

Cairo  
Egypt  
15 Dec 1914

Dear Mother,

We are off the boat at last, after  
some weeks on the water, and camped fourteen  
miles from Cairo on the banks of the Nile  
and within half a mile of the Pyramids.  
After leaving when we sailed through the  
Red Sea and out Babatman, landed in  
Aden to meet the Turks, but the Indian  
troops were able to beat them, they put them  
along the coast, so we embarked to go by  
sea and continued our journey through the Suez  
Canal to Port Said, where a Coy left the  
boat and came as an advance party to  
prepare the camp. The rest of the troops went  
on to Alexandria and up the Nile river  
and landed here three days after us.  
We had fifty German prisoners on the boat  
including Bruno Franz Josef Holzgoller, the  
German nephew. We will not have another  
day to be killed with the drabs and  
Sulphur bomb at the end of the day. I have  
not much to say for the time being.



before we leave for England. Cairo is a very  
big city about twice the size of Melbourne.  
There are scarcely any white people, though  
there is every other breed, it is full of dirt  
and the streets about eight feet wide. Everything  
is very cheap especially fruit we can get  
forty five oranges for a piastre which equals  
2 1/2 d. It took some time to learn the value  
of the Egyptian money. The natives here work  
for less than a penny a day and men  
and women dress exactly alike.  
I have not got a letter since we left  
Melbourne but expect they will follow as up.  
The pyramids are a wonderful sight, one  
covers fifteen acres and is 571 ft high, some  
of the stones near the top are as big as a house.  
I have been through some and seen the mummies  
of things who are supposed to be dead 4,000 years  
you would not credit some of the sights to  
be seen here. I suppose you think we were  
foolish to enlist, but what would be the result  
if Germany took England, Australia would soon  
be under German rule. Dear Mother give my  
sincere love to Father and all at home and  
I hope all are well. Dont worry about me, I  
get plenty to do very little work, & am happy.  
Your affectionate son, Jack.



Dear Mother  
Long paper  
1st 11/11

Dear Mother,  
I have just received your  
letter of Jan 4th and I am glad to hear  
from you. We have just come back from  
Ishmalia where we were for a  
week. We thought we were going to see  
a lot of things but they were all  
at the bottom of the water. We  
were all disappointed as we were looking  
forward to having a lot of things.  
The second part of the letter says they  
are camped at the top about thirty miles  
from where that sphere is not being  
sent back to them as he has passed the  
medical examination. We get plenty of  
food, and I am a very interesting place  
there is so much to be seen so we have  
a good time. I am just beginning to  
learn the native language.



I had a big fever one night  
and before I knew it I asked the nurse  
what it was, she told me it was diphtheria  
I enjoyed it all the more  
My training has been made a hardship  
I hope the boys get another year at the  
barracks, suppose they are big girls now  
Did you get the \$10 alright, it is risky  
sending it such a long distance  
You asked me if I had a girl in  
Melbourne I had a girl, Lily, she was  
the only one I had with for some  
I left Australia  
Will mother there is not much to write  
you so I will write I like to see  
shopping here till 12th Mar  
Give my love to all at home as well  
but I will write to her soon  
I remain  
Your affectionate son  
Jack



PATRON OF NATIONAL  
COUNCIL OF Y.M.C.A.'S:  
HIS MAJESTY THE KING



PATRON MILITARY  
CAMP DEPARTMENT:  
H.R.H. THE  
DUKE OF CONNAUGHT

On  
Active  
Service

THE Y.M.C.A. WITH H.M. TROOPS

For God  
for King &  
for Country

From

Jack

5<sup>th</sup> Ball. 1<sup>st</sup> A.I.F. Reg't. A. Coy.

Address reply to

Mustapha

Convalescent camp  
Alexandria Egypt

Dear Father

in answer to your letter which I was very glad to receive. I suppose mother got my letter from the hospital alright. I am very sorry you are having such a bad season in Victoria it seems to be getting worse every year.

I am sending mother a letter by this mail containing eight pounds which I hope she will get safely.

I suppose you read many glowing accounts of the Australians on the Gallipoli Peninsula, but I doubt if you get much truth. Even here where we know what is going on, the papers publish continually false accounts of the war.

We left Cairo about 1<sup>st</sup> April and went to Lemnos Island where we stayed about two weeks. On April 25<sup>th</sup> about two o'clock in the morning



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For God for King & for Country

From .....

