

LETTERS OF
FREDERICK WILLIAM ROWE
TO HIS FAMILY
1914 - 1915

Notes to the letters of F. W. Rowe as typed by his
daughter - Mrs. Pamela Rose Vial

The original letters were written by my father (Frederick William Rowe) mainly to his mother (Mrs. Rosetta Rowe) while he was on active service with the Australian Imperial Forces during the First World War (1914-1918). I have typed copies of the letters so that they may be more easily read. I always knew my grandmother as Granny Rowe, and she kept the letters in their original envelopes in a gold cardboard box. After her death in 1945 they were given to my mother - Mattie Alice Rowe (nee Mackenzie - 1899 - 1976). After Mother's death they came into my possession. They have been read by a few people (including a young historian), and I thought it time to pass copies on to the writer's grandchildren.

The people mentioned in the letters are -

his parents and your great grandparents - Rosetta and William Rowe who lived at 85 Eskdale Road, Caulfield
younger brothers Roy and Jack, also living at the same address

sister Ethel, who was married to Fred Mollard, and the baby mentioned is Keith (Bill) Mollard, my cousin. The firm was F.W. Mollard and Co. Pty. Ltd., Mantle Manufacturers, which began shortly before the war and where my father spent most of his working days.

Jean, was Jean Talbot, who was living with Dad's parents at the time and who later married Dad's cousin, Bert Wilks and became the mother of Charles Wilks.

Mr. Gillison was the minister of St. George's, Chapel Street, Windsor, who became a chaplain when the war commenced. Apparently he was a wonderful preacher and minister, and a service is still held in the church each year during August as a memorial to the battalion and to the man himself.

Many of the words in the letters begin with capitals. In some cases I have changed this, and in others left it, as apparently Dad used this form of writing. He also had the habit of running one sentence into another, and I have also altered this in some cases.

My father was discharged from the army on 25th March 1916. He had been admitted to hospital in Heliopolis towards the end of 1915 and his gall bladder had been removed. He also had a duodenal ulcer operation which was considered very serious, and he was very ill for some time. As long as I can remember he always had to take white medicine before meals, and was affected by the results of the operation for the remainder of his life. He was in Caulfield Hospital for a period in 1927, and was cared for by the Repatriation Department until his death. He worked for F. W. Mollard & Co. Pty. Ltd. until about 1945 when he was admitted to Caulfield Hospital again. He was later transferred to Macleod Sanatorium when it was discovered he had Tuberculosis which was caused by the effects of prolonged illness. At that time there was no cure for this disease and when it was found that they could do no more for him, he returned home and spent the last six weeks of his life with his family. He died at home on the 21st June 1947, aged 57.

(contd 2)

Sunday

In typing these letters, it has given me the opportunity to see Dad more clearly, and understand the pain and suffering he went through for many years. Life became a struggle for him, and I wish I had known the young man who came out so clearly in these letters. However, I do remember the devotion he had for his Mother, which continued throughout his lifetime.

I want to pass these letters on to all his grandchildren to give you some idea of what your grandfather was like as a young man, and the attitude he had towards fighting for his country. His life was affected, as were the lives of most of his contemporaries by the horrors of war. In fact all our lives were affected, firstly by myself and my brother losing our father at the age of 57, and the fact that none of you had the opportunity of knowing your grandfather. And so I hope these letters may open a door for you, and perhaps you may see a little of yourself in him.

P.R.V.

January 1990

S.S. Shropshire

Sunday

Dear Mother,

We have arrived off Albany all right having had a lovely trip across. Some of the boys have been sea sick but so far I have escaped & I am feeling splendid. I think I have found my sea legs. Below I will give you an idea of some of the things that have happened.

After leaving the pier we sailed straight through the bay to the heads and we passed straight through the heads about 6.15 pm. The water was like a millpond - there wasn't a ripple on the water.

About 9.00 we were ordered down below to bed. It was funny to see some of the boys getting into their hammocks they would get half in then the hammock would turn then the fun would begin.

They soon got into the way and by about 10.00 they were all asleep and it didn't take me long to go. The hammocks are very comfortable to sleep in you do not feel the roll of the boat a bit and by tightening the two outside strands you make them almost impossible to fall out of. Wednesday morning reveille sounded at 6.00. We had to rise and stow hammocks then we paraded at 6.30. The drivers turned into stables and the gunners did physical drill and we were dismissed about 7.30 for breakfast which was a very fair meal, vis. porridge and meat, butter and jam. We fell in again at 9.00 the gunners doing gun drill; dismissed again 9.45 for a smoke; fall in again at 10.00 for lecture; dismissed again for stables at 11.00, then after stables dinner at 12.00. At 3.00 we paraded again for about 2½ hours and were dismissed for tea, then we were off for the day. This is about all the drillings and parading we do so have a little time to ourselves now. We have gramophone and organ so have plenty of fun and the band also plays every night. We have to do fire drill. When the bell rings every man has to fall in at his station. I have to rush to a horse and keep him quiet. If the alarm goes at night we all have to put on life belts.

On Wednesday afternoon we ran into a school of whales. Jack would have liked to see them. They were only about 30 yards off the ship and kept coming to the surface to spout. It was a great sight to see. We also ran across porpoises in the hundreds some of them about 12 feet long. We saw a long shark on Thursday about 22 feet long. It ran right into the side of the ship. Some of the horses are beginning to feel it and one of them had to be shot today. It had pneumonia and got down and could not rise again so the Vet did all he could, but it was no good. Friday night it began to blow but when we got up on Saturday it was fairly calm again. There was a bit of excitement on board on Friday caused by a collier

22nd Nov. 1914

passing us on our port side going towards Melbourne.

We are not on the trade route being about 25 miles further out to sea and the ship crew were very curious to know who she was. They could not make out who she was. Poor old Lummy is not so good on the boat as he is on a horse. He has been a bit squeamish but is getting all right again now. The ship is travelling about 11 knots. Well Mum I do not think there is any more news at present. I have now exhausted the thinking box. Tell Ethel she was a beauty missing the boat. If she had been on time she would have seen it leave. Well Mum I hope you are in the best of health, also Dad and the boys. If yourself and the others are as good as myself you will do. When you have read this apology for a letter give it to Ethel and Fred and tell them that I am getting some post cards and will forward them onto them whenever I can as it gives me the pip to write two letters at once. Tell Ethel and Fred I send my love to them and trust they are in the best of health and that things are going along all right at the factory.

Well goodbye Mum, best love to yourself Dad and the boys. Cheer up and do not worry because I am having the time of my life and the boys are good fellows. Your loving son

Fred

PS. I will write if possible before we leave Albany.

Fred

22nd Nov. 1914

S.S. Shropshire

Aden

Dear Mother,

At last we are able to send letters without being censored by the military authorities. We had a glorious trip from Albany to Colombo - leaving Albany on Sunday 1st Nov., and it was a great sight to see the fleet sail out of the Sound. We did not get ashore at all. I suppose you have heard how the Sydney got rid of the Emden. We received the news that the Emden was attacking the wireless station at Cocos Island and the Sydney and Minatoar set off to give help. The Sydney gave chase to the Emden and eventually finished her and also the collier. She passed us the day before we arrived in Colombo with the wounded on board. We arrived in Colombo Sunday 15th Nov. It is a beautiful place looking from the bay. We had no chance of getting ashore but we anchored very close in. You could see the palms on the hills also the banana plantations and it made us long to get ashore and have a bit of fun. You could see the coolies and rickshaws trotting along the road and now and again wagons being pulled by oxen. Everyone is dressed in white and you will see people going to work first thing of a morning all dressed in white. We had some of the coolies around the ship in their bumboats. They were not allowed to bring fruit but some of them managed to smuggle some on board. It is curious to see them. They will come up alongside the ship and throw a rope on board then climb up. To see them swarming up the sides you would think they were flies. They were diving into the water for money. You would have to throw silver as a penny is of no value in Colombo. They are very good at getting the money and never miss. Some of them were diving off the roof of the bridge for 6d. One of the officers offered one of them a sovereign to dive off the bridge and he refused. They do not value gold at all. I cannot tell you any more news about Colombo as I did not see inside it but hope to do so on the return trip. We left Colombo on Tuesday some of the slower boats going on ahead and the faster boats leaving later. Everything went right till 4.30 am on Saturday morning. Then the ship gave a violent roll and shock from stem to stern, the collision bell rang and the whistle blew and we all put on our life belts and went up on deck to learn that we had been run into by the Ascanius. Everyone kept their heads and fell in at their right positions. The Captain of the boat told us afterwards he had never seen such a cool crowd in all his life before.

There was a good deal of damage done to both ships, our ship having the stern all smashed and the poop bridge broken down. Also the side of the ship stove in amidships, and the Ascanius has a great rip in her bows. All the damage is above the water line so everything is alright. Everything is alright on board and I am tip top not having had one days sickness. We have all been innoculated for typhoid and are having another dose tomorrow. It makes your arm stiff and sore for a couple of days thats all. We sighted land this morning, Cape Guardafuri on the north east coast of Africa and we expect to reach Aden tomorrow morning. Our battery have lost 6 horses up to date mostly through pneumonia. There has been a couple of burials at sea off the Euripides and a couple off the Wiltshire. So far our ship has escaped and I think we have had less sickness than any other boat. The last two weeks have been very hot and there is hardly any breeze at all. You will never see the water off St.Kilda as calm as it is now.

There is no more news at present so I will close now and will write to you again as soon as we reach Aden.

Give my love to Jean, Roy and Jack and best love to yourself and Dad and I trust you are all in the best of health.

Your loving son

Fred

PS

We will be home for Christmas and I will wire you as soon as I get a chance.

S.S. SHROPSHIRE

Dec. 4th 1914

Dear Mother,

I received two letters the first so far from you today also 3 Christmas cards one from Fred and Roy and one from Miss Smyth.

