Camp
7.9.14

Dearest Mother

I thank you very much for your letter and appreciate what you have said in it we are beginning to work seriously and commence the day at 5 30 am and finish at 6 pm Dorothy and Chantes and Mr Kleinpender were out to see me to day. Maude and her sister were here all yesterday afternoon and brought me a huge supply of the most beautiful sweets. Our adjutant Lieut Dundyson got married on Saturday so we had a wedding Breakfast at mess to-night Cake and everything the Brigadier & his staff came and there were many speeches & toasts I am beginning to realize the gulf that is widening between myself

And my loved ones. I now am fully aware of the sacrifice we are still making and hope that it will not be in vain

Good bye
Much love
from Geoff.

7/5/14.

Broadmeadows
15. 9. 14

Dear Mother Father & Helen.

Bowleys man came out this evening and admitted that everything was four inches too small for me and has undertaken to turn me an~~d~~ entirely new set of uniform by Saturday so you may cease from worrying. I was very sorry to have missed Helen this afternoon but we did not return from Williamstown until after six I received the cap case and sweets for which I thank you. also the mirror. I can hardly keep my eyes open so you will excuse brevity.

Much love
From
Geoff.

A few packets of envelopes would be very acceptable Swift has exhausted my supply.

15/9/14.

Broadmeadows.
21.9.14

Dearest Mother
I must thank you for sending me up the binoculars I was sorry you did not come out but I hope you will before we leave I think 28th inst is the day of embarkation I have made my will and I enclose a form which I want you to sign and return to me by first post sign where marked X so that you may draw my money whilst I am in Europe you can make arrangements for the pay office to forward you a cheque fortnightly Maude has given me her camera to take to the front. ask Helen to buy her up and get the size of the films and get me ½ a doz to take away with me I also want some more fountain pen ink for my letters whilst on Board the

21.9.14

Transport. Anyone would think I was giving an order to a General Store an order but we are so isolated here that we cannot do things for ourselves. We are all ordering steel trunks of regulation size as it is announced that it is unsafe to leave personal property at Base Store in canvas or leather trunks as they are generally cut open and contents rifled. Saturday was a terrible day out here we were all soaked through and were ploughing through the rain & mud from nine in the morning until four thirty in the afternoon. I have much yet to do and the hour is late so I will bid you adieu with much love

from your loving son

Geoff.

Dororata
off Williamstown
18-10-19

Dearest loved ones.

We are now moving South and this is to be sent ashore by boat. Good bye and God bless & keep you and bring me safely back to you all I feel that I am being parted from all that make life worth living no time for more

