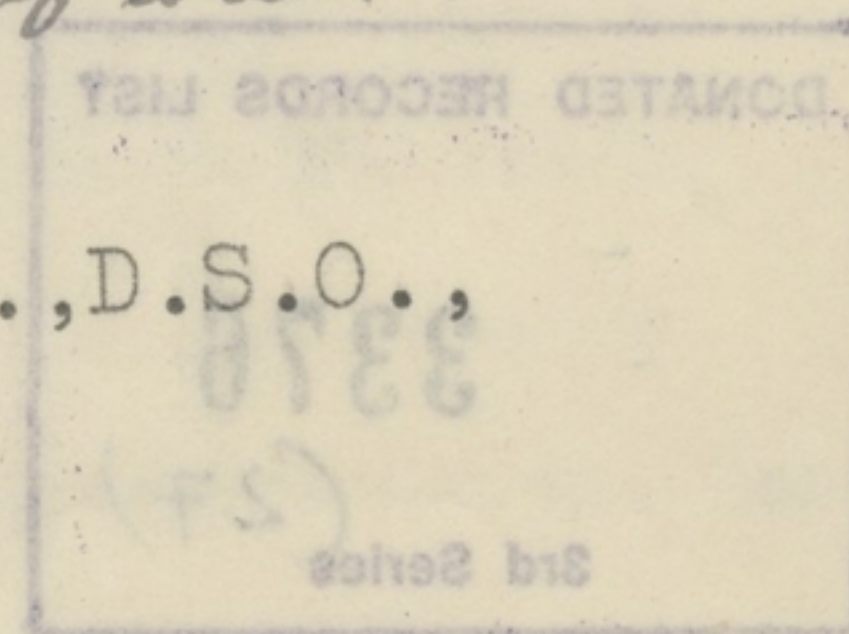
Keith A. Murdoch

P.S. I expect to be coming across about February for a few days if you will find a corner for me somewhere. I am afraid that my footsteps will again be dogged by Gilmour. Do you think that any more can be done to tighten the relationships between the Force and the Australian public? One of our mistakes has been to neglect this relationship. The Government should have had a perfect stream of news and notes always going out to those at home about the force. We have failed to keep the large mass of Australians personally interested in the Australian Army, and now our punishment has been visited upon us. If there is to be another voluntary recruiting campaign, as I expect, we should do everything that we can to tighten the relationships, and I have been thinking that you might care to send a mission from the A.I.F. to Australia. I presume that it is quite out of the question for you to visit Australia at this time, as your duties here are so onerous. No other man could have any comparable effect, but a direct mission of some of the best known fighting men would certainly do a lot of good in Australia to-day. I should think Jacka, for instance, would be worth a thousand recruits if he visited Australia for one month.

By the way, & quite privately, don't you think that the incoming Administration, instead of yourself, should have the odium of breaking up the Division? Why not delay a couple of weeks?

General Sir W.S. Birdwood, K.C.M.G., K.C.B., D.S.O.,
First Anzac Corps,
B.E.F., France.

Enc.



CONFIDENTIAL

Notes on the Australian Conscription Referendum

A few months after war Trades Union Leaders, with their allied Political Labour Councils and Leagues, began demands that Conscription should never be introduced for Overseas Service. Several deputations extracted ready promises from the then Prime Minister, Mr. Fisher, who was and remains a confirmed anti-conscriptionist. No friend explained the possible needs or reasoned with the Trades Unionists, whose dislike of conscription therefore hardened into an intense feeling that it would be unnecessary, unjust, and dangerous to their class.

During Mr. Hughes's absence the conscription issue was forced to the front by conservative elements. Class feeling being feverish at all times in Australia, this led to the suspicions and prejudices of many Trades Union leaders being aroused. Mr. Hughes returned to find that a controversy was raging upon what he had hoped to secure unity.

The Australian overseas forces (five infantry divisions, four brigades of Light Horse, tunnelling and railway companies, siege batteries, Navy, &c.) were then well supplied with reinforcements but with Parliament dying the issue could not be postponed, and Mr. Hughes endeavoured to secure an agreement. His parliamentary party refused to come to a decision, being impressed both by the threats of its union supporters and the apparent overwhelming strength of the conscriptionists. Mr. Hughes could get nothing through Parliament except a bill authorising a referendum. He accepted this in the hope of keeping the Labour Party solid. He visited trades union congresses, held secret meetings of Parliament, and tried in every way to explain the Allies' need for men. But the split became absolute, and the Labour Leagues expelled him and his supporters from membership. The referendum was lost

by 60,000 votes in a poll of 2,200,000. At the subsequent elections Mr. Hughes swept the Senate and won three-quarters of the House of Representatives.

The great strike which followed was largely vindictive and led to the complete defeat of the Unions, which had spent their accumulated funds upon the referendum.

Seven thousand men a month were required to maintain the Australian forces. The voluntary recruitments dwindled to 2000 a month. The Fourth, Second, First and Fifth Divisions had heavy fighting at Bullecourt in April and May. The Third and Fourth had 36 days' heaving fighting at Messines. All the divisions were however brought to full strength, and went through the battles of Ypres in September and October, suffering 32,000 casualties.

Available reinforcements through the divisions to about strength (averaging some 2000 under), but the question of breaking up a division became pressing. We had at the request of the War Office formed a Sixth Division out of reinforcements, but this never left England as a division and was broken up just before the Broodseinde battles.

Mr. Hughes decided to have another referendum, his party being pledged not to introduce conscription by Act of Parliament. He could not divulge the actual strength of the divisions, and his opponents insisted that these were being and could be fully maintained by voluntary enlistment.

THE ANTI-CONSCRIPTIONIST FACTORS. The great block votes against conscription were the Trades Unions' political organisation, into which every member of every union, male and female, is conscripted; and the Irish vote. Trades Unions have 586,000 members, of whom perhaps 175,000

are serving in the army. The Irish vote is considerably overlapped by the Unions' vote. The Irish-Australian community is 23 per cent. of the whole, but though Archbishop Mennix of Melbourne took a bitter part in the campaign, other prelates supported conscription, and the vote though a serious factor would not be solid. In the same way, many Trades Union leaders are conscriptionists, and this vote would have been far from unanimous, though members not sound on such a political issue are ruthlessly expelled.

Labour in Australia introduced conscription for home defence, and established the Australian Navy, but has always been inclined to sectional views. This tendency has increased since money has become dear, and the unions have pressed more and more upon their politicians to satisfy their expanding appetites; and since the politicians definitely passed under the domination of the Unions' leaders, who now select candidates, control the political organisation, and give orders to the political leaders. A resolution demanding the abolition of the home conscription service secured strong support at the last Inter-State conference, but there seems to be no feeling against the War. The official organs of the unions preach internationalism, but do not demand peace with Germany. The organisations are syndicalist in tendency, but denounce the Industrial Workers of the World, whose missionaries came from San Francisco with plenty of money, advocating syndicalism with a dash of anarchism.

No doubt unionists in Australia blindly follow their leaders, but they would not have defeated conscription without substantial considerations which weighed with them and hundreds of thousands of others.

These were : -

(1) The argument that Australia had done her part - 306,000 men, exclusive of nurses, Navy, New Guinea expedition, &c. The total raised for war purposes is now 386,000. With this argument is connected the dearth of labour in Australian primary industries.

(2) The strong and general feeling that Australia has to keep an eye on the Asiatics, together with a certain distrust of Great Britain's policy in the Pacific. This distrust springs from many incidents, some historical, some little known, such as naval unpreparedness in the Pacific during the Agadir crisis. This feeling is shared by many who are friendly to Great Britain.