We arrived at Aden on the 24th Nov. having had a very good trip from Colombo. It is a very dirty and ugly and the country around is very barren there not being a blade of grass anywhere, all you see there is camel trains and filthy Arabs.

We were very glad to leave there and get on to Suez. We arrived at Suez on Tuesday 1st Nov. It looked splendid from the ship after Aden. We anchored about two miles out till about 6.00 and then we made for the Canal. We entered the Canal about 6.30 and as it gets dark very early we did not see very much of the town.

Well Mother the Suez Canal is a marvellous piece of work. You can throw a stone from the ship across the railway line almost anywhere. The railway line follows the canal the full length of its course. In places there does not seem to be more than 2 yards of water between the ship and the land. We could see the shores of the Canal lined with troops mostly Indian Sepoys and they cheered us as we passed. We had a record run through taking 13½ hours to reach Port Said. This seems to be a pretty place from the Harbour but as I could not get ashore I could not say what it is like inside. It is marvellous how they control the entrance to the Canal here there must have been over 80 ships at the entrance when we were there. We left Port Said last evening and arrived at Alexandria this morning, we stood out in the harbour all day and have just made fast to the Pier and are disembarking at 7.00 tomorrow. We will then entrain for Cairo where we will have about 3 months training before we go to the front. Alexandria seems to be all right but as we have not been ashore I cannot tell you what it is like but will let you know in a couple of days.

Well Mother I have told all the news up to date and we are very busy so must close with best love to Self and Dad, Jean Roy and Jack & give my love to Ethel and Fred and tell them I will write as soon as I get a chance.

Your Loving Son

Fred

Mena

8/12/14

Dear Mother,

We disembarked on Saturday. Reveille sounded 5.00 and we started to get everything off the ship, by 3.00 we had everything including horses on the train and started for Cairo straight away, which we reached at 8.00 at night.

We started to get everything off the trains and we had everything off by about 11.00. Before we started to unload we had a cup of Cocoa and a slice of bread each, which seemed to be the best meal I ever tasted. We then left Cairo for the Camp which is at Mena about 10 miles out we had to lead horses and walk. We reached there at 3.00 Sunday morning and got dismissed about 3.30, we were tired out having had 22½ hours solid work without a break and the walk on top finished us.

Mena is about 300 yards past the pyramids and all you see around you is sand. We are camped in the desert and are walking in sand up to the top of our boots all day long. I will try to describe the natives etc. There are the Egyptians they are a fine built lot of men with a very Jewish Nose and expression and the women are mostly fine looking and carry themselves as good as any girl in Melbourne. The Arabs are something like the Egyptians but have different features. They have not got such prominent noses and I think some of the girls are as good looking as any girl I have ever seen but they are very dirty and live a filthy life. I do not think they have a wash more than once a month and I am sure they never wash their clothes.

The Bedouins are a darker race than the Arabs and are as dirty and live like pigs. Just like the Arabs you cannot get within 50 yards of the native village here owing to the stench from it.

There are Soudanese in the Village as well. They are a good deal cleaner than the Arabs. They are a very dark race much like a Negro and are very powerful men. One of them lifted a box of horseshoes off one of their lorries and carried it for about 20 yards. Four of us lifted it and had to drop it after we went about 5 yards. They all dress much alike the Arabs and Bedouins as well. The Egyptian women of the lower class and the Arab women wear their faces veiled you can only see their eyes and they have a piece of wood down their nose that is only the married women and those that are going to be married. The married women wear black veils and those going to be married wear white veils.

The native men of all the villages and also in Cairo wear robes all colors of the rainbow and mostly wear hoods over their heads. They are a very lazy and seem to live from day to day and

expect to be paid for everything they do.

Only English gold and silver are any good here and you never get full value for silver. You get 97½ Piastre for one sovereign so you see a Piastre is worth about 2½d. Their biggest money is a 20 Piastre piece which is about twice the size of a half crown and you can get a ½ Piastre then there is a Millime, 10 Millime are the value of a Piastre.

The trip from Alexandria to Cairo is not so very interesting you see a few native mostly old broken down places all patched up with mud, there are also groves of date palms and cocoanut trees and along each side of the line there are swamps and miniature lakes some about the size of Albert Park lagoon. You see plenty of camels and donkeys along the different tracks.

We had leave on Sunday night and went into Cairo. A few of the streets are decent but the rest are slums and in most quarters if you were to say a word you would get your throat cut. I have not been to these quarters yet but a crowd of us are going to visit them to see what they are like.

As soon as you put your foot in Cairo about 50 kids (boot blacks) start polishing your boots and you have to dance to stop them, they will clean them for a ½ Piastre. The town is full of Guides and they will show you everything for about one Piastre. The road from Cairo to Mena is very pretty especially from Gizeh to the Pyramids it is one long avenue of trees with a canal on either side and from Cairo to Gizeh you pass some beautiful old time mansions and cross several large bridges. After you leave the road at the Pyramids you have to plow through sand to get to Mena. I have not been over the Pyramids yet a party of us are going over them on Sunday so I will be able to explain them to you in the next letter.

Well Mother I want to catch the mail so I must close now with best love to Self and Dad and also Jean and the Boys, and give my love to Ethel and Fred. Show them this letter and tell them I will send them some cards from here next mail.

Your loving son

Fred

MEMO

Dec. 20th 1914

Dear Mother,

Yesterday afternoon a party of us engaged a Guide and a motor car and went into Cairo we first visited the Museum. The Museum is built out of Granite and Alabaster it is a beautiful building and at present they are enlarging it. They have only got Ancient Egyptian relics in it, there being no Foreign exhibits at all. They have got some priceless ancient relics here and some of the mummies date back 4,000 years before Christ. They have got the mummified body of Ramesses the Great he reigned about 4,500 years before Christ. You can see him with all the body bound round with linen of course you are not allowed to touch as the linen is rotten and will crumple up to powder. The face is uncovered and has all the skin complete and the expression is wonderful. He must have been very old when he died his hair being quite grey and is still on his scalp. They have got the Tombs and Mummified bodies of most of the Ancient Kings including Cheops the builder of the largest Pyramid also his wife. They have also got the small sphinx's out of the Temple of the Sphinx which was supposed to be built about 6,000 years ago. They are wonderfully carved out of solid Granite and are each about 6 feet long. Some of the Tombs which they placed the Mummified Bodies in are beautiful being wonderfully carved out of solid alabaster and others are made of Granite and Sycamore Wood, but of course the wooden ones are all decayed, most of the tombs have the different gods they used to worship carved on the outside and when they put a body in the tomb they used to put different meats and food inside, also a house made of limestone about 12" big for the spirit to live in. They used to believe that the Spirit would come out of the body and feed on the meats etc. and then go to heaven. One of their Gods was the Cow which they still hold sacred. The Very ancient Mohomedans used to believe that the soul would after having fed would drink the water of life from the Cow. There is one Idol in the Museum the life size of a Cow made about 2,000 years before Christ - the Colors are beautiful. Under the lead is the statue of a black man he is supposed to be the dead man and underneath the Cow is the statue of a red man supposed to be drawing the blood of life from the Cow. This Idol has a tomb in the shape of an arch and the way the interior is painted with magnificent colors.

They have got a lot of Egyptian Jewellery belonging to different Princesses dating back about 4,000 years before Christ. You talk about English jewellery it is not in the same street as

the Egyptian. Some of their Necklaces and Bangles are lovely and are of Priceless Value.

The sand here is alive with beetles called Scarabs these beetles are Sacred and if any of the Arabs around here see you kill one they will commence praying. Well in the Museum they have got these Scarabs cut out of Precious Stones some of them are very ancient and the way they are cut would be a credit to any present day engraver.

We then went to the Citadel which is right in the native quarters of Cairo. The Citadel itself is a very large fortress and has walls about three feet wide. I suppose the walls are twice as high as the Old Melbourne Gaol in Russell Street and on top of the Wall all round there are modern guns. Inside this fortress there is the Greatest and largest Mosque in Egypt it is called the Mohamed Ali Mosqué. It was started in 1821 and was finished in 1860. There is a beautiful Tomb inside the Mosque where the Man who started it (The Grandfather of the present Sultan) is buried. The interior of the Mosque is something lovely there is a huge carpet on the floor about 1" thick and you have to take your boots off before

Page five of the letter is missing

(contd) coming to Egypt here. There is another mail from Australia here I believe and I am looking forward to one from you.

I forgot to mention to you before I have been made Acting Bombadier that is when a vacancy occurs I will be made full Bombadier. As it is I now wear a stripe. It is not the best of jobs but is all in the game so I must not growl. How are you keeping. Do you still get your bad turns. I hope you are not worrying because you have nothing to worry about. We are having a good time and are all well contented the boys here in camp say we are not soldiers but tourists. Well Mother I have no more news to write and it is getting late so I must close. With best love to you and Dad also Jack Roy and Jean

Your loving son

Fred

PS

I suppose you know that today is the greatest day in Egypt The English have taken over from today.

MENA
Jan 10th
1914

Dear Mother,

Your letter to hand dated Dec. 7th. It is the first letter I have had for about 5 weeks. I was beginning to wonder if I was going to get any at all. I also received one from Aunt Emma, who tells me that Jessie has a little son and that the boys were giving Joe a rough time over it.

We are well settled down in camp now and for the past week have been doing Field Manouvering and start firing next week then the fun will commence. I have put on a bit of weight since I left Melbourne and now weigh close on 11 stone which is not too bad. We had a bit of excitement on last Tuesday evening. A storage reservoir which is used for storing the drinking water for the camp burst it was a fairly large one made out of reinforced concrete and at the time it was full up to the top. It made a terrible mess of things when it burst it made a gap in the ground about 12 feet deep and about 15 feet wide it swamped the Engineers out and also the first and second batteries of Field Artillery. It was funny to see the Engineers digging the Rifles and their belongings out of the sand, they were buried about three feet deep. There was a store shed in the road of the flood and it got crumpled up to matchwood and everything in it was either covered with sand or washed away. On the same night a Mare in our battery had a foal it was not fully formed and died only living a couple of hours.