Goodbye Goodbye

Geoff

No 1. in Boat

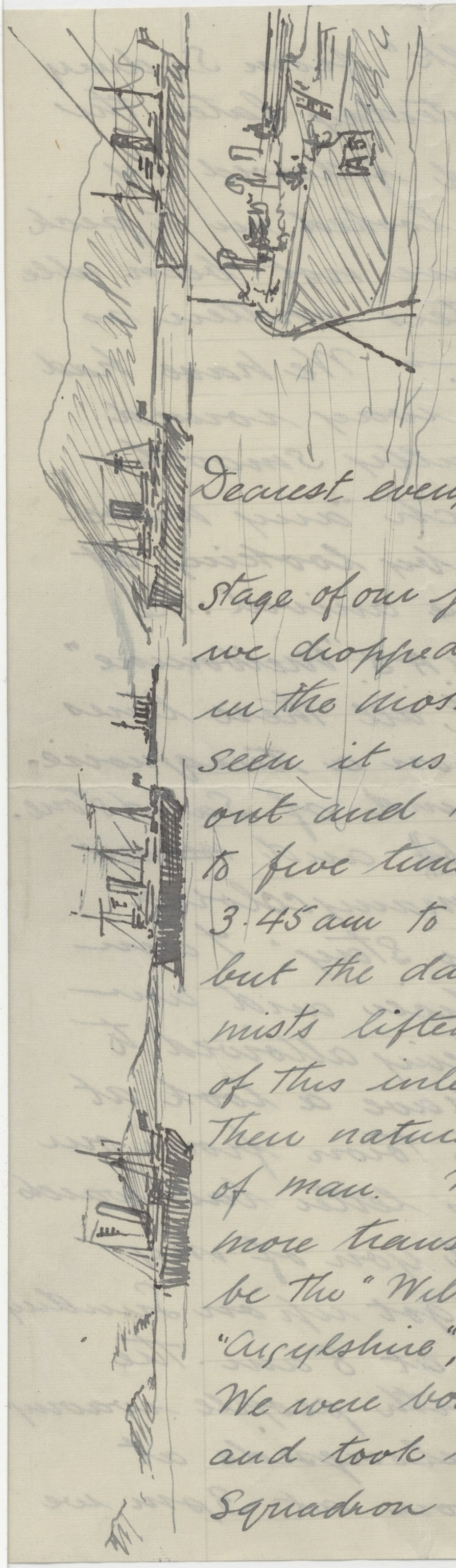
HOROROATA.
PORT PHILLIP
18. 10. 14

Dearest Mother & everyone at Auchorfield

We are lying out off Gellibrand understeam with the Wiltshire close beside us we are sailing for Albany in the early morning. This is a very fine ship. I mess with the "Heads" The Skipper, Chief Officer Chief Engineer & two Commanding Officers, 2nds in Command and 3 Senior Captains of Each Regiment. we are quite apart from the rest of the ships company on the Bridge deck We have a very nice lounge with a piano & Gramphone installed a library and many other comforts altogether we are thoroughly comfortable except as regards cabin accomodation which does not seem to attempt at the very slightest everyday conveniences veritable dog boxes I have been hard at work since 5 am this morning and am so tired I can

Scarcely keep my eyes open so will close with much love from your loving boy Geoff

No 1. in Book



"HORORATA" A. 20.
King Georges Sound W.A.
25. 10. 14

Dearest everybody.

We reached the end of the first stage of our journey at 6 am this morning when we dropped anchor in lee of Breaksea Island in the most beautiful Harbor I have yet seen it is like Sydney harbor opened out and the surrounding hills increased to five times their height. I was up at 3.45 am to see the entry; it was then dark but the day gradually dawned and the mists lifted and revealed the beauties of this inlet whose shores are yet in their natural state untouched by the hand of man. We found lying at anchor some more transports which turned out to be the "Wiltshire", "Southern", "Pera", "Meera", "Omrah" "Ayrshire", "Anglo Egyptian" and "Benalla" — We were boarded by a Naval Commander and took up our position with the Starboard Squadron ~~we~~ were closely followed

into port by the "Afric" & Suffolk" from Sydney we picked these up at 3 p.m yesterday later the "Shropshire" and "Sandala" arrived followed by the "Aramgatira" The "Indara" looked in to pick up the mails of the fleet I have not been able to find time to get my letters written so I am posting these tomorrow. We have had most perfect weather all the way round the sea has been wonderfully smooth and the only way in which any move-ment was perceptible was by looking at the Horizon. 3 more ships have arrived: the "Karoo," "Armadale" and "H.M.A.S. "Melbourne" It makes a very pretty sight, all these lines of ships lying at anchor on a turquoise-blue bay with a background of sandstone-cliff covered with green scrub and ~~many~~ look very gay with their manycolored signal-flags on the jumper stay. I am good friends with the Chief officer and am often on the Bridge. – We are being allowed to go ashore here so I hope to have a look at Albany. we cannot see the town from our anchorage. I have begun this letter backwards ~~so I will~~ but I must go back and tell you of my doings from Saturday. We got up on Sunday at 5 am and left Camp at 8 am. the railway line was lined with people waving us farewells: we arrived alongside at 9 and embarked at 12 noon at 3 pm we

Gellibrand's Point Williamstown.

cast off and took up an anchorage off Gellibrand: it was decided as better ~~that~~ owing to the crowded state of the ship to move round here slowly and get the air circulating through the ship than to lie at anchor until Tuesday and make a fast passage so we just jogged round at Half speed passing Dromana we met a French barque "Ville de Mulhouse": the troops lined our decks and cheered her and the massed bands played the Marseillaise. we dipped our ensigns and went on our ways passing Queenscliff— the men of the Garrison lined the defences and waved no farewell— messages with flags & helios: We dropped the Pilot outside and also five Stowaways and a stray dog. we passed cape Otway at six in the evening and that was the last land we saw until this morning. We have an excellent table and live very well. It is grand being upstairs on