(3) Amongst a section of Irish and Irish-Australians there is open hostility to Great Britain, but this is almost negligible. A much more extensive and important feeling is that of passive friendliness, amounting almost to aloofness. In a still wider circle is the feeling that Australia's duty to Great Britain does not include an extreme act of self-denial - i.e., that conscription for European fighting does not come within its sphere. No one doubts that Australia would conscript every man for a war in the Pacific. The Trades Union Leaders dislike the British social system, and the British governing classes, who do not command great respect in Australia, though certain British leaders have widespread renown and popularity throughout Australia.

(4) The Australian view of the war is different from that of Great Britain. Australia entered the war and continues in it more in support of Great Britain and the Empire than for dislike of Germany. Though Germany is now abhorred, she is so far away that she does not come directly and massively into Australian affairs. Before the war we

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welcomed Germany in the Pacific, as a Great Power establishing interests around our white man's outpost.

(5) Strong local considerations have been the farmers' urgent need for labour, and the women's intense feminine dislike of sending their own and other people's men-folk into battles. This dislike in thousands of cases certainly amounted to moral inability to vote " Yes ".

It probably explains the fact that though the " No " vote did not increase at the second referendum, the " Yes " vote decreased by 200,000, through people refusing to go to the polls.

(6) The relationship with the Australian Army. This is the phase which must be earnestly considered by the British authorities. There have been no complaints from Australia about the treatment of its army, and its fine faith in British administration has been noteworthy. The attitude of the Australian public has been that losses and reverses must be sturdily accepted and that Great Britain should be unquestionably trusted. A widespread feeling exists however that the divisions have been overworked, and that the British Headquarters does not try to understand the Australian soldier. This is largely due to the letters home from the troops, and the wteries of returned soldiers, including senior officers. The substratum of truth in the belief is that four divisions went through periods of prolonged and intense strain during the last few months of last year and the first five of this, and that the Third and especially the Fourth Divisions have had a very heavy time during the last eight months. The inevitable suffering of soldiering would have been better endured if the Australian army had from the first been treated as a distinctive national effort, as it undoubtedly is, both in psychology and character of its men and in administration. It was only

within the last six weeks however that the authorities here accepted this view and agreed that the divisions should be brought together. At various times some have been with General Godley, a most distrusted commander in Australia.

(7) The strong anti-conscriptionist tone of a large number of the men, and of their letters home, is due to this feeling, to the belief that Australia is doing her full share under the voluntary system, and to many thousands of family agreements whereby they left home for the front on condition that brothers or fathers remained to keep the place going.

SUMMARY. The three recent pollings in Australia show clearly that the people are for the war, are in varying degree whole-hearted supporters of Great Britain, and are becoming more and more distinctively national - i.e. putting Australian considerations before Imperial. It is now unquestionable that the sentimental tie with Great Britain tends to disappear with every new generation, and that the Empire of the future must have other ties. The immediate practical question is that of bringing the Australian public into closer touch with the war, and especially with its own gallant army. During the last three months, there has been an immense improvement in the stream of news going to Australia about the Australian army; it should be increased and assisted - until three months ago it was retarded and crabbed. The position of the men in France, which has some dangerous elements, will be vastly improved if the fullest possible authority be given to Australians and to General Birdwood to command their army; and if the policy of regarding the Australian army as a distinctive national effort, in which all Australians are engaged, be actively followed, especially as regards having all the men together as one fighting force whenever the strategic conditions possibly permit of it.

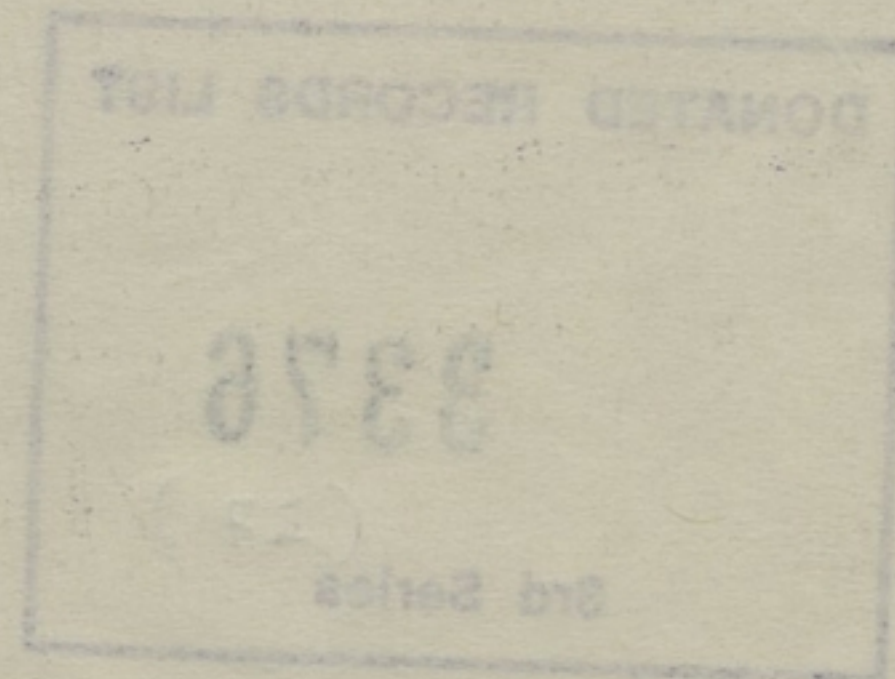
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1588
S. S. S.

One division will now have to be broken up, and possibly another later on. There is no prospect of conscription being adopted except by a general election after some months, which would seriously risk the return of a Government ruled by sectionalists, inclined to become anti-war.

Keith A. Murdoch.

The difficulty of visualising the war from 12,000 miles through censorships ; the strong belief that great nations in Europe and America can rally millions more readily than Australia can rally thousands ; the belief that the war will soon be over and well won ; the feeling that Australia's few remaining men cannot be much help ; and the anxiety about financial burdens, which to-day amount to £180,000,000 war expenditure and a total interest bill of £25,000,000 a year, should not be overlooked.

K.A.M.



United Cable Service

(Australasia)

SYDNEY
MELBOURNE
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NEW ZEALAND

CABLE ADDRESS:
"JAGANATHA, LONDON"

TELEPHONE: HOLBORN. 6600

LONDON OFFICE, The Times,

162. Queen Victoria Street.
E.C.

April 8, 1918.

My dear General,

I was down on the American Front after leaving the kind hospitality of your headquarters. Then the smash came and I ran back and had a peep at the battle - very brief - before coming back to London. I unfortunately had to come back because urgent cables from Mr. Hughes were awaiting me and I had not been at my office for a month.

Here I heard that Mr. Townend had applied for permission for Gilmour to go back to the Front, and under the agreement made with G.H.Q. this application included automatically a similar application for myself. I am very busy here but at the same time I must get across to France if it can possibly be arranged.

The War Office told us that G.H.Q. had replied that you had refused accommodation for us, and that no car was available. A further inquiry was put through, and again the answer came that you would not have us at your headquarters or at the Corps. This decision of course makes the understanding with G.H.Q. useless, at the very moment when it was to be valuable to the Australian Press; and it rather hurts because we naturally think the Australian Press has a proper place in the Australian Corps and I clearly understood that you agreed with the understanding made with G.H.Q..