Things are very quiet in Egypt here to see this camp you would think it only an ordinary camp only on a larger scale. I am sending you a couple of photos taken at the camp here enclosed in this letter. There is a rumour about that this is the last letter we will be able to write home and from now on will send the Active Service Post Cards same as they are using at the front. I have got an idea we will be here for some time yet as they have built mess rooms for each battery and I suppose they cost about £50 each being built out of good timber. Tell Ethel I have met Tom Kerr several times and he wishes to be remembered to her. The Y.M.C.A. have got several big timber buildings here with a piano in each. (This is not a Piano it is something similar but gives you a pain every time you hear it being terribly out of tune).

There are some good concerts here occasionally and we are going to have one round the camp fire tomorrow evening it is what we call a command night they will pick out about 16 names and they all have to do something or get fined 5 piastres so you can imagine the fun.

The weather here is not too bad it is very hot in the day time and turns bitter cold at night and it never rains but at early morning the wind nearly cuts you in half.

I have been up to the top of the Cheops pyramid it is a very stiff climb and makes you very tired. I also went inside to see the tomb but it was so crowded and the air so stuffy that I came out again and am going inside one night next week. You soon get tired of Cairo - I have only been in there once this last 3 weeks I am going in again probably next Saturday to see some more Mosques and visit some of the Arab quarters. It is very hard to find anything at present to write about so I will close with Best love to Self and Dad, Ethel & Fred, Jean, Roy and Jack and trust you are all well.

Your loving son

Fred

PS. I Think I will buy a Camera when I save up enough cash. There are some lovely snaps here.

Fred.

Mena Jan 15th

Dear Dad,

Your letter dated Nov. 14th received today also one from Mother dated the 8th Nov. They went onto England and came back to Egypt again which caused the delay.

There is not very much doing here mostly the old Manouvers etc. The Battery has gone out on a Route March full War Strength they have gone to a place called Sekarra it is a very interesting place and has a very ancient temple and also the oldest pyramid is there. I should have liked to go on the march myself but it fell to my lot to remain in camp.

You know by my previous letters that I have got a stripe now I am acting Bombadier so that is why I am left in charge of camp it being my turn.

On Monday next we are going for a 3 days Bivouac and are going to do some practice firing. It might interest you to know that the Victorian Brigade is the best Brigade of Artillery in the Camp we have even beaten the permanent battery from Sydney and Victoria combined and Colonel Johnston has told the Majors in the Brigade that the fourth Battery (our battery) is the Best in the Camp. Everything is running smoothly and all the boys seem well satisfied. I have forwarded by the last mail a couple of photos of the Camp and Pyramids taken by one of the boys and I am getting a few more which I will forward on.

Well dad, we have seen Colombo, Aden, Suez, Port Said, Alexandria and Cairo and there is not one of these places to go anywhere near Melbourne the more you see of them the prouder you are of Australia. There is nothing that can touch it. You talk about Melbourne being an Immoral City. Let me tell you it is just like a Church compared with Cairo everyone is full up of it and very few take leave at all unless they are going to visit some ancient places and ruins. There are miles of Cairo where it is not safe for a white man to go and I think it is a Mecca for the Scum of the Earth. I cannot tell you about it in a letter but perhaps you can guess what it is like some of the main streets being worse than Little Lonsdale St. Melbourne.

I was up having supper with Leigh Price the other night you know he is a Lieutenant in the Light Horse we put in a good night talking about old times etc. Aunt Emma was saying that Jessie Wilks had a little son and that the boys were giving Joe a rough time. I suppose Joe is as proud as a peacock.

We had a bit of a sand storm here the other day. I hope we do not have another you cannot see a yard in front of you and your eyes are sore for a couple of days after. Well Dad there is nothing to write about just yet but I will be sending a letter to Jean by this

Your loving Son

Fred

Mena EGYPT

Jan 16th

Dear Mother,

Today is Saturday and with it is a half day off so I will try and scrape up a few lines of something that may interest you. I have sent a letter by this mail to Dad and Jean and have exhausted everything to write about so you will have to be content with a little letter this time.

Several of the boys have received Xmas cards from you and they say it was very kind of you to think of them. I can tell you we all look forward to any news from Victoria. Poor old Lummy has not received any news from his people and he was very glad to get any news at all. I received a post card from Iona McFarlane and also one from Mrs. Lister but I think a few of your letters have gone astray and I am expecting them to arrive any time now.

I received a Xmas card from Ethel about 5 minutes ago it having gone on to England first so you can guess how long it was before we heard any news from Australia at all. Today is what you would call an ideal day there being no wind and the sun not too strong the temperature being about 80° Faht. Some of the boys have gone to town but most of them are around the mess tables writing home. Gill Wright is sitting next to me writing to his girl. He has got about 10 letters in one hand which he opens to find out what he is to write about and it is dead funny to see him.

I went across to see Harold Seeley the other night he is looking very well and says that he is having a good time. There are a lot of good sports in the camp so that makes one contented. I myself expected things to be worse than what they are and I can honestly tell you that things are better here than at Broadmeadows. I do not think there is one in our battery who is discontented with his lot.

It is marvellous how one settles down to the military life. At times it seems to one to be the game he has been at for years and you think of nothing else. There is a little canvas town of shops opening up in the camp now and you can procure almost everything. These shops are mostly owned by natives whom the military authorities have issued passes to and we sometimes go over to some of them and have a pick at the natives just to break the monotony.

Well Mother I will have more to write about next time as I am making another trip to places of interest in Cairo next week. So will close with best love.

Your loving son

Fred

Mena Camp

Pyramids

Egypt

17/1/15

Dear Jack

I received your Christmas Card today it was a Bonzer and I am very pleased that you sent it. It was a long time coming but arrived safely so we will call it quits.

I suppose you have got tons of Money now that you are choir Master take care of it because I want to borrow a few quid off you when I come home.

Mum was saying that you and Floss sleep together in the tent I suppose you think you are the Boss Cockey now that the long fellow is at Camp. How is Floss getting on has she grown much I suppose you take her for a run on Sundays to the Racecourse. I would like to have her here with me we could have plenty of fun and send her after the Camels and Donkeys.

You would enjoy yourself if you were here it is a Bonzer place for a holiday but not much to live in all your life. We might go to the Zoo next Saturday and If I go I will send you a letter and tell you what it was like. Do you still have fights with Fred Sherriff I suppose by now you are able to punch him all round the Paddock.

Remember me to Russell Thomas and tell him that he would have a great time here with the Bonkeys etc.

Well Jack it is bed time so I must close with best love

from your loving Brother

Fred

Mena

Egypt

Jan 21st

Dear Mother,

I have just received Ethel's letter saying that you were in the Hospital it came as a shock to me. I did not think you would get Pneumonia. You must have had a bad time of it and I hope you are quite well again now. I was wondering why I have not received any recent letters from you but I suppose you were too bad to write. Well Mother you know you do not want to go getting ill. I expected you to be rid of all your attacks and to be as good as gold. Do not start getting ill because I want to tell you all about Egypt when I come home. I do not expect you to be very fat because I know you are built like a Crayfish (the Meat inside the bone) but that doesn't matter as long as you are quite well and keep in the best of health.

We have been shooting today but it was not a good day for it and on the whole the shooting was not too bad. The First Brigade which is composed of the Three batteries from Sydney fired yesterday. No. 1 Battery that is the Permanent Men had first shoot they did not do too well. The Second battery followed they were even worse the fuses being set incorrectly. The Third Battery were not too bad. The Second Brigade that is us Victorians fired today the Sixth Battery leading. The shooting was fairly good we fired after them and then the Fifth followed us. The Major had a Pow Wow with us after we returned to camp and he told us that our Shooting was the best so far our line of fire being especially good and bringing our team into action was also good and our time for getting the first shot off was very quick. All they had to complain about was a couple of men never took sufficient cover.

Well Mother you can tell by the writing I am just sneaking the time to write so will close with best love and trust that you are quite well again and remain so.

Your loving son

Fred

Mena

Jan 30th

Dear Mother,

Your ever welcome letter to hand and I am glad that you are home again and hope that by this time you are quite well again. You know you do not want to catch these complaints. I thought you had quite enough with your attacks. So look after yourself because I expect to see you improved out of all knowledge when I return. I know you will not put on much flesh I think you are of the Crayfish breed (the meat between the bone) I want to tell you a lot about Egypt when I return so do not disappoint me. I see by your letter that you met Monty's Sister in the hospital isn't it curious how you meet people. Monty is still in the Battery he is A Sub Section and his tent is next to the one I am in. Nurse Finlay is still with us here. She is at Mena Hotel where they have established a headquarter Hospital. It is funny you referring to Norman Sheppard it was only last night his brother Geoff was put on the strength of our Battery. He was in the Divisional Headquarters and came over to see me with Bert Richmond about three weeks ago and he was saying that he was full up of Headquarters and wanted to get into a Battery. So I spoke to the heads and found out we were short of Gunners so he applied for a transfer and got it and arrived in the Battery last night.