25. 10. 14 Cpl Wood

the bridge with the Skipper, for mess we get the best of attention and food. Captain Cameron is a fine old scotchman of reserved disposition but still friendly. I have never felt fitter than I do now. everyone is in the highest spirits we have three Pianos an organ, Gramophones galore, our two regimental Bands and a scratch Orchestra. The ship is kept spotlessly clean, the decks & mess tables are scrubbed snow white and the mens mess utensils polished until they shine like silver - the commander holds an inspection of the troop-decks every morning at 10. a.m. The day is occupied in physical & sword-exercise lectures & studies boxing, cards and I am learning chess from Major Bennet Our day lasts from 6 am the morning until 11 at night we are a very busy and happy family. I hope everyone is well at home I will write as soon as I can provide you with something fresh. much love from

Geoff.

No B in Book

Officers' Mess.

7

6TH BATTALION,
2ND INFANTRY BRIGADE,
A.I.E.F.

27. 10 1914

Dearest everyone.
The whole of the fleet is now in port except one, the New Zealanders are expected to morrow. Last night a bonza gale was blowing and we got tossed some and had to put our second anchor out and let out 15 fathoms of cable during the night a Color Sergeant jumped overboard and search parties where sent out but without success. At 4 pm we moved from our anchorage up to the railway pier it was a great sight moving up the harbor with the sunset and as we passed through the fleet every boat lined her decks and cheered us there was more enthusiasm on a house boat than the whole of Melbourne We are now taking in water for the next stage of our ~~journey~~

27. 10. 14

6TH BATTALION,
2ND INFANTRY BRIGADE,
A.I.E.F.

1917

I feel exceedingly cheap I have a lovely cold and to day I was inoculated with Typhoid to-day and my left arm's crippled it has swollen so that I am unable to bend it and ~~it~~ my head and arm-pit are aching much. All shore leave has been cancelled at all intermediate ports so we shall only see the world from the deck of our troop ship. I have just received your letters and I am deeply grateful for them they have relieved my terrible isolation I have been told that numerous parcels have reached Egypt to be delivered to us en route. I feel too seedy to write more so I will say aurevoir

Ever lovingly
Your
Geoff

27.10.14
No 3 in Book

no A. in book

H.M.A.T. "HORORATA" A. 20.
14. 11. 1914

Dearest Father Mother & Helen

We left Albany at 6 am on Sunday 1st inst the fleet consisting of 36 transports escorted by H.M.S. "Minotaur" "Melbourne" "Sydney" it was a wonderful sight. ships stretching from horizon to horizon We rounded the Leeuwin at 2 am on Monday morning and picked up the Medic and Ascanius under escort of Japanese Battle cruiser "Ibouki" which had come out to join us from Fremantle. On Sunday 8th the Minotaur left us and disappeared south-west. all ships that night travelled with all lights extinguished next morning the Sydney swung suddenly round and steamed south at a tremendous rate. HMAS Melbourne changed her station from the head of the fleet to the Port flank where she was joined by the Japs which was stationed to Starboard. A great state of excitement prevailed our two 4.7s were made

ready for action and accumulator brought up out of the magazine. Warren told me that he had picked up the "Sydney" yesterday but "AUSTRALIA" [illegible] were discovery free messages by wireless. Each had power officers and sailors. Later the following were taken through "Sydney" steaming for Cocos at 7 am and at 9.30 am had reached the position travelling at full speed. We were able to get written lamps in 20 minutes of the same time she signalled that the chase was speeding North. At 10.30 Sydney was swopping heavy disablg and at 11.10 am the latter had to beach herself to avoid sinking. The foremast and 3 funnels were gone but her flag was still flying. Sydney then went after enemy's collier took the crew off and sank her. Sydney then returned to the Emden who succeeded. Emden had to have to destroy useless station and cut one of the cables. Yet cable is intact & probably the 3rd. Wireless operators deserve much praise for sticking to their posts and sending out distress messages and for using instruments by burning them. The Sydney reports as to wireless at 5 am but there is to be no demonstration because she

carries a number of wounded. On the night of the fight we being an armed ship were sent behind the fleet to act as rearguard. On Thursday the Melbourne ran up close to the Sbouki and a conference was cordially held as boats passed from ship to ship. The "Melbourne" then signalled us goodbye and steamed east leaving us under the sole control and protection of the Japanese rather an irony of fate seeing how the average Australian scorn them. At 1.30 a steamer appeared coming south the jap immediately went to meet her she passed quite close and proved to be one of the C.P.R. Liners "Empress of Asia" now an auxilliary cruiser flying the white ensign she was estimated to be travelling at 22 knots she hoisted "Good Luck Austhalia" as she passed. The "Osterley" passed us when we were five days out and came very close her passengers however will rue the day they saw us as the following instructions were issued to her commander by our convoy "Confiscate all cameras and destroy all plates and films. No passenger is allowed