Accommodation at the Corps headquarters is of course by no means necessary for our visit, as there are plenty of hotels within reasonable distance of the Front, and such places as the Flying Corps are always ready to give us cover. I am of course biassed in this matter, but it seems to me to be hard lines that Australian Corps headquarters should return a peremptory No when if someone looked round a little bit he could recommend accommodation in some corner or other, if not within the corps territory.

The smash has stiffened Great Britain, and everything possible will be done to increase the armies. It may be too late - I was not well impressed with the Americans, and the future is more a matter for blind faith and action than for reasoned confidence. I have had to cable Mr. Hughes very fully during the past seven days, as he wanted all sorts of things done. I had a long conversation with Mr. Lloyd George, and brought up your name. These days one must not be surprised at anything.

At Mr. Townend's request I have signed a joint letter regarding our representation at the Front. With regards, Yours sincerely,

Keith A. Murdoch

United Cable Service

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CABLE ADDRESS:
"JAGANATHA, LONDON"

TELEPHONE: HOLBORN. 6600

(Australasia)

LONDON OFFICE, The Times,

162. Queen Victoria Street.

E.C.

April 23, 1918.

My dear General,

Many thanks for your letter of the 12th. The thing that hurts is that the Australian public of five millions is getting very little news about its fighting forces. At the time when all parties are getting together to make a supreme recruiting rally, when the people are in a mood to be profoundly impressed by the deeds that interest and affect them most of all - when we are faced at home by something like organised pacifism, when what is needed above all is to get the public out of that awful slush of foolish optimism and enemy propaganda and ignorant official statement that they have waded in for so long - at just this moment Australia gets practically nothing. The plain fact is that all the newspapers would print columns of our cables where they get and print very little from Bean and Cutlack, and everybody knows that is so. I vouch for it that by our absence the amount of matter about the Australians in the Australasian newspapers is less than one-quarter what it would otherwise be.

I have no doubt that excellent reasons exist for our absence and it is always my intention to accept at once your decisions as our commander; at the same time it seems rough to Australians that because a British G.H.Q. is unsympathetic therefore the Australian public is to suffer.

It is of course wrong for Colonel Church to say that the Charteris agreement does not cover this case; it was expressly designed to cover all such cases. The real point is however Australian recruiting and Australian war spirit - and personally I cannot help being astonished and distressed that minor difficulties should have stood in the way.

There is very little news on this side. I have seen a good deal of the Downing-street people. They were rather scared after the fall of Bailleul and Neuve Eglise. Personally I am inclined to believe that the C-inC is severely shaken. It is not a question of finding scapegoats but of restoring confidence. Milner has no mission at the War Office - he is not put in to disturb anyone or anything, but what he decides, when he comes to judge the men, will certainly be final. The educated public, like

United Cable Service

Times men and indeed all the circles in which I go, has undoubtedly lost faith in our Generals but I sincerely hope that steady counsels will prevail. There is great irritation over the slowness and dilatoriness of American efforts - as you know they promised 17 divns by March 1 - and also over Pershing's stonewalling of the proposed subdivision of the A. E. F..

SYDNEY
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CABLE ADDRESS
JAGANATHA, LOND
TELEPHONE - HOLBORN, 6600

As you probably know, Mr. Hughes, Mr. Cook, and a party of nine all told ~~left~~ Australia tomorrow for London, via N Z and U S A. They will pick up Massey and Ward and later Borden. Botha is not coming. I have been inundated with cables from Mr. Hughes asking for things, and it has been rather a trial. He even cabled that returned soldiers including officers were spreading stories which were believed and affecting the recruiting conference, e.g., that Britain has 1500000 soldiers in G B, that British Generals let us down, &c, which he asked me to get the full strength of, so that he could convince the Conference that things were better than they seemed. I hope I appeased him. His health is just now poor. Mr. Fisher is down in town and very well, the same dear fellow. I have had a long letter from Anderson. He is doing great things as chairman of the N Z commission on the defence administration. He says the Australian commission's second report is to be a terrible indictment of the finance side of the Defence Dept, and he thinks that Pearce will be hunted from office. Pearce is one of the most honest and fearless of administrators, but as W.M.H. says in a recent letter, he "~~listens to his officers~~ *sees through the* ~~glare of his officers~~ *glare of his officers* ~~too much.~~ *- that's HIS fault.*" White will say No!

*glare of his officers
- that's HIS fault.*

Anderson says that George Swinburne, one of the best of Australians, is coming across here privately and carries a commission from the Government to inquire into certain aspects of London administration. I know Swinburne well and am sure you will like him. He is just and kindly. Griffiths says he is quite ready for him. I fancy that Griffiths who knows a thing or two will get the "lay of the land" from Swinburne's secretary who is at Horseferry road just now.

AIF

We were all distressed to hear of your losses amongst battalion commanders - Milne and Maconochie especially, young Daly I went to school with, and he was I am sure brave, but he never shone for ability at school.

With kindest regards and best wishes for all,

*Your most sincerely
Robert D. Mandell*

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(Australasia)

SYDNEY
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TELEPHONE: HOLBORN. 6600

LONDON OFFICE, The Times Office.

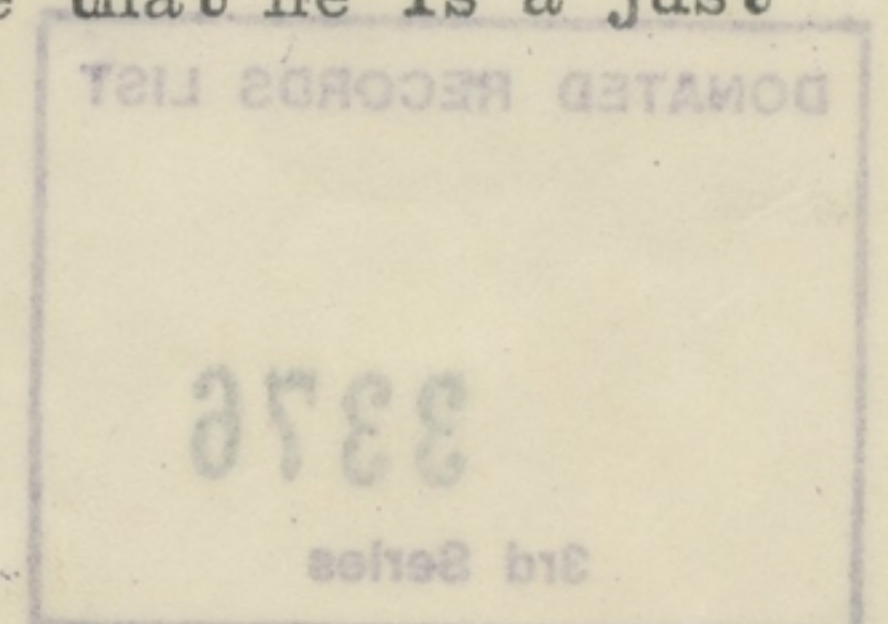
162. Queen Victoria Street.
E.C.

May 8, 1918.

My dear General,

I was indeed glad to get your letter of April 28 and to learn the news of the boys. They so invariably do their bit and a bit more, that we are apt to take it all too much for granted. Perhaps this is why Bean rushes into print to deny that we are doing more than our share and why General Radcliffe, the new Director of Military Operations, makes such astonishing statements to assembled pressmen, that ^{our} total casualties since March 21 are less than the total of each of 31 British divisions. This is **not** so bad as the analysis of casualties issued by Charteris last year, when he omitted the Bullecourt and the winter fighting on the Somme, and then alleged that British losses were more in proportion than ours. However, we have to expect that when it is all over the British General Staff will prove that it was all done by English troops.