Bert often comes across to see me and we see a good deal of each other and occasionally go and have a bit of Sport. He is just the same as of old only he has filled out a lot but still the same hard case. Cairo is a place you soon get tired of and as I told you in my last letter we do not go in there much. Geoff Shepherd and myself are going to a place called Heliopolos. There is a Luna Park there and it is like the Toorak part. We are told that the largest Hotel in the World is here so will be able to tell you by the next letter. As you can see by this letter we are still at Mena and are likely to be here some time yet I think and so are just about full up of the Sand. We went out for a Bivouac the other night and put the night in out in the Desert. We did not have much sleep we arrived at the Camping Ground about 5.00 at night and had horses picketted and everything secure about 7.00 then we had a snack to eat and went to Bed. We did not get much sleep being awakened again about 10.00 to dig Gun Pits. We finished them about 11.30 and went to bed again. We were awakened again and at 4.00 am and had to harness up the Teams and take the Guns and place them in position and wait for the Dawn, that was the time the attacking party were to start business. We left our position about 9.00 had a bit of Breakfast packed up and left for Camp the Gunners having to walk all the way about 5 miles and all through sand and I can tell you it was no easy task.

6th Feb 1915

But everyone is satisfied here and you hear very few grumble. The boys all seem to be contented but are very anxious to see the Fighting. I know myself it is not half bad. The Officers are very decent and make things as easy as they can for us. I never thought we would get such good food here as we are getting, if anything it is better than Broadmeadows and The Australians allow us 6d. per man per day field allowance. There are 32 on our Sub which means 15/- per day to buy extras so you see we live all right. Of course this will not be kept on when we get in the Fighting line. So you see we have nothing to complain against re food.

Last Sunday I went across to see Len Aspinall but he was still on the Kyarra. But I think he is in the Camp now so I am going across to see him tomorrow. Stan Lister was in the Isolation Hospital for a week with Measles but he is out again he could not have been too bad as he put on about $\frac{1}{2}$ stone in weight and looks as fit as a fiddle. All he did there was play football and he says it was a good holiday.

Well Mum this is all the News for Present so will close with Best Love to yourself and Dad and remember me to all the others and tell Jean that I received her first Post Card yesterday.

Your loving son

Fred

PS Enclosed find few photos which may interest you.

Fred

I cannot say too much as all letters are being censored.

Mena

6th Feb 1915

Dear Mother,

Just the usual weekly to let you know how things are going and a little news if possible. We have had the usual manoeuvres each day and go out to the same place every time which is about three miles south of the Pyramid. We do not mind the drill so much but when you have to walk along side the guns all the way out and back again to save the horses as much as possible and through sand which is above the top of your boots all the time I can tell you it gets a bit monotonous and makes you pretty tired. They are going to alter things a little next week and give the drivers a little walking exercise and mount the gunners in their places which is a very good idea from the gunners point of view. We had a bit of a spell on Wednesday last but made up for it at night leaving camp about 7.30 pm we marched out into the Desert about five miles arriving at our destination about 9.30. We had a cup of tea and a short spell then were told off into two reliefs to dig gun pits the first relief going on about 10.00 and finishing about 11.45. The second relief of which I was one then went on and finished the pits and we finished up about 2.00 am. One of the wagons earlier in the evening had taken out a waterproof sheet and one blanket for each man and we also had our overcoats so we turned in after we had finished our shift, there were very few who had any sleep on account of the cold. I think it was the coldest night I have ever experienced. I laid in the blanket for about one hour and then got up and walked about for the rest of the night. There is one peculiar feature with the climate here which is the days are lovely and warm but at night it is bitter cold. We do not notice it so much when we sleep in the tents because there is such a lot in each tent which keeps it very warm but you notice it when you go out for a Bivouac and there is also a very heavy dew which does not improve things. The sleeping out does not do any harm and I know myself I am a lot hardier in health since I left Melbourne and joined this force which is saying a lot. We are still at Mena as you can see by this letter it being nine weeks today since we arrived here and I think we will be here for some time yet. I do not think there is anyone in the camp who would not enjoy a move to some other place.

There was a curious sight here last Wednesday in the form of a mass of large grass hoppers about the size of your middle finger and if anything a bit longer. They settled on the camp in thousands and remained there for about two hours then departed as quickly as they came.

I have been looking all over the camp for Len Aspinall but have not

been able to locate him yet. I have been told that the Tasmanian A.M.C. which came on the Kyarra are at a place called Meadi which is about five miles out of Cairo the opposite direction to us. I will probably go out that way next Sunday and see if I can strike him, that is if I can get off for the day. Some of the Australian Artillery had a group photo taken yesterday, it was a great sight to see them all lined up in their different batteries and ought to be a splendid photo. I will send you home one if they are obtainable. Stan Lister and myself wanted some money from Melbourne. He did not want much neither did I so we thought of a plan to save money. We both clubbed together and he has sent a telegram home for ten pounds five of which is for me and I want you to give Mrs. Lister the five pounds as soon as you can and square the deal.

I am wanting the money to buy a camera, films etc. not being able to save enough out of my screw and I think a camera is a good investment in a place like this. Quite a number of the chaps have got them here and they have some beautiful snaps some of which I have sent home to you and I will be able to explain Egypt to you better with a few views. Quite a number of ~~lady~~ visitors visit the camp here and some of them are very choice, (French of course) and we are always there to show them round a little and make their visit enjoyable. I think before we leave Egypt some of us will be licenced guides. We are expecting some lady friends today they are very Chic and we cause a little stir sometimes when we show some of these Tabs around the camp some of the chaps get quite jealous. Well mother I have told you everything I can for the present so will close trusting you are quite well again and are quite recovered from your illness. Remember me to Dad, Jean and the Boys also Ethel and Fred and tell them I will miss them with a letter this week and will make up for it next time.

Your loving son

Fred

PS. Tell Florry that I do not understand shorthand.

I have got Cockys Crest in my hat

Fred

Tell Jack I will send him some Cigarette Cards next week.

Mena
Feb 13th 1915

Dear Mother

Your welcome letter dated Jan 12 received and I am glad to hear that you are improving. I suppose by this you are able to walk about again. Now that you are getting well see that you do not get a relapse. You tell me to look after myself. I think it is you that wants to do that. I have just finished a letter to Ethel and Fred and as there is very little news, I find it hard to scrape up anything worth writing about. I received a letter from Roy in the same mail as yours came in, he seemed to have had a good time up Healesville. I think he deserved a good holiday. They look very much alike my white pants he is wearing. Tell him I will sell them to him for 10 piastres. It is a very good photo of Roy and I cannot see his feet but I suppose they are as big as ever.

There are several Malvern Boys with us and they know some of the chaps in the photo very well. It was a bitter cold night here last night you could not get to sleep on account of it, but today has made up for it being what you would call a perfect day. To see the Pyramids about 8.30 with the sun shining on them and the mist just lifting over them I tell you it takes a bit of beating.

Today is Saturday there is an inspection this morning and a half holiday this afternoon to those not on duty. I am one of the unlucky ones but the job I have got is not too bad so I do not mind. I am thinking of making a trip to see Heliopolis tomorrow with Stan Lister. I believe it is a beautiful place and will be able to tell you about it later. A number of the chaps here have bought helmets they cost about 5/6 each. I am not going to buy one. If they want us to wear them which they will do they can supply them themselves. I haven't money to burn.

The horses that died on the ship on our way here were replaced this morning. Lummy is going around to see if there are any rough ones to ride. He has not been able to get a rough ride ever since we left Broadmeadows and our own horses are so tame that you can do anything with them.

Sandy McDougall is laid up today with a touch of Influenza. I do not think he is so bad because whenever you go into the tent he has always got a smile on his dial.

I went into Cairo the other day and visited the Egyptian Bazaar. It is a sight worth seeing the street it is in is called the Mousky and the Bazaar itself is about 2 miles long. The natives sell everything there that is possible to get. There are some shops there where they sell the Pure Oriental Perfumes. You can buy the pure essential oils there and you can whiff these places when you are about a mile

away. In other parts you can see the native women making lace by hand and beautiful lace it is some of it being very pricey. In these quarters you see every nationality of people that are in the world from the Indian to the Spaniard. I do not think the natives have lived so well in all their lives as they are now the prices they ask us for their wares are about 200% above the ordinary price and of course we are fools to pay them the price they ask. We had done one good thing here for an Australian Product that we have opened a market here for Kiwi Boot Polish. One enterprising firm got some about 4 weeks ago. He sold out in about two days and since then he has placed a contract with the Kiwi firm. There is no polish here to touch it. I have told you all there is at present so will close wishing yourself and Dad the best of health and best love from

Your loving son

Fred

Remember me to Jean and the Boys and tell Roy I will write to him next week.

PS

Give my love to Aunt Pop and tell her that she will have to excuse me not writing to her as all the news is in your letter which I expect you to tell her.

Fred

Mena
Feb 19th

Dear Mother

Another attempt to try and let you know a little news but I do not think there will be much to interest you as things are just the same.

Last Sunday all the N.C.O. of the Battery went for a trip to Sakarra an ancient village about 10 miles from our camp (south west). It was the best trip I have had since I have been here. We left camp about 9.30 in the morning and our route was along the Cairo road for about two miles and then along a large irrigation canal.

The ride was very interesting especially when we branched off along the canal. At present most of the land along these canals are under cultivation they grow a clover here much like Lucerne and you see this green stuff on every side. There are several villages along the route and it is a sight you cannot describe. Their way of building their homes are very primitive. They make the bricks to build these houses (if you can call them such) out of Mud and dry them in the Sun. The rooms in the huts are only about 6 feet high and about 5 feet square they are very shy about letting any one in their villages and they come around in thousands as soon as you get anywhere near and as you are likely to get knifed if you are not too careful we do not make ourselves too familiar.

There are others of the Arabs mostly the Bedouins who live in a kind of tent. These tents are about 12 feet long and 6 feet wide and not more than 3 feet high and one side is always open. There are usually two or three families living in each tent. I have seen as many as fifteen in each and when they go to sleep they just sit down on their haunches with their legs crossed underneath them and cover their heads up with their long robes which they wear. I cannot describe them to you properly but will tell you all about them when I return.