14.11.14

to land at any port save that of destination. All letters must be opened and read by commander and then forwarded to nearest naval or military authority before transmission." The congested state of our decks militates against exercise. I have been getting fat and lazy. I have now alleviated this state of affairs by going for two hours daily into the stokehold and bunkers shovelling coal pretty warm work on the Equator. We crossed the Line yesterday and were bounded by Father Neptune and his satellites with locks and beards of rope yarn. I came up from below black as a nigger was duly shaved and ducked by order of the court we had splendid fun. We are due to arrive in Colombo to-morrow so I am hurrying this through to catch the mail. Please excuse use of carbon paper but by its use is the only way I can hope to get through. I wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy new year. I hope you are all enjoying the best of health, am longing to hear from you. Much love

from Geoff

no ~~H~~ A. in Book

T.S. HOROPATA A 20

Dearest everybody.

I have just passed through some of the most interesting and fascinating days of my life it began on Sunday when the morning breeze was full of aromatic scents and out of the morning twilight a low coastline appeared. As we drew nearer we could distinguish long lines of sandy beach fringed with immense waving cocoanuts over which hung a cotton wool like mist clinging round the fantastically shaped Kandy ranges. The fortifications regulation temples and churches of Point de Gall were clearly discernable. From this point to Colombo a distance of 70 miles the calm ocean was dotted with a regiment of Kata-marans each carrying a crew of six or seven gay chattering Cingalese fishermen whose entire dress was

a brilliantly colored (2) loin cloth. The first part of Colombo we saw was Mount Lavinia an outlying sea side resort built of white stone with a rusty brown tile roof. It was quite a picture standing on an emerald green knoll behind which rose a great grove of Coconut & Banyan trees whilst in front the blue ocean broke in columns of spray during white foam. Colombo! What a sight its long grey breakwater jutting out to the west behind which lay the teeming harbor packed to its utmost capacity with ships of all nations from the Battle cruiser & liner to the Maldive Island Rig and Arabian Dhow. each of whose halliards carried strings of colored bunting At the base of the breakwater clustered the red roofed Warehouses in rear rose the stately white pile of the G.O.H. further along the lighthouse with its red top and four clock faces the ~~the~~ Military Barracks and Hospital from ~~[illegible]~~ there stretched an esplanade along which hummed a crowd of motors rickshaws gharries and ox carts with their thatched roofs and solid wooden wheels past the

Colombo Club to the Gall Face Hotel a~~nd~~ towering block of red brick building from there the suburbs seemed to commence and houses & churches peered out amongst the beautiful tropical vegetation The Harbor being filled we anchored outside and I was a member of a boatscrew sent to the office to get a printing press she had on board for us. We started off alright but a northeast monsoon came down on us and the sea we took 3 hours to row 3/4 of a mile when we reached our destination we had great difficulty in coming alongside owing to the great rise and fall of the waves. Having done our business we set sail and reached our ship in a few

minutes. I was told off to hook on aft a difficult and risky job under the circumstances as the boat was rising fully ten feet at a time and the lifting tackle very heavy I succeeded after a long struggle and severely crushing one of my fingers the boat was then half full of water and hard to stand on I slipped and cracked my shin where I had already had it injured by coal falling on it in the bunkers it was agony for the time. Next morning we went in behind the Breakwater to take in water we were immediately besieged by a fleet of small craft beyond description laden with shouting gesticulating cingalese all wildly calling for money and endeavouring to sell fruit and cigarettes at exhorbitant prices then came the divers who swamed up loose ropes hanging over side on the hands and toes with miraculus speed and dived from our boats