Batt. .... Reg't. .... Coy. ....

Address reply to .....

we took to the boats and made for shore, where the Turks were waiting, when our boats grounded in about six feet of water, meanwhile the enemy kept up a hot rifle fire on us (killing many in the boats) we scrambled ashore fixed bayonets and charged them up a hill 900 feet. There were easily fire to one of the enemy but they would not face the bayonet. We drove them four miles inland with great losses on both sides; then the forts and artillery began to shell us, and as there was some delay in getting our guns ashore we had to retire about two miles, with a big loss of men. The Turks are good shots and have better organisation than us, but will not come near the bayonet. They are using soft-nose, dum dum, and explosive bullets, though the four that hit me were small nickel ones



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For God  
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for Country

From .....  
Ball. .... Reg't. .... Coy. ....

Address reply to .....

my left hand is nearly right, and my head  
is getting on as well as can be expected  
The Dr. told me I must have an empty space  
where my brain should be otherwise I would  
have been killed.

I reckon on being well enough in a month  
or two to go back again. I want to be  
amongst them when Constantinople is taken  
my opinion is the war will last another year  
Of all the troops the Australians show the  
greatest pluck. fear is a thing unknown  
while under fire.

Well Father I will conclude with love  
to all at home

Your affectionate son  
Jack



Trenches. Anzac  
Dec 8<sup>th</sup> 1915

Dear Mother,

just a few lines to say I am well, and hope all are well at home. I have not received any letters for a long time, though I know you write regular. There have been a lot of mails sunk in the Mediterranean lately by the Kaiser's "Tin Fish" which accounts for it, I suppose. The weather is very cold now with an occasional fall of snow, but we are well supplied with warm clothes and have good Dug-outs, twenty feet below the surface. I forgot to mention in my last letter that I had transferred from the Infantry to the Machine Gun Sect. There has been very little fighting here this few weeks; though had Generalship we have remained here idle, while "Abdul" has consolidated his position so well that I think our opportunity of taking the Peninsula has been lost; we have the men to go through anything but lack competent leaders.



This is the envelope of a letter  
which has been following me  
for seven months

Herb Hippius is still in Egypt I guess  
he has got "cold feet". Charlie Headlam is  
at Saphi Lemnos. I met Eddie Bourke  
at Cape Surla last week, he is looking  
well and expects to be relieved shortly  
for a rest. Major Scott from Wanganatta  
was blown right away with a "Jack Johnson"  
last week, it never left a trace of him.  
There is only seven of my old Broadmeadows  
Company left <sup>out of 250.</sup> and five of us have been  
wounded, which goes to prove they have  
done their job.

Dear Mother I feel quite confident that  
I shall get through all right, but should  
my time come I am prepared to face it  
I would like to write a lot but this  
letter is liable to censor, I am certain  
the Allies will win eventually, thanks to  
Russia, but it will probably be some years yet  
I will now conclude, Mother, with the  
best of love to little Ned the Twins  
and all the family, and look forward  
to seeing you all again.

Your affectionate son  
Jack



France

June 17th 16

My Dear Mother,  
I have just received a letter from Eileen, the first from home for a long time. She says you need not get the money what I said you, but I think you will be alright, as I did not expect the money till I had it through the military pay office in Cairo, and you will have to produce a signature for it before they can give you the money. I think you will receive it in time, the military pay is very slow. I am making enquiries here about it, and would advise father to write to the Melbourne Pay Office. The allotment was four shillings per day to be drawn from Dullar's and a pension of £100 on Feb 22. I have written a lot of letters for you, but the postal service of my Unit is about the worst in the division. Both coming and going are destroyed to save transport.



I have just come out of the trenches after  
doing a stretch of 52 days and killed  
before the firing line in reserve, at a point  
The Germans shelled a very narrow gap at  
the other night, but we were quite safe  
with respirators. All soldiers and children  
going to school must wear respirators.  
Conditions here are even so much better than  
Galipoli, the food is splendid and plenty of  
clothes. I would like to see a big stunt  
come off now and finish the war. I am  
just about tired of soldiering, but I want  
to see the war right through if I can.  
Tell the boys to send me their plates if they  
has one. I would like to see you all  
again, and hope you are not worrying about  
me, but I shall get home again some day.  
I have seen Jack White here and I believe  
Charlie Hedden is in England.  
Dear Mother give my love to all at home  
and do not worry about me.