Well to go on with the story we also passed several groves of date palms they looked very well with the sun shining on them. Some of these groves are very ancient and are up to 80 feet high. These palms are bare till about three feet from the top and then there is a clump of vegetation. These palms are not bearing at present. I do not think it took us as long to reach Sakarra as it has taken me to write this bit so I will tell you a little about Sakarra. There are three or four Pyramids here and one of them (I forget the name) is supposed to be the oldest Pyramid in Egypt. These Pyramids are nothing to look at after you have seen the Mena Pyramids. But there is one great sight there and that is

the underground tombs. They extend in every direction hundreds of yards underground and the work inside is wonderful. All these passages are straight and all finish at a dead end and do not connect with each other.

The tombs branch off these passages and vary in sizes from about 40 feet square to 20 feet square and are all about 25 feet high. The walls of these tombs are decorated with paintings of the different animals they used to hold sacred also drawings of every instrument of labor used in those days with the men working them and they are painted with every color imaginable. These drawings are thousands of years old and the colors are still there. Inside these outer tombs are the tombs in which the Sacred Idols of the people are buried. These are all made of solid granite and the largest the tomb of the Bull (which is in Cairo Museum), I forget his name but its some jaw breaker is about 14 feet x 9 feet x 6 feet and is a foot thick and has all been hollowed out inside so you can guess its weight. The other tombs have all got the tombs in them only smaller.

We have had a fairly easy week here this week having only gone out with the guns twice it is about time they gave us a bit of a spell. On Tuesday last we took the horses out to exercise in a direction we had never been before but all we saw was desert so it did not interest us much. Well Mother, I do not think there is any more to tell so far so will close wishing you the best of health with best love

Your loving son

Fred.

PS Remember me to dad, Jean Roy and Jack also Ethel and Fred and tell them that this letter is for them also and do not forget to show it to them.

Fred.

Hena
Feb 21

Dear Mother

I sent a cable to you yesterday asking you to forward me ten pounds. I suppose you think I am playing the game pretty high asking for this amount, but I am not. The reason I cabled for the money was because I want to buy a camera and a good stock of films also several other things and I believe we will be moving soon and not likely to be paid very often when we get to the front so I do not want to be broke.

We are getting a day off a week now so I have a good chance to see some of the outer places but cannot do it on the money I am drawing. Do not think that I am sending for this money just to spend it on foolery. Stan Lister has also sent another cable for ten pounds in fact more than three quarters of chaps in the battery have sent cables home for money.

I am enclosing to you by this letter a couple of photos taken by one of the boys. I have got a bit of a Mo on but have taken it off now. I will be sending you about 1 doz. next week. I have told you all the news in the letter I wrote yesterday so will close with best love to self and Dad.

Your loving son

Fred

Mena
Feb 28th

Dear Mother,

Your welcome letter dated Jan 25th received. I am glad to hear that you are about again. I suppose by this you have received more views of Egypt. I have sent a good few to you also a lot to Ethel. When we first came here we used to buy post cards fairly cheap but now have to pay through the nose for them, there has been such a demand for them. It is the same with everything. When we came here we could get oranges for 10 for a piastre but can only get 4 for 1 piastre now, and everything else has gone up in the same proportion. The money I cabled for has arrived it did not take long to get here. I thought it would take a week or more that is why I put urgent on the cable. I received the money on Wednesday and then went and bought a camera. I am busy now learning how to take decent photos. It takes photos $4\frac{1}{2}$ " x $2\frac{1}{2}$ " which is a very decent size. I have got some films getting developed now, but will not get them till Tuesday evening. I have forwarded to Ethel by this mail a silk shawl for baby. It is not a very good one but I think Ethel will like it, it is not a bad pattern and looks nice. You mentioned in your letter about the way the Australian soldiers were behaving themselves in Egypt. Mr. Bean must be a very poor war correspondent if that is all he can write about.

It is a lot of lies from start to finish and he has got himself in very hot water.

There has been indignation meetings all over the camp. The meetings have been packed and not a few officers have been in attendance. The South African Returned Soldiers in camp here have taken the matter up and they are holding a mass meeting this afternoon. I believe Colonel Johnston is presiding. I can honestly tell you that the boys are behaving very well considering and Cairo has not suffered at their hands at all. In fact no matter where you go in Cairo you will always see that the Australians get a better welcome than any other troops. I am not kidding you on this subject as you can get proof of this in the papers published here. There are plenty of places in Cairo where we have been told this in front of other troops as well.

Of course there are a few bad ones in all the troops but the minority is with the Australian. There has not been one defaulter in our Battery through playing up in Cairo. I suppose by the time you get this letter you will know the truth and then you will be able to judge yourself. There are a few fellows in the Infantry who caused a bit of fun. They were late leaving Cairo for camp one night last week and seeing a motor car outside Shepherds Hotel they all jumped in and one of them drove the car out to the camp. When

they reached the camp they left the car out on the road undamaged. The car turned out to belong to General Birdwood who is in command of all the troops in Egypt. Of course there was a bit of a stir but they could not find out who it was and it is a thing of the past now.

Another joke was caused by some chaps in the sixth infantry. Their Officer Commanding told them on parade that all men who were short of hats were to get them somewhere, he said it did not matter where they came from as long as they got them. Next morning his own hat was missing. He had every hat in the Battalion examined but has not found his yet. There is one chap in the infantry they cannot tame. He has been confined to barracks most of the time since we left Broadmeadows. He was on Guard the other night and when the Guard Rounds came round they found his rifle leaning up against a telegraph pole and he was inside the tent smoking a cigarette and talking to a prisoner. The Major in charge said - It is a bit of a cow this job of yours, the sentry said it is a bit, The Major said do you know any of your officers, the sentry said a bit. The Major said I am a bit of a Major how about a bit of a salute the sentry said If you wait a bit I'll get my rifle and give you a bit of a present. He is in the military gaol at Abyssia. On the whole the troops are very orderly here and they have no cause for complaint.

I am enclosing a few photos by this mail. These were taken by one of the boys and next week I hope to be sending some photos taken by myself with the camera I have just bought. They will be the same size as these.

I am sending by this mail a few post cards to Aunt Emma also one to Lil Ward. I am enclosing in this letter a piece of poetry which the trumpeter in the battery has written about Capt. Bean.

Well Mother, I have told all the news for the present so must say
Au-revoir

Your loving son

Fred.

Best love to everyone including Ethel and Fred.

TO OUR CRITIC
FROM AN AUSTRALIAN SOLDIER IN EGYPT

Mena
March 2 1915

Aint yer got no blanky savvy,
Have yer got no better use,
Than to Fling back home yer inky
Products of your pens abuse

Do yer think we've all gone dippy,
Since we landed over here,
Is a soldier less a soldier!
Cause he socks a pint of beer.

Have yer got no loving Mother!
Waiting for yer over 'Ome,
Do yer own no smilin sister!
Over there acrost the foam,

Do yer thinks they likes yer better,
Fer yer tales of drink and shame,
Do yer think they'll praise yer action,
In defamin our fair name,

One swallow makes no summer,
Three shickers not a force,
Were the few makes it a welter
you condemns, the lot o'course,

Do yer think yer Gawd Almighty,
Cos yer wears a captain's Stars,
Thinks us blokes is dirt beneath yer,
Mea of low degree & bars.

Say yer cannot be Australian,
Let us say in our defence
Yer can read it on your coinage
Honny soit qui mal y pense.

Cease yer vowseristic whining,
Tell the truth & play the game,
And we only ask fair dinkum!
How we keep Australia's name,

We're not out to fight the Devil
On a new Salvarmy stunt
To reform the Arabs morals,
While we're waitin for the front,

Let me ask you Mr. Critic
Try and face things with a smile,
Don't be finding all the crook-uns
Studying them blokes all the while,

Then write home nice and Proper,
"Bout the boys thats all true blue,
And they'll love yer better mister,
This is my advice to you.

Tpt. F.E. WESTBROOK
4th Battery, A.F.A.
1st A.I.F. MENA

Price 1½ P.T.
(COPYRIGHT)

Extra Verse (written by hand)

Let me tip yer mister Critic
Don't take walks along the Nile
Else perhaps yer taste its waters
While the boys look on and smile.

Mena
March 13th

Dear Mother,

I received letters from you and Jean yesterday also Table Talk. It is grand getting the news from home. I am glad you sent the Table Talk we do not get many papers here that interest us as much as the papers from home.

We are still in the same camp goodness only knows when we are going to shift. We hear all sorts of rumours but they all end where they begin (nowhere).

Things are just about the same here the only difference of note is that things have gone up in price. I went out to Heliopolis the other day it has some very beautiful buildings but the town is not finished yet. It was built for a Monte Carlo. But on account of the war there are very few tourists about and everything is quiet there. The Palace Hotel at Heliopolis is said to be the largest in the world and I am sure it will take a lot of beating. It has been taken over by the military authorities and is now a hospital. It is a magnificent building about four times larger than the George at St. Kilda and inside everything is marble. Some of the pillars are 3 feet in diameter all marble and the walls and balustrades are all solid marble. It is a sight impossible to describe you would have to see it yourself to realise how beautiful it is. There are also lovely gardens and lawns around it but these are getting cut up a bit now. There is a mansion there (more like a miniature palace than a mansion) belonging to a Belgian. It has statues all over the place and must have cost a mint of money and is by far the finest looking place I have ever seen. When Germany demanded the £8,000,000 to save Antwerp this Belgian gave 2,000,000 so you see he has got plenty of filthy lucre so you can imagine what the place is like. There is also a Roman Catholic Church here which in appearance from the outside takes a lot of beating but is nothing inside. A feature about Heliopolis is that you see very few natives there and only the rich live there.