fully seventy feet above the water some head some feet forwmost one boy had 28/6 in silver in his mouth. They seem to stand perfectly still in the water crying alright, alright, alright, you throw in a silver coin they turn over and sink like a stone & return with the coin in their hand which they place in their mouths and again take up the cry of alright. We were anchored nesct to the "Yboukie" she was a perfect picture of order & smartness all the little japs were in spotless white and did everything at the run with beaming smiles. latter she moved out to sea and her place was filled by the Russian cruiser "Askold" what a change, slow slovenly melancholy men dressed in dirty greasy suits which once were white crawled about her unkempt decks as if with an effort it was the diffence of a house kept by Helen and one run by Nancy We passed out of harbor through the glare of the searchlights

which nightly illumine the sur-
rounding sea. My leg by this
time had become frightfully swollen
and painfull I showed it to
Dr Williams who immediatelly
ordered me into hospital whence
I write this which is also account
able for the pencil. I have been
here for 3 days and my leg is the color
of the cingalese being painted twice
daily with iodine. It is improv-
ing rapidly and I am looking
forward to being about again shortly
These army medical people are
wonders as gentle as women and
constantly hovering about one to
see what service they can do for
you they shave me wash me get
your chows of pyjamas The Naval
Petty officer in charge of this hospital
Knows Dr Yates whom he tells me
has married and taken up a private
Practice in Shanghai. We have not
received any letters from home yet
and are now looking to Aden for
news from home
Goodbye Love from
Geoff

Colombo.
17. 11. 14

Dearest mother

We are now in behind the Breakwater this is the most fascinating and beautiful spot I have seen. There are more ships here than harbour can hold. Including Russian Japanese and British warships. Cingalese are diving for coins selling cocoanuts and fruits. The Sydney is tied up just in rear of us she transferred the German prisoners from the Emden to the Orvieto and Omrah. An Engineer off the Sydney is posting this for me he gave a very graphic account of the show. As we are about to continue on our way I must say

Farewell

Love from

Geoff

I am quite well.

No. 5.
Pte. Black

17.11.14.

pages 24-26 in Book

1

"HORORATA"
18. 11. 14

Dearest ones all

I am now in possession of all the facts concerning the Emden shot told me by an eye witness who was on the Sydney's Conning Tower during the whole action. The Emden attacked the Sydney her commander seeing number the wireless she was only manned by Cadets and therefore an easy prize. He opened fire at 1600 yards his first 3 shots falling a hundred yards short the Sydney gunners estimated the range he was using and added 100 yds to it the first three shots carried away three funnels and the foremast each time the Sydney scored a hit the gun crews would come out and cheer like a lot of kids much to the annoyance of the Captain

the Sydney then diew into within 4000 yards in order to torpedoe the enemy she however missed it going a few yards astern of the Emden which immediately swung round to attempt to torpedoe and ram the Sydney she was however stopped by a broadside which swept her decks of all top hamper and in some cases blew guns & crews into the sea and set her alight, the stokers where then brought up to man her guns but they could only load & fire being unable to sight the guns in consequence out of the 1400 rounds fired only four were effective hits during the engagement the Sydney steamed at 27 knots the temperature in her engine room was 153°. The enemy was steaming at her full rate 23 knots the Sydney though only a 25 knot boat managed to get an extra couple on and zig zag about in order to bring both Port & Starboard guns into action the Emden being failly riddled and in a sinking state turned shorewards the Sydney then left her caught her collier and having removed the crew sank her by opening her sea cocks and putting a

few shots through her. The Emden returned to the Emden which lay in the breakers a burning mass of crumpled scrap iron. Her main mast was still standing with the flag flying from it and at the foot of it stood the Captain and 300 of the crew. The Sydney asked him "in the interests of humanity to haul it down" after making this request 3 times the only reply was "come and get it" The Sydney then fired 3 shots which brought down the mast and swept most of the crew into Kingdome Come. The Sydney then sent to succour her wounded which were in a terribly mutilated state and most of them were badly blistered all over the body through lying on the deck. The doctor went right through taking off all those who had the slightest hope of recovery and administering morphia to the remainder, the removal of these unfortunates was a most difficult undertaking as a heavy sea was breaking on

wreck. The wounded on shore were in a frightful condition their wounds fly blown and in some cases the poor devils were eaten alive by huge land crabs. The men from the Sydney did not land that evening and just as well for next morning it was discovered that 40 Germans had entrenched and had 4 Machine Guns trained on the spot where the Australians landed. The Germans deserted their position went across to the other side of the Island and stole a Schooner belonging to a Mr Ross. in which they made their escape. Dr Darley of the Sydney worked continuously for 72 hours the German Doctor would only attend to his wounded by compulsion. The prisoners upon being put on the Sydney all saluted the Quarter deck with the exception of the Captain when placed on Board the "Empress of Russia" for Conveyance to Colombo they were put with the French portion of the crew immediately a wild Mellée took place which necessitated the prisoners being moved for and amongst the British members of her crew.