I had a long talk yesterday with Lord Milner, and found him not at all pessimistic, but rather more disposed to put all responsibility on the men than one would have thought just. He was very anxious to hear about the Australian Corps and the lines of policy followed in the past, and asked a great deal about our leading Australian Generals. I am sure that he is a just man and recognises the immensity of your own good work.

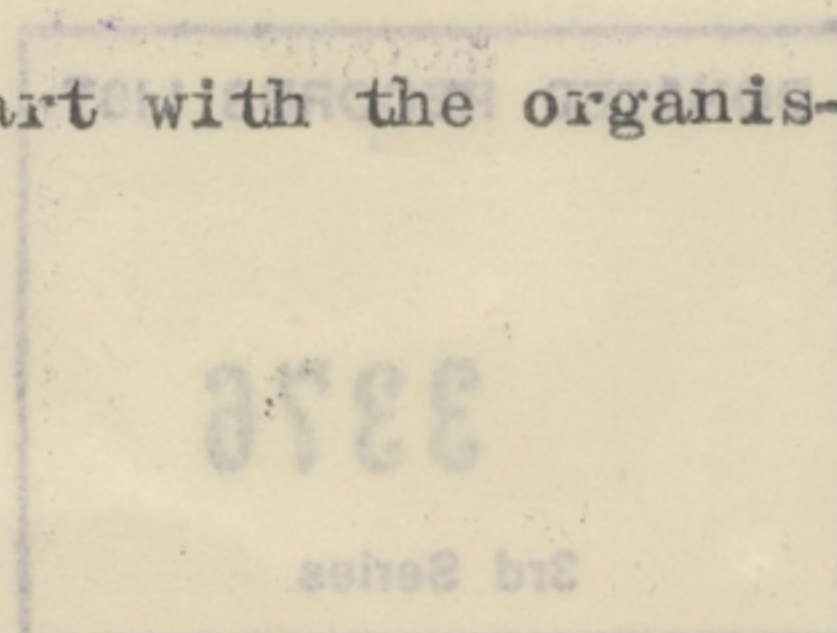


General Sir W.R. Birdwood. 8/5/18. -2-

There is a fairly good tone here at present as regards the Front, but a carping and disgruntled political tone which may lead to anything. I understand that Maurice had been offered a division by Haig but that this had not been settled. He and Whigham offered to resign at the time that Robertson left the War Office, but Robertson would not allow them. It looks very much as though the Haig and Robertson party here, who have a distinct following in the House, will get the Government out unless Lloyd George faces the issue very squarely. So far he has done nothing but balance with it and intrigue behind the soldiers' backs.

Milner was very anxious to hear what we had to say about Gough, and, of course, as I am purely a layman I could only give the layman's point of view. Gough is running a rather strong campaign here for reinstatement through a Court of Inquiry, and I have little doubt that if the Government falls he will be returned to the field. As you know, he was removed only by the War Cabinet's direct intervention after the Commander-in-Chief had actually reappointed him to take over the Fifth Army again.

All this is gossip which probably won't interest you at all. The feeling in Australia is distinctly better, as you will have observed. The new split in the Labour party over recruiting is, indeed, likely to become fatal to them. I expect to see Ryan entering Federal politics and leading a hostile anti-Imperial remnant of Sinn Feiners and Syndicalists; but, of course, that would take some time to develop. I had a most interesting letter from Tudor, in which he clearly shows that he didn't know where he stood. He is full of his troubles and is ready to part with the organisation when it becomes anti-recruiting.



General Sir W.R. Birdwood. 8/5/18 -3-

Mr. Hughes is on the water. Strictly confidentially, the present arrangement is that he will arrive here between June 11 and 15, some days after the rest of the party. He will, I am sure, strike a major note with a view to helping us all through the times ahead. One of his recent cables to me concerned what he describes as statements widely circulated by returned officers and men, to the effect that England has a million and-a-half troops still in this country, and that the British Generals are bad leaders and have no settled plan of campaign. He asked me to cable him something with which to meet these statements, and I am sure that what I sent would enable him to floor them.

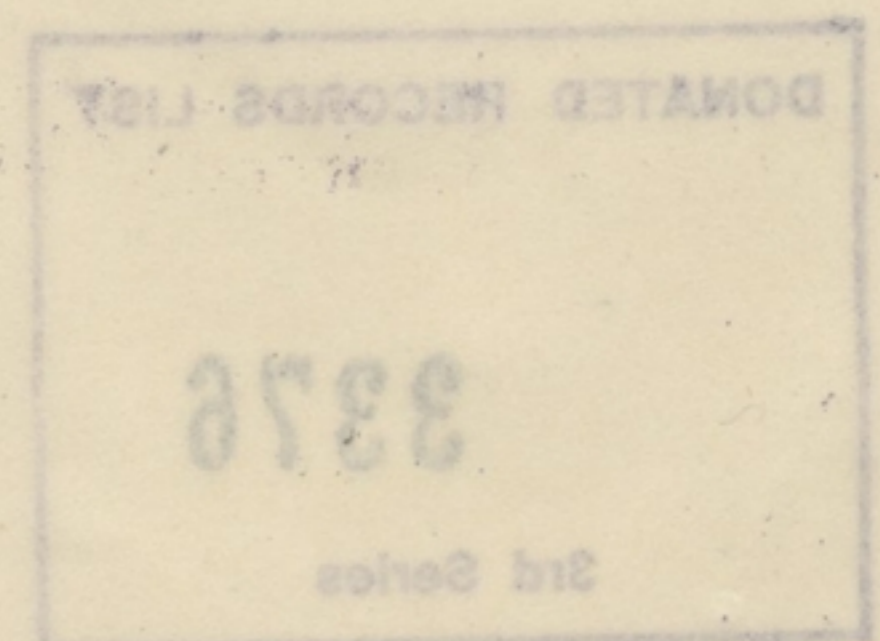
I enclose a cable which we did not publish because it obviously refers to your decision that A.I.F. should not enlist in the R.F.C. It has nothing to do with the A.F.C. I secured a thoroughly strong explanation of the case from Griffiths, and cabled it anonymously to my newspapers, so that your position would be quite plain. My hands have been so full that I have been unable to move towards coming out at once, but I sincerely hope to be with you before long. I am going to run up to Fisher's place in Scotland for a few days' absolute rest.

With kindest regards,

Sincerely yours,

Keith Murdoch

Gen. Sir W.R. Birdwood,
G.O.C., A.I.F., Brit.
Enclosure. Armies in France.