I took a couple of snaps of a French funeral in Cairo the other day it was the funeral of one of the directors of the Treasury. It was a very large affair but nothing extraordinary. I picked up an "Age" that one of the boys received this mail and was looking through the deaths and noticed the death in Rockhampton Hospital of Syd. McNaughton from Fyansford he died of Pneumonia. A chap named McPherson from the 6th Battery died on Friday from Pneumonia. He was buried today with full military honors. His coffin was carried on the gun covered with the union jack and a firing party fired over his grave.

I am sending by this mail some more photo films that I have taken. Take care of these Mother as they are valuable to me. Tell Roy that there might be a couple of snaps worth something to some of the papers. Tell him that he might be able to make a bit of pocket money by selling them.

I am also enclosing in a parcel a table centre and a couple of little mementos for you and one for Jean.

I am sending a packet of post cards to Aunt Emma by this mail, they are something like the first lot I sent to you only they are coloured. Has Mr. Bean been sending home any more complimentary letters to the press. He has had a very rough time here and I would not like to be in his shoes.

I have not been able to find where Florry Davies brother or Len Aspinall are. I have made several inquiries all without success. Well mother there is no more to tell so will close with best love to yourself and Dad Jean and the Boys

Your loving son

Fred

PS Do not pay duty on the parcel I have sent you as everything is free to soldiers sending goods home. I have addressed the parcels wrongly the shawl is for Ethel and the table centre for you. Fred.

Your loving son

Fred

Mena
March 27 1915

Dear Mother

Your welcome letter dated Feb 22. I received yesterday. I am receiving them fairly regularly now so cannot complain. We are still at the pyramids and are likely to be here for some time yet. We were to have moved off early last week but orders came through cancelling the move indefinitely so we do not know how long it will be before we get a wriggle on. Today is the worst day I have ever experienced. The temperature is about 115° in the shade and there has been a sand storm all day. Thank goodness it is Sunday and we do not have to go out on parade. You cannot imagine what a sand storm is like till you have been in one. You cannot see five yards ahead of you and your face feels as if it is cut to pieces. We have got our kits in the tents and have tied the tents up securely and when you go into the tents you find the kits covered up with sand, it is impossible to keep it out.

I am sending home some more films of views I have taken here. I am not sending prints but you can get a print off the negative in Melbourne. Jack McCormack sent some photos home to his sister and she has been selling them to the Australasian. Roy might sell some of my prints to the different papers. Tell him not to sell the film. Jack McCormack only sold prints.

Tell Roy not to take less than 10/- each for a print (McCormack) got more than this. If he happens to sell any he is on half the money. You mentioned in your letter about gambling. You have nothing to fear I have not seen a card since we left the ship. One cannot afford to gamble in a place like this. Bert Richmond comes across a good deal and we often go to the pictures together. He wished to be remembered to you.

Fancy Wal Howson divorcing his wife. She must have been a bit of a nut. Well Mother it is a terrible day to write a letter and there is very little news so I will close with best love to all including Ethel Fred and Jean

Your loving son

Fred

Mena
April 4th

Dear Mother

Just the usual weekly and probably the last letter I will be able to write to you for some time as we are moving off this week and I believe all our messages home will have to be written on active service post cards so you will not receive very much news. Last Monday all the troops in camp here at Mena were inspected by Sir Ian Hamilton. It was a grand sight to see us all massed together in our different units. He came down the lines and inspected unit and section separately. We then had a march past. You could see the Light Horse about 50 in a line marching past as straight as a die then we marched past eight guns in a line the wheels all in a line it would have made a very good snap shot but of course I had no chance to take one. Talking about photos I will be taking to the front with me over a hundred films so I ought to be able to take a few snaps. I have about 50 films that I have taken but have not been able to send them home. I hope the ones I have sent home have arrived all right. A lot of the chaps here who have sent photos etc. home say that they have not reached there so I am going to stick to the ones I have got and not risk losing them.

One of our chaps a driver named Charlie Newman died on Tuesday morning from Pneumonia. He went into the hospital on the previous Wednesday. On the Tuesday evening he was as well as could be and we were all larking and singing but about 9.00 he said he had a pain in the chest so he got one of the boys to rub it for him and he then went to bed. About two or so in the morning he woke up moaning and in pain so one of the chaps went for the doctor and he ordered him to be removed to Mena House but it was no good he never rallied and collapsed about 3.00 am the following Tuesday. He was buried with full military honors on Wednesday. He was in my Sub and we had the coffin mounted on our own gun and the harness of the horses was draped with white, the coffin was covered with the Union Jack. The whole battery turned out to the funeral, also a lot of old South African soldiers who were chums of his at the S.A. War. The order of march was the 5th Inf. Band then came the firing party followed by the gun carriage then the pall bearers and the battery following. It was a very impressive sight and I shall never forget it for a long time. He was buried in the Military Cemetery which is situated in old Cairo.

The Battery is erecting a tomb stone on the grave costing about £13 which will be a very decent one for that price here. Yesterday all his wearing kit was sold by auction and realised £15 odd. Of course we bid ridiculous prices and the money that is received is

sent home to his little daughter his wife being dead. His mother is alive but is very old and those here who know her are afraid that she will collapse when she hears the news. One does not know who he is going to meet next in the crowd. I went to the Brigade Guard tent to hand my pass in on Goodfriday night and ran into Percy Reed from the Ford. Roy knows him very well and he wishes to be remembered to Roy. He is in the Fifth Battery P.A. Well Mother there is very little news to tell so I will close with best love to all.

Your loving Son

Fred

6th 1915

Dear Mother and Dad

We are leaving Egypt tonight and are going to do our bit for King and Country. We do not know where we are going but it is only going to be a short sea trip and I suppose by the time this letter reaches you we will be well in the thick of it.

All I can say Mother is that I am very happy and well contented and am one of the 6 in our sub section who will the gun detachment when we first go into action.

It is the first time Australia has ever been represented in any war with Artillery so we have got to make a name and God grant that we do so and one that will not be forgotten for many a day. I am in the best of health and am fitter for a rough time than I have ever been before so you have nothing to worry about. Well Mother I am just sneaking the time to write this as we are busy packing up so I will have to close wishing yourself the best of health also best love to self Dad and Roy Jack Jean Ethel Fred and Baby.

Your loving son

Fred

I am carrying your photo and the prayer book in my jacket pocket

Fred

Alexandria
Sailors Home

April 22nd

Dear Mother

We have loaded the Ship the S.A. Karroo A.19 and are moving off tonight. We do not know whether we are going on by ourselves or whether we are going to anchor out a little. We have no more idea where we are going than you have but I suppose it will be the Dardenelles. I have just received the mail it was brought onto the ship for us and was very sorry I did not receive a letter from you. I received one from Florry Wilson she is a nut.

I received the Australasian it is grand to get some of the news. Jack McCormack is unlucky he had to go into the hospital yesterday with appendicitis so he will not be able to go into action with us. Well Mother I have only got $\frac{1}{2}$ hour and I want to scribble a line to Ethel so will have to cut this short. I will not say goodbye just Au-revoir so I hope to see you all again. Remember me to all my friends who you know and best love to yourself Dad Jean Roy and Jack.

I have just been called out as we are moving off at once. Cheer up Mother do not worry I am confident that we are coming through all right.

I will not be able to write to Ethel & Fred so give them my best love and tell them that I will write to them every chance I get.

Yours loving Son

Fred

From your loving son

Fred

Give my love to Ethel, Fred and the Ship

(This letter has been censored, but I am fairly certain that I can read what has been crossed out)

April 22nd

Dear Mother,

Today I received a letter from you dated March 16th. I also received one from Jean. I am glad you are receiving my letters alright. I had not missed a mail up to the time we

- and on the night we departed I scribbled a few lines to you but had to cut off suddenly, a Sargeant coming in the Sailors Rest where I was writing and telling us that

- was on the move almost at once.

I did not waste much time getting back and as it was they had the gangway up and had to lower it to let us on board.

Geoff Sheppard missed the - but picked us up a couple of days later.

We are still on the ship doing the usual work that has to be done when horses are - Duties and fatigues are very light and we are all in the best of spirits. When we first came onto the ship some of us suffered with our feet. I suppose it was the hardness of the deck compared with the sand which always gave under ones feet.

We are getting very decent food on board this lugger and is a bit too rich for us after the stews we used to get at Mena.

We are a bit crowded but I can always find a place to lay down and have a snooze so am contented. I will not be able to send you any more long letters for a while but will write to you whenever it is possible to do so. You must not worry if you do not hear from me for two or three weeks at a time as there may not be a mail or it may be impossible for me to send any news. I am glad you are keeping well and have got over your bad turns. The attack of pleurisy must have settled them.

It is getting late Mother and light out goes at 9.15 so I must close this brief note with best love to yourself and Dad Jean and the Boys

From your loving son

Fred

Give my love to Ethel Fred and the Chip

May 12th 1915

Dear Mother

I received your letter and papers yesterday and also a letter from Ethel. I was very glad to get them and glad to hear that you are all well.

Had a bit of bad luck today got right in the way of a piece of shrapnel and of course stopped it, as luck had it it went right through without striking a bone. I got it through the thigh it is not serious and I will be back with the Gun in a few days.

I hope you got the rain in time it is what we do not want here. Sandy wishes to be remembered to you and Jean also Stan Lister. Arthur Mann has been slightly wounded but I suppose he is back with the Battery now.

Well Mother there is no news so I will close with best love to yourself and Dad Jean Roy and Jack, also Ethel and Fred

Your loving son

Fred.

R.M.S. "Mauretania" stationery

Parts of this letter has been censored, but
I have managed to decipher what has been written

Mudros
Lemnos Island

June 6th

Dear Mother,

I have been going to write to you this last week but kept putting it off. I am going back to Gallipoli today my leg being all right again now. We were to have gone back yesterday but no ship came in for us so we had to go back to the hospital. I have had a bit of a spell on this island but it is only a one horse town so we do not see much life here. We had a bit of excitement here about a week ago a German Biplane flew over the island and dropped a couple of bombs. Neither of them did any damage. The aviator must have had a very poor eye. He was only about $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile off the target.

