

Home again. at
"Basalt"
Elsternwick

29/7/16

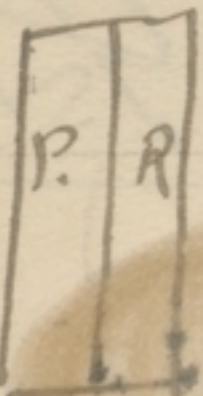
Dear Goodwin,

I'm home again but this time
I'm on final leave. I've got till Monday night.
It seems very short but I'm making the most of it.
I have my full company now of 165 men & 1 officer.
Mr E Ryan (son of Dr Ryan of Glenferrie) He is a fine
fellow & I believe (though he is a P.C.) that we will be
fast chums. I am delighted with my men & they
think the world of me & so stimulate me to further
efforts on their behalf. I had them at musketry for
a week at Williamstown & I find I have some good
shots. We are due to sail in August. but nothing is
definite. I was going to try a push up to the Ridge
before I left but I can't do it. We are all well at
home & I trust they will keep so till I get back.
So Mr B has plenty of work when all is well.

I am fortunate in receiving a case of magazines for
my company. from Gordon & Co. & a wealthy lady
is giving each of my men socks, shirts & underpants
& Lt Ryan & myself a pair of 15 guinea field glasses
each. I told you my Co is 5/58 Bn which is doing
all the work at the front in France at present.

(The Anzac Bn) It is good to reinforce such a
fine Battalion. Col Davis is my Bn Comd & General
Elliot my brigadier. (5 brigade) My colors are purpled

so



We are all so anxious to get away. but no

doubt will be just as anxious to
return to our dear ones.

Remember me kindly to all at the Ridge & let me have a "Ridge" letter at least once a month. If you want any news write to Mr B to find out where I am any time. We are going to Salisbury Plains first. The trip takes about 18 weeks, via Cape - I'd like a ride on "Fairy" again. Some day I may have that pleasure Aye? I believe if Gick is there still & "Auntie" will not look I'll try a ride on him also. How is little Florie Fowler getting on? Surely she can write a letter to her old crabby teacher she could write splendidly once. I suppose she has forgotten me. I have forgotten any of the Ridge folk. I learnt a lesson in tidiness from Freddie Russell I think I'll never forget. Remember the night Fred & I stayed at your place. Well Fred folded his clothes with wonderful "exactitude." & I do that myself now, even in camp. Remember it. Remember me to Fred R. There are hundreds of incidents crop up as I write but I must write several letters now I have a minute of quietness at home. I have a nice letter from Waltham school committee which I value & place alongside the one I got from the Ridge. When the war is over & all is quiet again I'll delight in again taking up my profession. Why since I got to camp I got my numeral from last school 95. so I think I must be a teacher Aye. But this little "scrap" in France is very interesting to me at present & I'll lie won through that is where my heart & work is.

Tata till next time Goodson.

I don't forget a letter once a month at least.

Yours very sincerely N.G. Barlow

O.C. 5/58 Bⁿ A.I.F.
B'meadows.

Dear Goodson.

In firing line. France.
2/3/17.

I am at last at the nasty job.

I'm having a little spell for a day or 2 after a fight. I had a quick passage to the firing line. I'm sitting now under the heavy gun fire of the foe yet we consider it is safe here compared with where I've been. This is an awful war alright. Now I know what it is really. You people at home are spared a dreadful thing and I'd fight again after this war to keep it out of our country. There are some very big guns just near me. I write & they keep shaking me. There are balloons & aeroplanes over head & a host of army parts abroad. As far as the eye can see. The Germans are retreating before us just and we though pleased at this are wild at the distance we have to tramp to get at him now. They are blowing the whole enemy to pieces as they go. Of course our guns do it first. Fritz will be in a town or village - well simply blow him out of it (& blow the village out too) with our guns. Then we rush forward & take his trenches if possible before he can destroy them. The beautiful places are just obliterated. I can't describe it but if you see a frightful picture of any of the Somme battle fields then you only have a glimpse of what the places are like. I have ^{not} but 1 man yet and besides a cold am very fit myself. I continually meet old chums even on the battle field. The transport & all ordnance & stores munition depots of our army are wonderful & do excellent work. The old mule is a great friend here. We march miles along "duck boards" to the firing line. There are so many shell holes that one couldn't get along without these boards. The loads we carry forward are very heavy & one feels inclined to fall sometimes under the load, yet on we plod. I got one letter from Mrs Barton right up as I was fighting and I longed to get the job over to read that letter. I can tell you