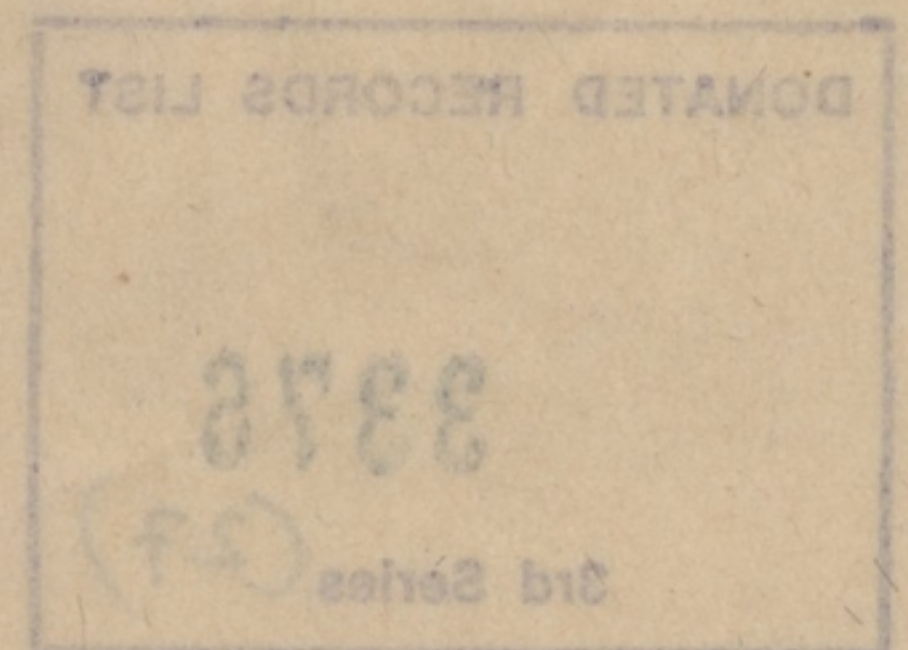


SYDNEY.

May 2nd.

by Birdwood

Electrification Melbourne Railways postponed English
American factories unable complete contracts stop Trades
Hall several states received delegates reports Fergusons
Conference last night and discussion disclosed distinct
line cleavage with extremists apprehensive moderates may
breakaway unless agree assist recruiting stop McGrath
Representative stated thousands Australians wish aircraft c
corps but Birdwood blocking stop McGrath join urged
Australians be allowed train fly machines for which Britain
wanting pilots. Jones.



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SYDNEY
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CABLE ADDRESS:
"JAGANATHA, LONDON"

TELEPHONE: HOLBORN. 5600

LONDON OFFICE, The Times

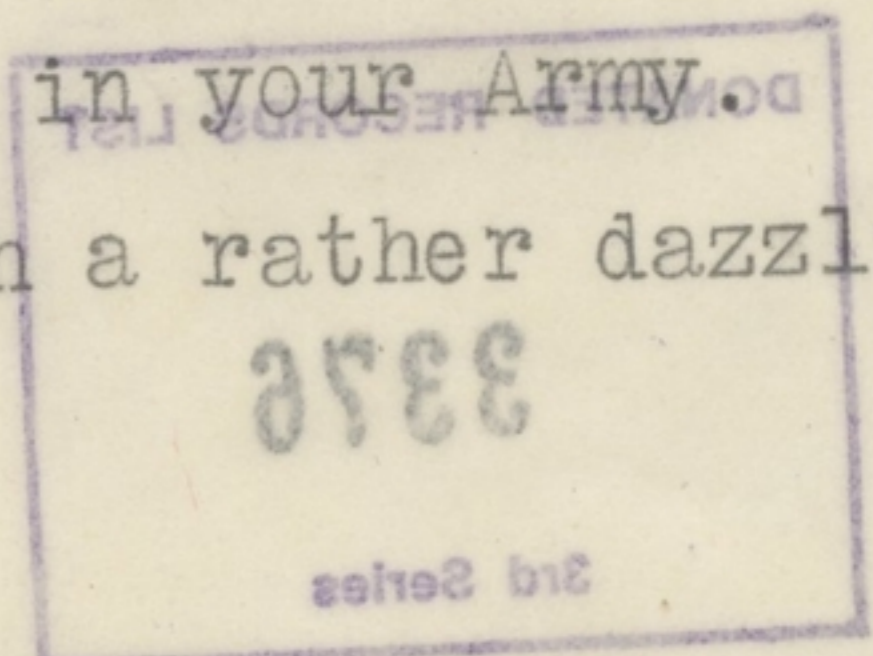
162. Queen Victoria Street.
E.C.

May 21, 1918.

My dear General,

I congratulate you heartily upon the important appointment assigned to you on the West Front. There is one thing certain in my mind, and that is, the more use the Empire makes of your services the better it will be for the Armies. I forget whether I wrote to you, as I certainly intended to, about an interview I had with Milner a fortnight ago. He was very anxious to learn all about us, and you may be sure I was as tactful as I could be. You were once so good as to warn me in the most kindly way of the value of tact as opposed to the ~~bludgeoned~~ ^{bludgeon} method of negotiation, and Mr. Fisher has also been hammering this lesson into me. I am in hopes that the appreciation expressed to Lloyd George and Milner by Australians concerning your services have not been without their effect in your brilliant advance. We all do wish you most heartily the greatest of success and best possible future for yourself and your new command. I am sure that the Australian Corps will always be happiest when it is in your Army.

All the other changes have come with a rather dazzling



General Sir W.R.Birdwood. -2-

21/5/18

suddenness, but we were of course pretty well prepared for the translation of Monash. I understand that Mr. Hughes may ask for the postponement of these changes until he arrives in London, as he was not personally informed that they were imminent, and of course there are very large questions of Australian policy now involved. Personally I never had any doubt that Monash would make a good Corps Commander, but whether he would even be better in another position with White as Commander of the Corps is possibly an open question.

Very many thanks indeed for your two kind letters, the first expressing sympathy for my brother who was wounded, and the second congratulating him upon his Military Cross. I have sent these letters out to his ~~M~~other, who will appreciate them most highly. My brother has, I know, been a good soldier, and on many occasions has been near to distinction, and it is a joy to all his friends that he has now received an award.

Mr. Hughes and Mr. Cook are to stay about ten days in America. They are to-day at Seattle, and will journey across the Middle West to New York, whence they go to Washington. Mr. Hughes has an important diplomatic commission there, and he has to make several speeches. They will therefore be at least six days later than the other delegates to the conference in arriving in London. They should be here about June 11/13. Mr. Hughes will be put

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General Sir W.R. Birdwood. -3-

21/5/18

up in a private house, and Mr. Cook will stay at the Savoy. I have had many anxious cables from them of late and have also been closely in touch with Mr. Watt, who is rather making the pace in administrative matters during Mr. Hughes's absence. No doubt Mr. Hughes will take absolute command upon arrival in London.

The last seven days I have been spending with Mr. Fisher at Prestwick, where we had a real holiday golfing three ~~hours~~ ^{rounds} a day and getting some relief from hard work. Mr. Fisher is at present in London, and after the opening of the A.I.F. War Pictures at the Grafton Galleries on Friday, returns for a few days longer in the country.

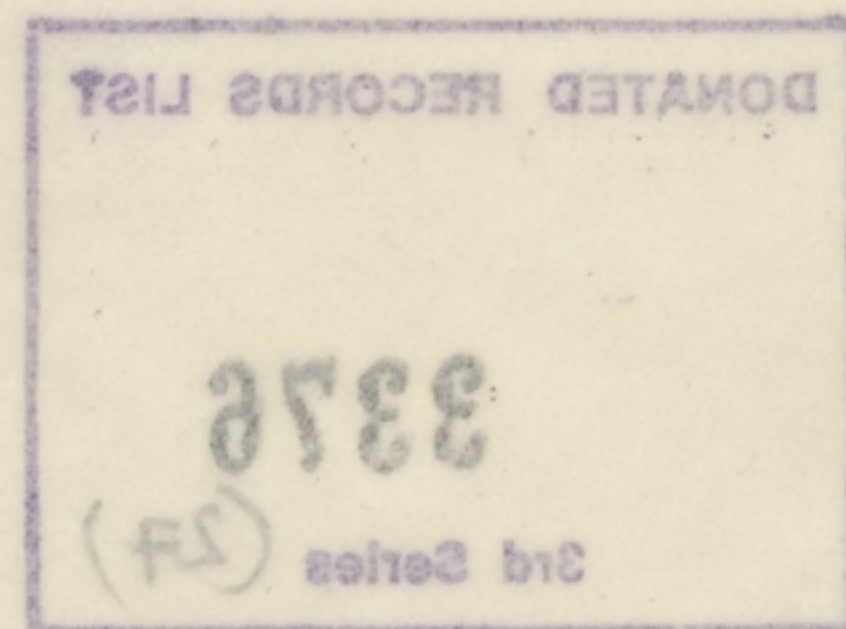
With my kindest regards and best wishes,

Yours ever sincerely,

Keith Murdoch

P.P. I feel this is very inadequate expression of my real joy at your advancement. Please believe whatever happens that on all occasions - some unknown to you - I have stood up for you & battled pretty hard. While knowers of some of them.