5 18.11.14

One other incident was this engineer (Pearce) was sent aft to see to some control gear on his way a german shell tore away a roof beam and exploded killing 3 men and knocking him down he was only dazed he proceeded on his way and noticed the cordite charges near one of the aft guns was alight this though burning fiercely was seized by two cadets (from the "Tingira" who were only 16 and 17 years of age) and carried 10 yards and thrown overside, they were terribly burnt about the chest and face. For their bravery they were mentioned in despatches. I hope these details may be of interest to you and if you think they would interest maude please send em on love to all

from Geoff

over

A few little points I ommitted

The "Osterley" had passed us very closely going north; The Emden became wise to her whereabouts although she never suspected our existence The day The Emden was sunk she was on her way to destroy the Osterley on the selfsame evening such are the fortunes of war the intending biter was bit properly The German Skipper when he passed through the fleet asked what it meant he was told that we were a part of 1,000,000 men which Australia was sending to the front. He exclaimed it was all to no purpose and produced German newspapers which declared that her armies had overrun Europe. The Emden did some duty work at Penang she disguised herself by putting up an extra funnel and hoisting the Japanese flag steamed into the harbor and sunk an unsuspecting french & russian cruiser then shot out to sea again The day the Emden was reported sunk 66 vessels left Colombo.

HOROKATA A 20.
24. 11. 14

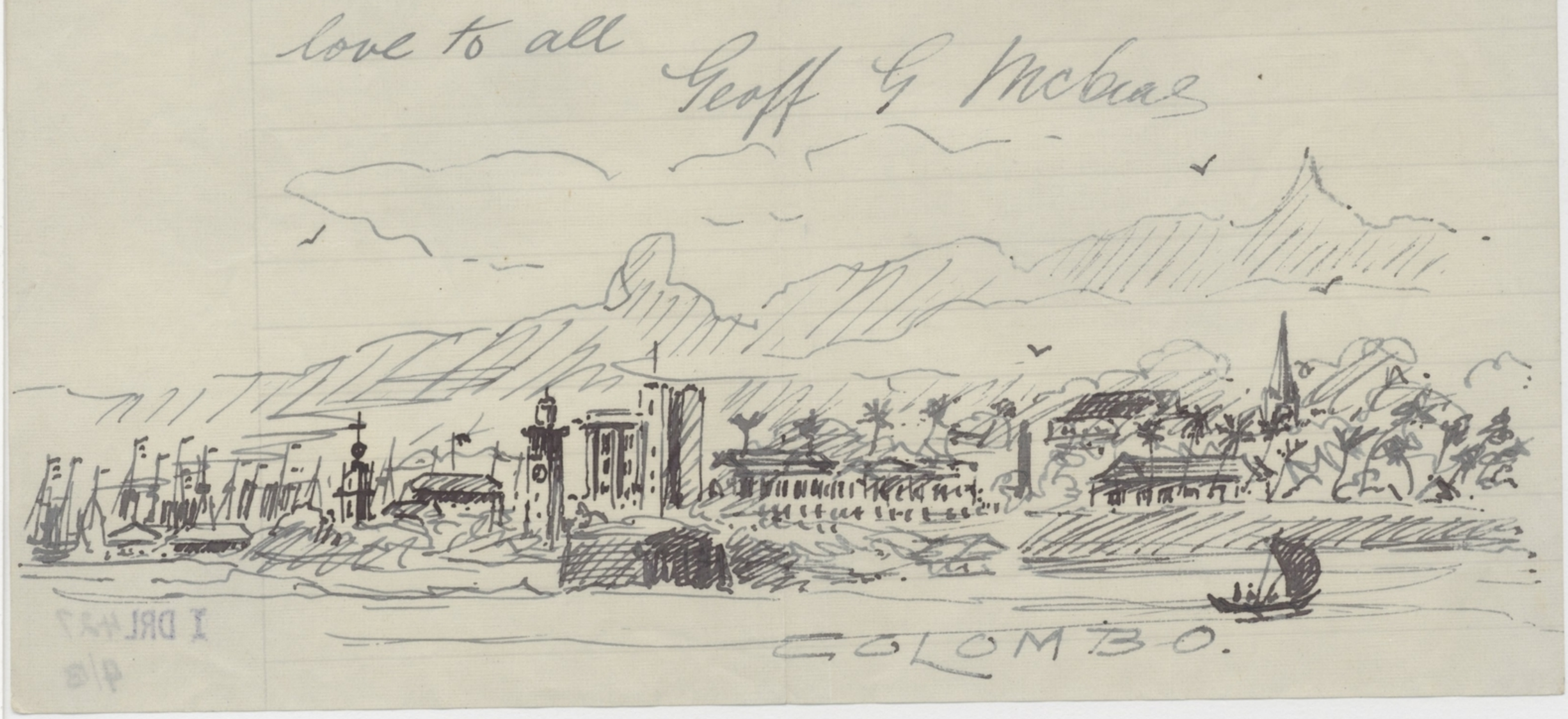
Dearest Mother Father & Helen
I have had the misfortune to splinter my tibia or in plain english my shin bone. I have been on my back in hospital for a week and am not allowed to walk about for another fortnight. In the beginning I "cracked handy" for three days and walk about until the agony brought me to a complete stand still. this aggravated matters and when I was admitted I had a leg 3 times its normal size for 4 days I had hot foments every 4 hours and for the remainder of the time it has been painted 3 times a day with iodine with the result that I have hardly any skin left on my leg which however has assumed its normal proportions. The ships cook is in the bed opposite to me he is a dear old man and keeps me amused