The s.s. Mauretania has arrived here with troops on board. I went aboard her the other day she is a beautiful ship. I did not have the chance to go right over her but managed to see a little. I have been trying to trace Len Aspinall but without any luck. Noone seems to know where he is.

Jack Orr has been killed he died of wounds received on the third day. He is the son of Orr the Grocer in High St. Prahran. I have been asking after Harold Seeley but can get no news of any kind about him. Well Mother Australia has played the game it is grand to hear the way the sailors off the battleships speak of our boys they cannot say enough. I am not going to say anything about the deeds the infantry have done only that they did in 20 minutes what they were told would take about 3 days.

It was a terrible landing they were under shell fire and gun fire from the time they left the ships. Each boat held 40 each and out of two boats I know of only nine reached the shore. The men did not wait for the boats to get right in but jumped into the water above their waists and waded ashore. When they got on the sand off came their packs and with fixed bayonets they charged the hills. It was a great feat and will remain in history for years. The six bob a day tourists have made a name for Australia that will live for ever. I am not in a good writing mood so will close wishing you the best of good things and trusting that you are enjoying good health also Dad, Jean and the boys, and give my love to Ethel & Fred

Your loving son

Fred.

W.B.

W. 4704

BASE RECORDS

VICTORIA BARRACKS

MELBOURNE

20th June, 1915

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE

Dear Sir,

I regret to advise you that your son Bombadier F. W. Rowe has been reported wounded. It is not stated as being serious, and in the event of further information coming to hand, you will be immediately notified.

In the absence of further reports Egypt advised that it is to be assumed that all wounded are progressing satisfactorily.

It should be clearly understood that if no further advice is received this Department has no later information to give.

Yours faithfully

J. M. Lean Captain

O. i/c Base Records

Mr. W. Rowe
Eskdale Road
Caulfield (V)

Gaba Tepe

July 24th

Dear Mother

Your letters are coming in regularly now the last one I have received was dated June 8th. Thanks for remembering my birthday. I have not received the parcel yet but am looking forward to getting it. I never thought I would ever spend a birthday on the Gallipoli Peninsular. We are still banging away at Jonny Turk but have now got him well in hand and I am still in hopes of spending Xmas with you all at home in Caulfield. Thanks for sending the papers. When things get monotonous it is very nice to be able to get hold of something to read. We don't get much news here only what we read in the papers and this is about 6 weeks old so you see we are a bit behind the times here. You would laugh if you were to see the way we knock about here. I do not fancy getting in a 2½" collar I think I would have a stiff neck for a day or two. The censorship here is very strict and there being no news it is very hard to write a letter. Tell Ethel I am looking forward to the photo of baby and am expecting it any mail now. Tell Jean I am just sending the letters and cards to you now so she will get all I have to say off of you. It has taken me about ½ an hour to write this and I have had to go some to do it in that time. Well Mother I will close now with love to all at home and best love to yourself

Your loving son

Fred

Your loving son

Fred

Gaba Tepe
Gallipoli
August 1st

Dear Mother,

I have received your ever welcome letter dated June 14th also the parcel containing the cigarettes etc. and it was grand of you to send them I can honestly tell you they were heartily appreciated both by myself and some of the boys. I am sorry to hear that you have not received any news from me. I have been sending p/cards home from the first but I believe things got mixed up a bit so I expect you will get them in a heap. What a trying time you must have had lately thank God everything has turned out all right, little I thought that Ethel would be so bad in fact I was as happy as Larry waiting for the good news. Now Mother you must stop worrying about me I will be home before long now. We have got the Turks well in hand now and there seems to be a Guarding Angel over me so you have nothing to fear. I know Mother that you are glad that I answered the call when I did. You would not have liked me to be one of those who has to be forced to go. Look what an honour it is to be one of those that landed the first day. There were some glorious deeds done by the infantry and they were run very close by the A.M.C. I will never stand by and hear an Australian Infantry man run down when I get back. You have heard of the landing from Ashmead Bartlett's account so there is nothing for me to tell. We have lost some of our men as you know but the casualties are very light now that we have the Turks well in hand. I have just written a letter to Ethel and it is very hard to write so I will cut this one short and try and write a bigger one next week. How is Dad keeping these days. Tell him it is a long while since I had a letter from him and that it will get a great reception even if it is only a couple of lines. You can also tell Roy to write and let me know how he is getting on with the girls at the Palais. Tell Jean she seems to be spending too much time with her boys and it is ages since I had a letter from her and you can tell Florrie that I have cut her name right off my visitors list. As for the splinter I think he must be keeping two homes since he has been made Choir Master and earning his 3/6 a week. Does he wear his hair like all those other musical blokes. Well Mother I will cut this letter short with best love to yourself and Dad Jean Roy and Jack and you can give Floss an extra piece of meat for me.

Your Loving son

Fred

Gaba Tepe
August 10th

Dear Roy

Your welcome letter I received yesterday it is about time you dropped a line. I have been expecting to hear from you for months past. I answered your last letter the day after I got it so it ought to have arrived long ago. Take a tip from me Roy do not be too keen on enlisting, one away from home is enough at present and besides your place is at home. There are plenty of other chaps to come away before it is your turn besides you must remember that Mother and Dad are getting on in years now and they need your help as much as you can. I know it stings seeing the other chaps coming away and you not being able to come but rest assured Roy yours is the biggest self-sacrifice. I see you have had another go with Miss Smyth you seem to have held your own all right. I believe you Storry has been wounded. I do not know whether it is serious or not I was just told that he was wounded.

Remember me to all the boys and girls that make enquiries about me also the young lady at Felstead goods and also the hands that I know in the factory. Ask Kenny how the gee gees are going and if he is wearing Diamond rings yet.

Thanks Roy for sending the cigarettes. I have not received them yet but will probably do so next mail. It is dam hard to write a letter here as one is not allowed to say too much else the letter may not reach its destination so you will have to excuse this brief note as I have a couple more to write yet.

Your loving brother

Fred

Your loving son

Fred

Gaba Tepe
August 15th

Dear Mother

I received your letter dated June 27th yesterday it being the first I have received for about three weeks. I did not think you would know anything about me being wounded until you received my letter as I asked them at the clearing station to keep back about a couple of weeks. My letter must have been delayed or you would have got it first. You know by my previous letter that the wound was nothing and I feel no affects from it at all. I am glad they have traced Harold Seeley I myself have made several enquiries about him but have never met with any satisfaction. I do not suppose that Tom French has any idea of coming away I think he would take a fit if he was here. I met Fred Stageman on the beach about four days after he landed here. He was trying to get away on account of his eyes (cold feet). I do not know how he got on. I am glad Ethel is well again. I am longing for the photo of Keith he must be a bonny little chap. I suppose he will be crawling before very long now. It is sixteen weeks now since we landed here time has gone very quickly and we have plenty to occupy our minds. The Turks are splendid fighters and are playing the game as fair as any other civilized race could be expected to. I know I would sooner face them than I would the Germans. You hear a lot of tales about their atrocities but take it from me do not believe them. Sandy McDougall and Stan Lister are both in good health. Sandy got a scratch on the head about a month ago but it was all right in a couple of days and he is dodging about just the same as ever now. I got letters from every one at home this mail even Jacks and Jeans also another box of cigarettes. I think they came from Fred and the Table Talk and Sydney mail so you see I have got something to read for a couple of days. Roy was saying in his letter that he wanted to come away and you would not let him. I am glad that he is not coming there are plenty more in Australia to come yet before it is his turn. One out of the family is enough.

Well Mother there isn't any news I can give you and I want to write to the others so I will close with best to yourself and all the others at home.

Your loving son
Fred

Gaba Tepe

August 15th

Dear Dad

I received your welcome letter yesterday it came as a bit of a shock as it is only the second since I have been away but still I know what letter writing is with you and Mother writing every week clears you.

I am sorry my letter did not reach you before the Defence Department notified you that I was wounded they kept it back a bit and my letter must have been delayed. I knew how mother would worry and I tried to avoid you knowing about it altogether but could not do so. Remember me to Fred Clapham also Sep Brown when you see them. I suppose Sep is the same as ever; by the way tell him that Bert Richmond is a Military Policeman in Alexandria. I laugh every time I think of it. You know by the papers how things have been here and of the number of casualties we have had, but the chaps here are still as game as ever. The warships have done marvellous work here and I can tell you they treat us Australians real well. When I was at Lemnos I went aboard the Swiftsure the sister ship to the Triumph and talk about a feed. It makes my mouth water to think of it.

The Turks are putting up a great struggle here and are fighting very fair they are a splendid race in regards to physique nearly all over 6 feet and broad with it. I do not think they are treated too well on their side and those that have been captured seem to be very happy that they are away from their own side.

It is four months now since we have had a decent feed and I can tell you I will not be sorry to have another though I cannot complain as I am in the best of health and not losing any flesh and am pretty hardy on it.

Flies are the worst pest here but as the weather gets colder they will disappear altogether. We never hear of a case of disease so that is one thing that we can thank our lucky stars for.

News is scarce Dad so I will close with best love

Your loving son

Fred

Your loving son

Fred

PS Tell Jack I received the button and wear it on my cap. Fred.

Gaba Tepe

Gallipoli

Sept. 16th 1915

Dear Mother,

Your welcome letter to hand yesterday. It was dated the 2nd of the 8th. I also received your parcel of sweets, pad-socks also a pair of socks from Mrs. Tipton. I look forward to getting the letters from you even if it is only a short one so keep on writing. It is splendid you sending the sock as I was in need of them and the shirts will be very acceptable as the weather is getting cold and wet now. I am getting most of the parcels but a few of the papers I think are going astray.