General Sir W.R. Birdwood, K.C.M.G.,
D.S.O., etc.,
G.O.C. Australian Imperial Force,
British Armies in France.



United Cable Service

(Australasia)

SYDNEY
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CABLE ADDRESS:
"JAGANATHA, LONDON"

TELEPHONE: HOLBORN. 6600

LONDON OFFICE, The Times,

162. Queen Victoria Street.
E.C.

May 22, 1918.

My dear General,

An influential friend in the City has written to me saying that he has letters from men in the Australian Tunnelling Company showing that the men strongly object to having to work with (not over) Chinese. Of course I do not know the facts, but I thought it would do no harm to send you on this fact, as the Australian workers are exceedingly touchy on this subject.

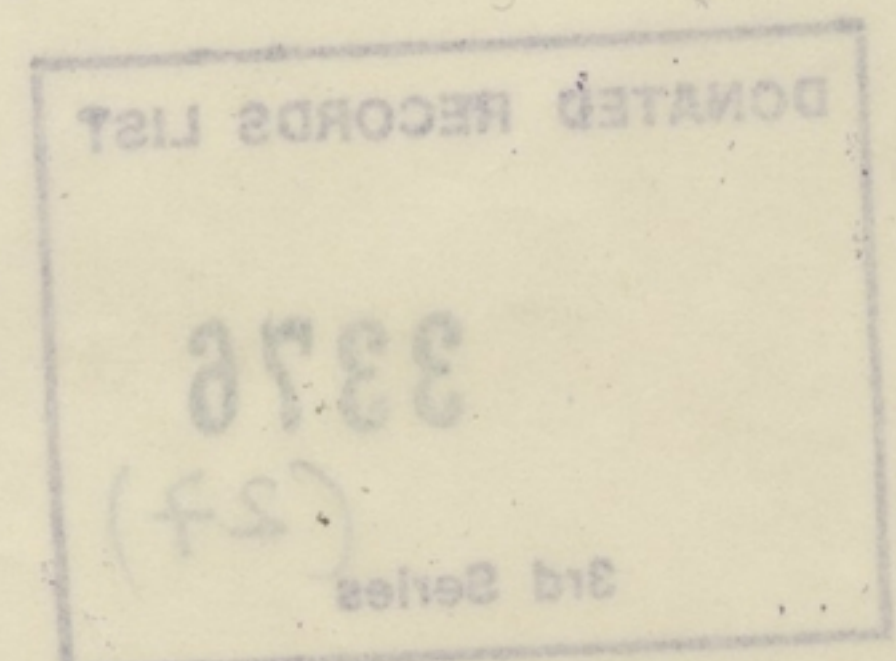
The news of your translation is widely spread amongst the boys - all those coming across from the Third Division seem to know about it - and yesterday I tried to get it through to my newspapers, but Griffiths to whom the Press Bureau referred decided that it should be withheld. It is rather hard to have a dual Australian censorship - one by an officer here, and the other by the Government in Australia itself - especially when the responsible Government does not get its chance to say whether the news should be published, as the subordinate official here prevents it even getting as far as the Australian censors.

I suppose you are already immersed in your new work and will be busy forming a staff. With all good wishes,

Yours ever sincerely,

Keith A. Murdoch

General Sir W.R. Birdwood, K.C.B., &c., &c.,
Headquarters, Australian Corps.



Australian Imperial Force.

R. N° 19885

ce.

Registered,

555

Keith A. Murdoch, Esq.,



On Active Service.

Registered,

355

Keith A. Murdoch, Esq.,



United Cable Service

(Australasia)

SYDNEY
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CABLE ADDRESS:
"JAGANATHA, LONDON"

TELEPHONE: HOLBORN. 6600

LONDON OFFICE, The Times,

162. Queen Victoria Street.

E.C.

Saturday, May 25, 1918.

Personal

My dear General,

I was very glad indeed to get your letter of May 15, which reached me by registered post only late last night. Despite the care to keep the changes secret, the news was as I wrote you fairly general some days ago. Of course it is impossible to prevent the obvious from becoming well known.

First may I clear away a point which may arise and may give you the idea that I betrayed the confidence you so kindly impose in me. The facts were so widely discussed here that on Tuesday last I decided to use them as a journalist, and as I had secured very full information from men at Wandsworth, &c., through the scouts on my staff, I sent the changes in detail. I do not know what was the ultimate fate of this news message, but I suspect it did not pass the censor. I know that Griffiths - I think quite wrongly, because surely such should have been the prerogative of the superior authorities in Australia - objected to this message, and I merely mention it to you now lest the matter should come to your notice, and you should think that I used your letter. For confirmation of this, I enclose part of your envelope, showing that it did not pass through the Field Post Office until May 22.

On Monday May 20 I cabled very fully about the changes to Mr. Hughes, for I was sure that he would regard the information as most important.

I am only a youngster trying to do my best for my country and countrymen, in all circumstances, and I have no right to force any views upon anyone, for decisions must be taken by far wiser and older and more responsible men.

You know, General, what my views are about definite and untrammelled military representation here for the Australian Government. I remember showing you some memoranda and cables which put that view frankly. On that occasion the Government would have instituted that representation, but in deference to your arguments I withdrew the proposal.

3rd Series

But the fact remains, and the principle - in my opinion, and the opinion of very many men, fundamental - that Australia must have a free and untrammelled check upon its military interests here. I am sure you know what I mean - some strongly and purely Australian liaison ~~between~~ on behalf of the Government, responsible to none and caring for none save the Government itself.

This of course involves directly the question of whether an Army Commander divorced from our men and responsible so completely and wholly to the Commander-in-Chief can act as G.O.C., A.I.F.. There are so many weighty and great reasons for trying to have it so in this case - you know that we all value you in every way as man and leader - that I feel that some solution should be found. But the issue is I think so fundamental that it will be difficult, and I was not surprised to receive a cable from Mr. Hughes, in response to mine, saying that he had cabled to Melbourne "strongly urging that the matter should be held up until his arrival in London."

I rather fancy that having received such strong representations from you, Pearce and Watt have bolted, and much will already have been sanctioned. Mr. Hughes will I think not make it an instruction that nothing should be agreed to until he arrives, preferring to have a good talk with you when he can get across to the Front, and then thinking things out.

Trusting you so completely, I am writing very frankly, and I do hope General that you will not in the least misunderstand all this, and remember that Mr. Hughes himself has expressed no opinion, though with his Government he was keenly alive to the viewpoint I now express, when it was put before him some months ago.