telling of experiences gained during 24 years he has been at sea. The stewards are allways bringing him up little delicacies and he always insists on sending some across to me. The other fellows have been very good bringing me up books, fruit, ices, and cigarettes. So I can hardly be called neglected. Yesterday we passed Socotra Island and expect to reach Aden to-night where we are staying for 2 days to Coal. We the 3rd Division and 4 New Zealanders being composed of faster ships than the remainder of the fleet have been sent on and will probably reach England a week or so ahead of the rest. Since leaving Colombo we have had most heavenly weather cloudless skey and sea like glass each ship as she ploughs along makes a distinct V which can be seen for thousands of yards each side of her it is a unique sight seeing our 15 ships making these patterns on the oily surface of the ocean at night it looks quite weird with the moon glinting on these corrugations They have now ceased to censor our homeward letters so it makes it far

Pag 26-28
of Book

easier to write. There is a continual stream of people coming to enquire N.C.O's of my own and other Companies and even the Ships officers We had our first mishap the day before yesterday the "Ascanius" collided with the "Shropshire" no serious damage was done. This world is a small place yesterday I was talking to one of the other patients who turned out to have been Mr Klingenders draftsman just before I went to the office he was also with Walter Butler. I hope you are all well hale & hearty much love to all

Geoff G McBeas



The Tropics.

Dear ones all.

Between you and me lies a bogey known as the censor through whom all letters must pass and if any mention of date time and place is made, well you will never see my letters therefore I cannot give you an interesting discription of our doings as I should like We are all swellering and gasping for air the engine room cowles move uneasily this way and that vainly throwing to catch the breeze which doesn't exist. Sleep is an impossibility. I miss you all terribly and especially dearest mother's tender care those little ailments for which she always had a remedy have to be put up with as the Doctors will only prescribe pills for everything you go to them for. I have had a bad ankle for three days and have only just now prevailed upon them to have a look at it and now they cant tell me whether it is septic posing, gout

or rheumatics. They have now given me some stuff and are going to watch its result to try and ascertain what really is the matter with it. The sea hereabouts is the color of the Blue you used on washing day with flying fish darting hither & thither and the ships officers look very dandy in their whites and Solar topees my pen has run dry so I will finish this in pencil as I don't feel like hobbling all the way down 3 flights of stairs to refill. I hope Helen got something good for Maude by now I do miss her. Especially when I am on watch at night when all are below except the Sentries & officer on the Bridge I watch the phosphorescent water hurrying past and unerringly adding miles to the gap that already divides me from all my dear ones I shall be heartily glad when we get into the stress and excitement of action. Here, there is a certain amount of enforced inactivity owing to our cramped condition and one is not able to be always studying technical stuff so now and again opportunities for reflection come to one and it is at these times you begin to realize the sacrifices you have made and it is my one hope that I have not made them in vain but will be able to do my job to the last & to the satisfaction