Bert Richmond is on shore here now I think he is with the 7th Battery. I have not seen him yet but will look him up when I get a chance. I see by your letter that you know that it was not him that was killed.

It is a bit hot the way they are making N.C.O. Fancy Charlie Cooper being a corporal. There is one thing they do not hold their rank when they come as reinforcements to the troops that are here now. I mentioned in my last letter to you that I had met Puss Vassey here. He used to be at Corniberes and used to camp with us at Mentone and Aspendale. He is 2 M.S. in the A.S.C. and I manage to get a few things in the eating line bakhsheesh. I have porridge every morning made out of wholemeal biscuits ground up very fine and I can tell you it takes a lot of beating.

Fred was saying in his last letter that he was going to be operated on and I suppose by now he is all right and about again.

I wish you would not worry about me it does not improve matters and you will only be making yourself ill. I am all right here and am a certainty to come back home again, things here are much different to what they were the first month.

The illness Len Aspinall wrote about was only trifling in fact it was not worth mentioning about just a touch of gastritis.

I received a postcard from Mr. Scanlon yesterday. It was very good of him to write to me. I have answered it but could give him very little news as we hear very little here. Well Mother I will close now as tea is up and I am feeling a bit on the hungry side. Best love to yourself, Dad Jean Roy and Jack

Your loving son

Fred

PS Tell Jack I received the button and wear it on my cap. Fred.

Gaba Tepe

Gallipoli

Oct. 13th

Dear Ethel

I received two letters from you yesterday without dates. I think one must have missed the previous mail but it was none the less welcome for that. In your first letter you mentioned about me being in the hospital the second time, that was only through having a pain in the pinny "Gastritis". I was back again in about 10 days. In your second letter you again mention that Len Aspinall had written saying I was in the hospital the third time. This was a close go. I never want to experience it again. It happened about 4.00am. I and three others were sleeping in the gun pit one Dave Morgan was on guard. The first shell the Turks fired a 6" howitzer came right into the pit, struck the tyre of the wheel and burst. I was sleeping right under the gun with my head almost touching the wheel that was struck. Needless to say I woke up when the shell hit. I didn't know much for a few minutes. Tiny (you remember the tall chap you used to all laugh at) pulled me out (he was in the pit at the time) and helped me into the Trench. I woke up then but felt very seedy. Another chap helped me down to the doctor and he dressed the wound I had on the eyebrow also a few scratches on the forehead. He also gave me a wee drap but it wasn't much good. I couldn't taste it. To go on with the story I was all right by this time (bar my head). I went back to the pit again to see what other damage had been done. In the meantime Tiny's nerves had broken down and he had to be taken to the hospital and W. Collins who was sleeping the other side of the gun had his hair and eyebrows singed. He did look a character. The concussion threw Dave Morgan out of the pit and he got his face knocked about a bit through coming in contact with the sides of the pit. Both Morgan and Collins had their eardrums fractured. Bad I believe and were sent away and they are still away, in England I believe. My ear drum was fractured but only slightly. I went away to Lemnos for treatment and was away about 10 days. It is now as good as ever it was. If you had seen the gun pit after the smash you would have said that it would have been impossible for anyone to get out alive pieces of the shell were all over the place. The gun was smashed a good deal but thanks to our Ordinance Dept. we had it in firing order again before night. The gun pit was in a terrible mess. Sandbags down and timber smashed all over the place. I tell you my Guarding Angel must have been looking after me that morning. The cuts I got in the head were caused I think by pieces of the shield, or some of the tools which were thrown about by the burst.

You mention in your letter about Mr. Gillison being killed. You know what a fine fellow he was. Roy knows what kind of a sport he was he has been camping with him. But none of us knew the real man. It was here where he appeared in his true colors. He was here there and everywhere always cheering up the boys and having jokes with them always wanting to help them when anything was doing nothing was too much for him no matter what sort of a day he always had his smile up and in the thickest part of an attack he would be up in the trenches with the boys helping them in every possible way. He was the idol of the battalion in fact everyone was talking about him. If any of his battalion got shot you would always see Mr. Gillison there first in fact it was not a common sight to see him stretcher bearing or helping a wounded comrade cheering him up and joking with him all the time. He feared nothing. The grandest man that ever wore a soldiers uniform was lost to Australia when the Turks got Mr. Gillison.

I have received two more photos by your last letter of baby and yourself. Fred is also in one of them. Tell Fred though I mention him last he is not least as he knows.

What a fine boy Keith is. I can just imagine how proud you both are of him. Mother tells me in her letters what a good little fellow he is. I will give you a couple of lines out of a letter I received from Aunt Lou yesterday (They say Ethel's baby is a Bonza, I have not seen it, but I hear its nose is like Grand Pa's Nuff sed). You cannot beat Aunt Lou can you. The group of three photo is a splendid one of you I was surprised to see you looking so well again. It is also a good one of Fred when he hasn't got his glasses on.

The cold weather is setting in now but thanks to yourself Mother and Mrs. Tipton I am well prepared for it and have also got a decent waterproof dugout so have nothing to fear. I am sorry to hear about Les Storry I think he must have had a bad time here. The sights we see at times are not too good but we are hardened to them now in fact they have a tendency to make one very callous.

I am glad to hear that things are so good at the factory. How well your stuff must be taking. I can see things looking pretty rosy ahead, no more than you both deserve. Thank Keith for the almonds and raisins they were tip top. Thank Fred for the cigarettes. I received two more boxes this mail, it is very good of you to send all these things. Thank goodness they are not going astray. Well Ethel there is no more I can think of at present so will close this letter with best love to yourself Fred and Keith and remember me kindly to Mr. & Mrs. Tipton

Your loving brother

Fred

PS Excuse mistakes & erasures

Gaba Tepe

October 13th

Dear Mother

I received 2 letters from you yesterday dated 22nd and 30th August. You mention about being wounded again. I have just written a letter to Ethel telling her all about it so you will be able to see it. I am sorry Roy has been ill but trust he is all right again now. I received a letter from Aunt Emma yesterday, she is a character. I mentioned in Ethel's letter that it was from Aunt Lou, you might correct it. I have not been able to find out anything about Harold Seeley. He might by chance be in one of the hospitals or even a captive so let us hope for the best. Sandy McDougall is still away sick. Stan Lister is also away on a three weeks spell. I think my turn will be next trip. They only take us to Mudros. You mention about Mr. Gillison what a grand fellow he was. I have told Ethel in her letter what the boys here thought of him. That is a bit hot about Mrs. Scanlon and the £10. Don't ever send any for me because I have plenty and am now drawing the extra money for the stripe. I got a letter from Sep yesterday it was very decent of him to drop a line. I am getting the parcels and papers all right I do not think many go astray now. It is your birthday next month so I wish you many happy returns. There is nothing to buy over here suitable for a wedding present so I will leave it till I get home. Best love to yourself - Dad Jean Roy and Jack.

Your loving son

Fred

Yours faithfully

J. H. ROY

OFFICER I/S 1st Bn 2nd Div

Mr. J. H. Roy
1st Bn 2nd Div
Mudros

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
POSTMASTER-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT, VICTORIA

CABLEGRAM

Eastern 224

Cairo 5.15 pm
28th

Received
Caulfield
31.12.1915

ROWE

CAULFIELD

GREETINGS CONVALESCENT THIRD AUXILLIARY
HOSPITAL HELIOPOLIS

FRED ROWE

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE
MELBOURNE 29th JANUARY 1916

Dear Sir,

I am in receipt of cable advice to the effect that
No. 953 Bombardier F.W. Rowe, 4th Battery Field Artillery,
is returning to Australia by H.M. Transport "Karoola" which
left Suez 20th January 1916, and is due in Melbourne about
the 19th February 1916.

It is to be noted that owing to possible mutilations
in the cabled advice and other causes this notification may
not be correct pending verifications from the roll on the
Troopship.

Yours faithfully

J. M. LEAN Capt.,
Officer i/c Base Records

Mr. W. H. Rowe
Eskdale Road
Caulfield Vic.

AUSTRALIAN ARMY

CENTRAL RECORDS OFFICE
MELBOURNE

Mrs. P. Vial
22 Fosbery Avenue
CAULFIELD 3161

9th May 1983

Dear Mrs. Vial

1. I refer to your letter of 28th March 1983
2. According to records held at this office the information that you have requested is as follows:-

85746 Private Frederick William Rowe

Enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force at St.Kilda Victoria on 23rd August 1914.

Stated on enlistment that he was born at Balaclava, Victoria on 24th July 1889.

Allotted regimental number 953.

Embarked at Melbourne, Victoria with the 2nd Australian Field Artillery Brigade per HMAS "Shropshire" on 20 October 1914.

Served at the Gallipoli Peninsula with the 2nd Australian Field Artillery Brigade.

Wounded in action at Gallipoli on 15 May 1915.

Promoted to the rank of bombardier at Gallipoli on 20 August 1915.

Returned to Australia on 21 February 1916.

Discharged from the Australian Imperial Force in Victoria on 25 March 1916.

Re-enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force at Melbourne, Victoria on 12 May 1919.

Allotted new regimental number 85746.

Embarked at Sydney, New South Wales on escort duty for returning alien Prisoners of War per SS "Willochra" on 27 May 1919.

Disembarked at London, England on 21 July 1919.

Returned to Australia on 13 November 1919.

Discharged from the Australian Imperial Force in Victoria on 3 December 1919.

Medals issued: 1914/15 Star
British War Medal
Victory Medal
Anzac Commemorative Medallion.

3. This information is released pursuant to Australian Military Regulation 770.

Yours sincerely,

(B.H.ADAMS)
Major
for Commanding Officer



PR90/090
Australia
War Memorial