The Germans are grand aviators & seem to be masters here in the air. but we've got him doing a retreat & are belting him back. The gas is a nuisance we have to wear our respirators all the time. The beggar popped a few tear shells into my position the night I was being relieved but it didn't hurt us. We find he has lovely dugouts I had some on my sector up to 30ft deep all clean & nicely boarded. The cunning beggars had left these dugouts ready for demolition with gunpowder on the walls etc. but I took the explosives all off & then let my men go down below. He had trip wires etc to explode these things as we got inside. I didn't like the job of getting these dugouts cleaned up I can tell you. Talk about mud I never saw such mud. We come out of the line fit to scare a host of Satan's soldiers let alone Germans. Long beards & dirty clothes, boots & faces just like the filthiest person you've ever seen but all in good heart & glad to have a spell. I've not had one letter from you yet, but I expect some will come soon. We find the Germans are well fed & fitted for the fight & it is sad to find when you enter a trench & take it that in the letters of the dead Germans there are letters to their wives & little ones & many a photo etc. I hope the war will soon stop now for it is sapping out the best of men & all that is beautiful in civilized life. Maybe you'll read about the time you get this of our great advance. No doubt Gitch will call a halt directly, then we'll get shaft. They don't like the Australian as fighters. The scenes at night here are grand yet terrible for the whole place is lit up by rockets & flares. Hope all are well & prospering at Ridge. Remember me kindly to Willie & all your dear ones. I hope to see you all some day & then I'll talk (you are saying he always could). Yours sincere friend. J. Barlow.

15/4/1917

France - Front Line.

Dear Goodson.

I think I wrote to Willie last. I am at last sitting in a dry place (a tent) but I am wet through & feeling very cold as I write. I am really wishing to do something to keep my mind occupied with other things than the war. We have been trying to rest for about a week but we no sooner get settled than we have to suddenly pack up & run up & occupy some forward position to either annoy Fritz or else stop him trying to get through. As I write there is such heavy artillery bombardment going on I believe I'll have to stop if it continues as we'll have to "stand to" again. Fritz has been getting a severe doing near by to our sector & he tried to take vengeance out of us poor chaps but I think we have taught him a lesson. We are right on his strong line and it is like teasing a wolf in a cage. He comes out at us very seldom but if he does we just give him a severe handling. The open warfare suits us best. It is not nice advancing to the attack under heavy artillery fire but our lads press on unheeding. A good bombardment is called "a drumming". The guns just bang & boom away incessantly. The noise is deafening. The balloons go up & the side that has mastery of the air quickly set them on fire or cause them to be lowered. There are some lovely horses here but the old mule is the best for transport work. I've had a few reconnoitring rides on old "crocks" but it didn't matter for they carried me through the shells & then one in particular took me safely home one black

night & he had to carry me between nasty holes & craters. but he was sure footed. The animals get used to the shelloch and though some shy at a dead horse or man they are nearly all used to anything. There are a lot of hares about here now. The country is very suitable for farming. The soil is just lovely & has a nice clay bottom. This day (16th April) has been a nice fine spring day till now & pm & it is raining again. I received 2 Daylesford Papers one day and I did enjoy the reading. I saw a few Daylesford lads lately. I saw young McKinnon (who used to be in my company at Daylesford.) last night. He is a corporal & looked very well. Today I got 6 nice letters from home and some little photos. These photos are a grand link with home. I got a letter from Mr J. Patterson of Dry Diggings also & I hear he has lost one son here. The news I've just heard is again grand we got 600 prisoners after the little attack Filly made