We all have the highest regard for your leadership, and we know the value of your prestige and popularity throughout the Empire, and we regard it as a sad moment when you laid down command of the corps.

There are many points about White's translation, &c., which I should like to discuss, but these I suppose are minor. I should very much like to get across to see you and talk it over. So much then could be prepared for Mr. Hughes's consideration. I do not however feel just at present inclined to apply for a permit, seeing that Colonel Church has so baldly laid it down that we have to be "invited".

Next week perhaps I shall try to get across just for say two days not on press work or as a journalist but to take any few minutes you can give me to talk things over.

I am rather at a loss to know whether to return your letter or keep it to show Mr. Hughes. He would of course be all the better for the strong and clear statement contained in it, and though you do not express your desire on the point I shall keep it with that view, unless you let me know that you would rather have it back immediately.

Needless to say I read it with the utmost interest, though I was rather surprised at the tribute to McNichol, having seen the latter

under varying conditions.

Mr. Hughes is to be put up in a private house in St. James's Place, and I do hope that this will help him keep his health here. He is still more than a fortnight from advent.

I will take an early opportunity of letting you have my small "news". There is plenty of activity here. I don't think Robertson is to get the Horse Guards. I fancy it is to be kept as a plum in reserve. Wilson is inordinately cheerful, and has many friends who assure everyone he is the "cleverest general by far", &c..

There is some talk of Plumer getting the Home Guard. Alamy I believe wishes to return to the West.

I hope Chris is well - he must be a great comfort to you. Has Chirnside gone with you? I hear that Churchill is to be your Camp Commandant.

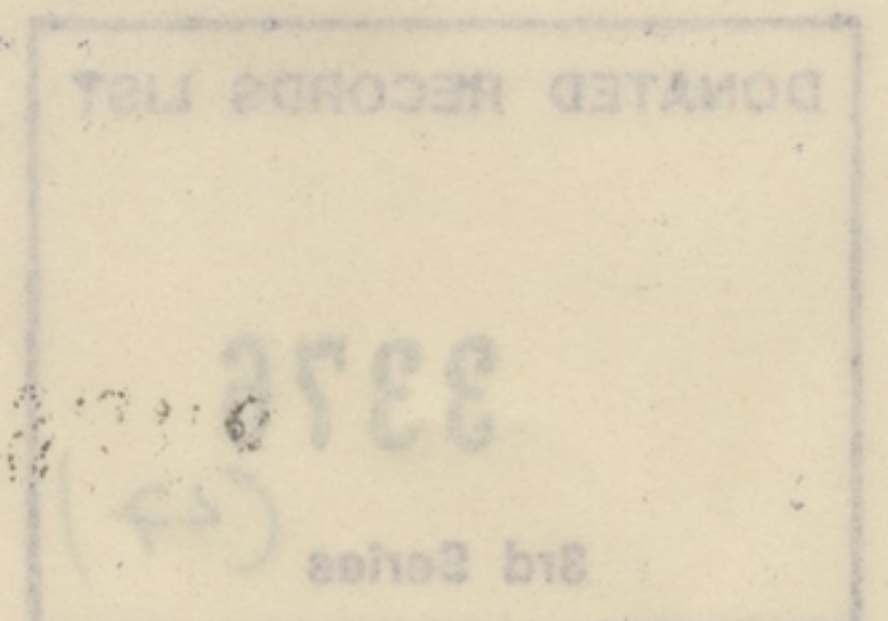
Assuring you, General, of my deepest regards,

Ever yours sincerely,

Keith A. Murdoch

General Sir W.R. Birdwood, K.C.B., &c., &c..

P.S. The C-in-C certainly desired to reappoint Gough at one time.



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CABLE ADDRESS:
"JAGANATHA, LONDON"

TELEPHONE: HOLBORN. 6600

LONDON OFFICE, The Times,

162. Queen Victoria Street.
E.C.

June 3, 1918.

My dear General,

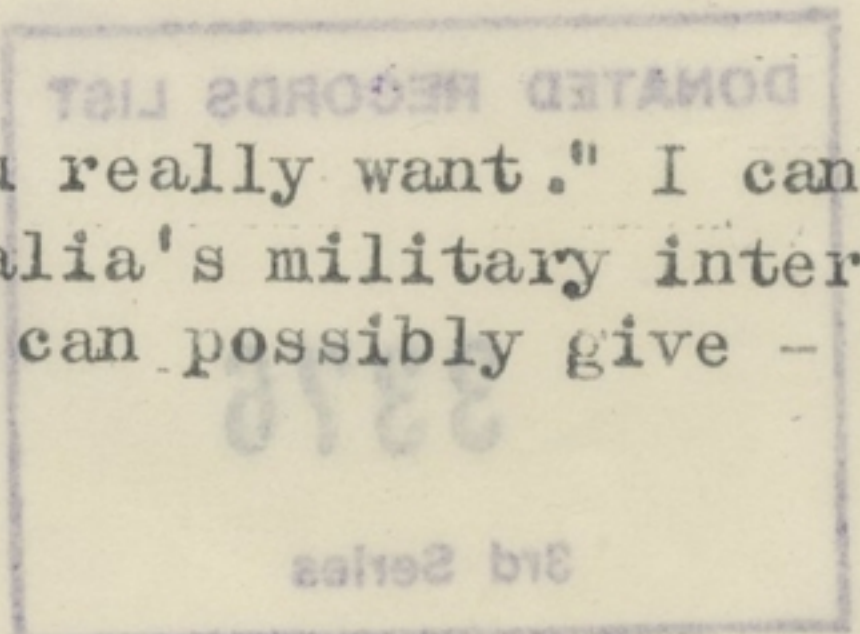
I was surprised and rather dumbfounded to read your letter of May 30, which is just to hand. As you say, it shows very strong feeling, and I cannot understand why this should be so. The very mild question I have been asked, asking, and writing about is whether these changes in France do not make it vital now that we should have some untrammelled and direct military representation; whether they make it possible for you to remain G.O.C., A.I.F. - which, to put it bluntly, we have the right to think is not the job for a busy Army Commander's odd moments - and whether the great advantages of retaining your services can be secured by filling the admitted and important blank in some other way.

I am going to write very frankly, feeling it is due to myself to do so in view of some passages in your letter. In the first place, let me assure you that I heard the news fully - the first was I think from Australia House - many days before I received your letter. On comparing notes with Mr. Fisher, I find that your letter to him also bore the field post office date, May 22. Then men arriving from the Front - especially wounded men at Wandsworth - were full of the story, which they had in a nebulous way. *It was impossible, as a competitive journalist, to leave alone news so widely known.*

I wrote to you twice about the changes, before I received your letter. I find that one of my letters was dated May 20, and therefore left London before you had posted your letter to me. I cannot see therefore why you should have thought that I had abused your confidence.

You say that "the action you (i.e., K.M.) advocate would tend to entirely change" your point of view about Australia, and would similarly affect any number of decent Englishmen, "who might have Australia's best interests at heart." I presume this is not a threat of the displeasure of yourself and a number of Englishmen, but an intimation that you think any such action would be ungrateful. Let me say that Australia will never be ungrateful for what you have done, any more I am sure than you will be ungrateful for what Australians have done for you. But personal feelings do not count where our dearest and greatest interests are involved.

You next say, "I doubt if you know what you really want." I can tell you in a nutshell. I want some further watch on Australia's military interests in the war than an Army Commander, under a British G.H.Q., can possibly give - in



Who had the news of pressure from Australia

my opinion - however distinguished he may be.