I remain

Your affectionate son  
Jack



Belgium

July 6<sup>th</sup> 16.

Dear Mother

I have just received your welcome letter of April 17<sup>th</sup>. I am quite well and hope you are all well at home. I am surprised to here you have had only one letter from me for about six months as I write at least every month. There is no truth in the yarns of my hand being shot off. I got a bullet through the centre of the palm of my left hand on Gallipoli more than a year ago, but it has long since got right as it broke no bones. Your letter that I have just received was enclosed in a letter from Charlie Headlam.

I was within two days of getting furlough to England when the leave of my Division was stopped but I think I shall get leave

sometime within the next few months. I am sorry you did not get the money deposit you but I think it had only been delayed in transfer. I have written the Head Quarter about it, and if you get it alright I want you to use what you require of it.

My Unit has been travelling round the different parts of the Tiring line lately at present we are in Belgium. I have been in some heavy bombardments and am beginning to think I am shell-proof. I believe the Germans are beginning to weaken now; we are pressing them hard on all sides, especially the Russians who are doing some immensely grand work against the Austrians.

If you could only see this beautiful country laid waste and whole towns battered to the ground you

No further pages Received



France  
Aug 26 '16

Dear Mother

I was glad to receive your welcome letter yesterday which makes the third I have got from you lately. I am all well at home, have not had any letters from the boys yet. I suppose you have read of the Austrians big victory of taking Pozieres. I was in that shell but our casualties were very great but we pushed back by a mile. It seemed hardly possible that a man could come out of it alive, such was the pain of shells.

The ground was fairly packed with dead and wounded. Poor old George Goodland was killed. All my old bobbers of the 21st Batt are gone. My plumbing is alright. My R.M.I. he has not to go in the firing line. I got two hard cracks from being knocked out but it is not far from out of action. I had not been promised to 21st yet as you know. I prefer to remain a private. I am glad you got the money alright which I sent you. I am going into another big attack in a few days and if I am ~~shot~~ <sup>shot</sup> out please send it to Eileen and Maggie's education.



Dear Helen and Maggie,

I am glad you are back at the combat again. Perhaps the most of your time there, as there is nothing like being able to pass your own living and being independent, a good education makes everything through life. If you require any money for books or anything else tell mother to draw on my money in the bank what you want, and don't forget.

I remain  
Your affectionate brother  
W Jack

I am sorry you are not getting my letters more regular, as I write every month, I am getting yours more regular. I'll get the parcel which you sent to Clara's care for me. I have been in I think about four months now and have a wonderful time. It is a beautiful country and the weather is perfect. I send you a piece of the farm if you like me what age have they now.

This is all for this time mother go I will conclude  
Your affectionate son  
W Jack



(2)  
I wired to you last week for  
£20 pound. I hope you have  
sent it along. I am not in  
any urgent need of it, but  
I have had to buy a great  
amount of clothing and kit,  
and an officer in England  
has to keep up appearances  
which means L.S.D.

My pay amounts to 21 shillings  
per day with four allotment  
and 3/6 deferred, leaving a sub-  
stantial balance of 13/6 per day.  
I have about £50 deferred pay  
in my boots which I cannot touch  
until after the war.

I have not had any letters  
from you since I was, I suppose  
they have not been sent on from  
my old unit.



"L" Lines,

Belton Park,

Grantham.

23/7/1917

Dear Mother,

Just a few lines to  
say that I am well and  
hoping all are well at home.  
I have just received my  
commission 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. and  
have transferred to a new M.G.  
Co. which has just been formed.  
I have been in England about  
a month now and expect to be  
going back to France in two  
or three weeks.



How is little Ned and all the  
rest at home, I received. Carrie's  
and the Twins photo's alright  
It is now two and a half  
years since I left Australia  
and I suppose there are a great  
many changes.

Every body seems to think the  
war will finish this year, but  
I believe it will carry on for  
at least another three years.

I was very sorry to leave my  
old Company but I am used  
to changes, men don't last very  
long in the Machine Gun Coy.  
as a rule.

I shall have to a much better  
time now as an officer, and  
I think it's up to me, for I  
have had my share

My new address will be  
J J Bourke 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut  
1<sup>st</sup> Aus. Divisional.  
Machine Gun Coy  
France

don't put any more or less or  
my letters will get mixed with  
Det Bde, or some other Coy  
I will be writing again shortly  
so I will close with love to  
all at home.

I remain  
Your affectionate son  
Jack