the other evening. He got one of a balloon just now but down came one of his soon afterwards. We are masters of the air again. Our planes can fly up or down sideward, in fact any way at great speed. Our lads are singing choruses as I write. It is raining but they are cheerful. I'm sure the Germans are not singing. They look so downhearted when we get them. There is a lot of sugar beet & root crops grown here. We have luckily had no gas lately as the warfare isn't suitable for it. We give & get gas shells though but the results are local. It is grand to see our big guns at work you can see the 9.2 inch shell fly up in the air on its deadly mission & follow it till it turns to drop then you miss it. I've seen heaps of these shells ready round a gun to be sent on to Filly. They are soon all gone. It'd sooner be at the gun end. We hope this cruel warfare will soon end but we are determined to give our lives to see a thrashing dealt out to the cruel Germans, if necessary to make him go on his knees for peace. Remember me to all at Ridge & B. Lots of love from your kind invitations to stay with you. I'll come some day

Perhaps I'll see next time Gordon from very sincerely & affectionately

Address reply to Lt W. G. Barlow
to G. E. May Esq.
103 Dagnall Park
S. Norwood
S.E.
England

Dear Goodsir.

I am snatching a moment as I
await a court martial on some men at which I am a
witness. Well I had a lovely trip to England and
saw England's sea strength. The torpedo boats are wonderful
they can rush ahead to fire in front of a troopship like
a dog does in a field in front of his master. We were
nearly in a bad way for a boat was sunk 80 miles
ahead of us but we were skilfully guided through all
dangers. The great Edison lighthouse was a grand sight
one evening. The cattle at Devon are very fine they
are red and all in good condition. Though it was
autumn there is plenty of grass. The country is just like
your paddock. (the best ones) Wet & hilly. It is strange to see
the fowl houses in the little fields. & the fences of mud &
hedges. It is similar weather to Daylesford. I stand the cold
well but of course I am well wrapped up. In our rooms
we have stoves like you had at the Ridge school. But
they do not smoke much & we burn coal. I saw the great
Westminster Abbey & went to matins there. The voice of
the choir boys vibrated through the great ceiling. Every-
where there are slabs showing someone is buried there
There are all the regimental flags on Wolfe's statue
St Pauls is a sight. I was shown into the Crypt a
place below the cathedral. in which there are several
chapels & the great tombs of Nelson & Wellington.

2 I saw the Indian Princes place a wreath on "Bobs"
Robert's grave. Was a solemn ceremony for several of them
had tears in their eyes. I saw all the chairs the kings & queens
of England sat in. Many of the best tools & statues are covered with
sand bags for protection. The pigeons at Parliament houses Trafalgar
square are tame & fly on to one's shoulders. Queen Victoria's
monument in front of Buckingham Palace is magnificent. I saw the
Horse Guards & they saluted as I passed & I saluted them.

I heard Asquith & Lloyd George & Redmond speak in the House of
Commons. I was admitted through the courtesy of a member named
John Burns. My uncle was very kind to me & showed me all things.
We don't expect to be at the front for a few weeks yet but our men
leave in a few weeks for certain. I have many letters yet to write
so you must excuse my short note this time. Remember me
to all on the Ridge. I often think of you all & some day if I'm

spared I'll run up to Ridge & see you all again. I hope
the children keep well & that Auntie & Mrs Fare also well.
I suppose Goodie is working hard at school now & I will be
pleased to hear he is getting on. Remember me to little
Florence. She was a good girl at school too. I hope Willie is
not moving barns & houses yet but is settled down in his home now
how does Fairy go? She told me many a hundred miles &
fast too. As I write the booming of guns & bombs & the rattle
of rifles maxim & Lewis guns helps to let you know why you are
here but of course it is only practice yet. The tanks are wonderful 300 horse
power 50' x 15' & hold 3 guns throw 6 lbs shells & several maxims & 9
men. can go up or down holes or buildings 12 feet high & are 12" steel
armoured. I see many mules here blueies, chestnuts, white blacks they
are useful beasts yet a little donkeyish

Yours sincerely
God bye this time I hope to hear from you soon
W. Barlow Lt.