You seem to agree with me in that. You disagree only in the point of view that the G.O.C.'ship enters into the question. My dear General, surely you know that no-one would regret more than I any further disruption of your authority over the A.I.F., provided what is essential to Australia is gained in some other way.

We differ as to procedure. You say the only way of securing untrammelled military representation would be by a Cabinet Minister. Really, you cannot argue that an independent Australian G.O.C., or a strong military representative like Legge, or someone else, would not be "untrammelled military representation."

Let us agree at once on the point on which apparently we can agree :- That new representation in the form of an Australian Cabinet Minister would be satisfactory representation. Having reached that, can we agree to push that proposal to Mr. Hughes and others, and on that condition do our best to ratify fully the suggested A.I.F. changes?

I am very sorry indeed if I merited your letter. I cannot help thinking that I have enemies amongst your associates who do not play fair with me. I know quite well of course that what I have done at various times in connection with the A.I.F. may have made enemies - and others have been made for me by lies and insinuations. Let them do what they like, for I count career and popularity as nothing, compared with the sacrifices many dear friends have made in doing their duty during this war.

Please don't think that in any way I state official opinion. I have told you, privately, all that has past between officials and myself in this matter. I would probably not have cabled to Mr. Hughes or the Government if it had not been that I felt sure that the matter had been rushed through before anyone was allowed to hear of it, and that Mr. Hughes, being on the water, had not been consulted. In that surmise, I was right.

There are many points in your letter I am tempted to answer, but it seems that correspondence on this question leads only to misunderstandings. With my best wishes,

Yours very sincerely,

Keith A. Murdoch

General Sir W. R. Birdwood, K.C.B., &c.
G. O. C., Fifth Army, B.E.F.

I am exceedingly sorry that Walker is leaving us, though glad of course that an Australian takes command. I think most strongly that General Walker should get the thanks of our Parliament and a grant of money. This I have already suggested, & I intend to urge it on Mr. Hughes. By the way, Capt Cook will not be here for some few days yet.

Blm.

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June 10, 1918. *E.C.*

Private
My dear General,

Your letter of June 6 is to hand and calls for some reply. I hear that you are coming to London early next week, and hope then to have an opportunity of discussing our correspondence, which I think leaves so many blanks to be filled in.

What I am particularly anxious to say at once is, I much regret that anything I have done has caused you to feel that I have been ungrateful. I am at a loss to understand how I could have interpreted your remarks on page 2 of yours of May 30 as showing this feeling, when they seem so clearly to convey altogether a different meaning. But on the score of personal ingratitude I should much like to say that I shall never feel anything but intense respect and high gratitude for the justness, ability and breadth of your administration of the A.I.F.

You seem to think that a general attack is being made on your administration. I assure you that idea is wholly wrong. We understand its merits.

What has happened is that you have left us as our

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DRL

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Gen. Sir W.R. Birdwood, K.C.M.G., D.S.O. -2- 10/6/18

fighting commander. I have always maintained, often against opposition, that whilst you commanded the Corps there should be no question of attempting to secure an Australian G.O.C. A.I.F. This, despite the anomalies of the position which were frequently thrown up at us.

You repeatedly told me that you would never leave the Australians. You had my fullest personal support for all it was worth whilst this was so. We differ materially now, but surely there is no ground for a charge of personal ingratitude. If you mean that you expected absolute personal loyalty to yourself under all circumstances from me, I can only reply that I think you have had it and, indeed, even more than it ; perhaps our ideas of personal and public loyalty somewhat differ.

As to my stating in a press cable that there was " a strong unanimous view that the position should now be separated" the word 'unanimous' was, I admit, too strong. It did not in any way mean the view of the soldiers. I was referring solely to the opinions of ~~Au~~stralians in London. If I have over-stated it you will, I hope, remember that the news of the changes had come as a great and painful surprise to us. You had left us, White had left us, and we could not see how an Army Commander could do justice to the great and growing duties of G.O.C. A.I.F.

I think it was wrong of White to show you my letter to him, and I am rather astonished that it should form a

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DRL

3376

Gen. Sir W.R. Birdwood, K.C.M.G., D.S.O. -3- 10/6/18

subject of a letter from you. Yet I am glad it is so, because I was evidently misinformed about your part in the discussion as to bases and hospitals here. I must therefore apologise for this statement, which was made on trustworthy authority, although I do not agree with some of the statements you have made. Nor do I accept several of the other points of view in your letter.

You have not answered the question contained in the eighth paragraph of my letter of June 3, and so far as it is any importance it is now withdrawn.

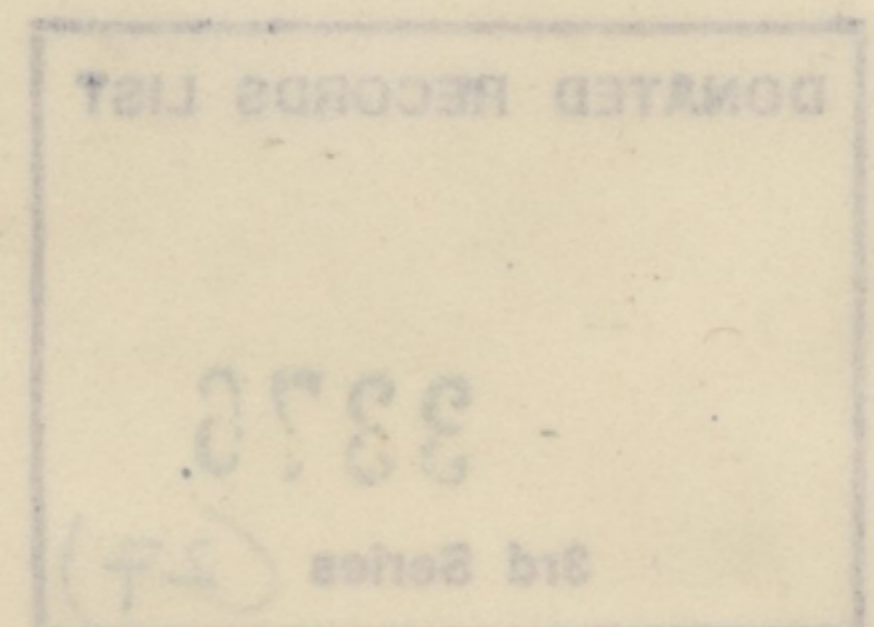
I am much obliged for the two alterations in the copy of the article I sent you, and I am cabling to my people so that these will be corrected before the article appears. In any case, it will probably be emasculated by the Australian censor.

Assuring you of my firm respect and regards, and wishing you all success,

Yours very sincerely,

Keith A. Murdoch

Gen. Sir W.R. Birdwood, K.C.M.G., D.S.O.,
G.O.C.
Fifth Army Headquarters,
France.



TELEGRAM HANDED IN BY MR. KEITH MURDOCH FOR DESPATCH
TO THE 'SUN', SYDNEY, 20. 6. 18.

M. I. 7 a.

MONASH's appointment as Corps Commander likely to be followed by early promotion to higher position owing to extreme difficulty preventing BIRDWOOD carrying out increasing duties as General Commander of the Force in conjunction with his new important post with British Armies in FRANCE. BIRDWOOD's step distinct progress for him, putting him among few leading generals at the front. HUGHES states the resulting changes will shortly mean that Australians will be commanded throughout and administered by Australians who have proved themselves as level-headed and sound in command and administration as in fighting.

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