of my superiors. A few nights ago we ran
into a heavy sea and our old hooker
gave us an exhibition of her rolling
qualities. My room is situated quite
near the Junior officers mess and it
was furnished with chairs and they
not fastened to the deck so that when
our boat began to get a move on
these chairs commenced to dash from
one side of the deck to the other and
come against the side with a great
crash the crockery cupboard then
opened its doors & released its contents
and a few empty lemonade bottles
to increase the din every door in the
ship seemed to have been left open &
kept slamming at each roll then all
the books in our book shelf emptied
themselves in Johnson's face and
brought out lurid language befitting
the occasion. I expect it will be
close on Christmas ere this reaches you
so I will take this opportunity of
wishing you all happiness for

No. 3 - A m Book

day I wonder where we shall be on that day of rejoicing. We are absolutely cut off from the world here I wish we knew who matters were going in Europe George Richardson who used to live next door is on his road to the front with us It is pretty rotten having to write about these generalities but that is the only way in which I can hope to get this through to you. I have never perspired so much in all my life each morning when I awake the bed and pillow looks as if a bucket of water has been poured over it, we are short of fresh water and are only allowed Saltwater to wash in therefore we are always more or less sticky. We endeavour each night to sleep on deck but everytime we are forced to go below by Tropical Showers. I am afraid I can't give you any more news of interest owing to restriction imposed upon us so I will conclude wishing you and everyone great happiness & good health

1 DRL
427 9/13

Much love from Geoff
Kindly explain it is a matter of impossibility to write to everyone.

HOROPATA A20.
Gulf of Suez
1. 12. 1914

Dearest Everyone

Our days are numbered aboard this ship a wireless came through ordering us to complete our training at Cairo. We will probably disembark at Alexandria and will go through the ditch to-day we are just about the spot where Moses is supposed to have crossed the Red Sea Sinai we have passed. I am able to get about again alright my leg is quite strong now. I shall be able to study the Sphinx & Pyramids at first hand now instead of through the medium of McKlingenden's Books. We gave the officers of the ship a farewell Supper last night I shall be very sorry to leave this ship I have become quite attached to her and have formed several firm friendships amongst her officers who are all rattling good fellows. I very much enjoyed our day at Aden it is though barren a

very interesting spot but lack of time prevents me from attempting to describe our experiences there as the mail is now due to close. I will have to write again when we reach Cairo. We have not yet had a line from home yet. and I hoping we will get some letters at Port Said. I enclose a page of the ships paper as a memento of the voyage. I hope you are all well and wish you all happiness and good luck.

Love from

Geoff.

The Pyramids
Sahara.
7.12.1914.

We are now camped near Mena House about half a mile West of the Pyramids

I have gone through many and varied experiences since last I had time to write

We staid a day at Port Said and then came on to Alexandria where we disembarked. The two battalions took two days to carry out the operation. The night before we got off the Ship I was nearly drowned. There were two huge lighter-arrangements moored between the Ship and the wharf. Between these two was a gap about three feet wide which was hardly visible in the night. We had a string of armed Sentries posted at intervals along the wharf to prevent men taking "French leave"; all officers on duty carried loaded revolvers. I was going the 'rounds' inspecting the sentries and walked right into this gap. Down I went into the black water and came up under the lighter. I had a great struggle to get from under it and get my head above water. I saw a dark object floating in the water and swam to it. I put my weight on and down I went with it. It was only an empty beer-bottle. I could not find anything to cling to. I had the two wooden, slippery ends of the lighters each side of me

Right, and at the gap, "Why no lanterns"

a granite wall one end and the steel side of the ship the other was the trap I had fallen into

I could not cry out because I was suffering from an awful cold and had lost my voice

After my experience with the bottle, I noticed a perpendicular black line on the ship's side.

I struggled towards it for I was beginning to to tire and my wet clothes and heavy revolver were weighing me down. When I reached the ship's side the line turned out to be only the shadow of a joint in the ship's plates. which of course offered me no hand-grip; so, down, I went again into the gurgling depths. I came up very much exhausted. It was a most dreadful experience & extremely impressive in that dark narrow gap with no possible means of escape or of attracting attention

It seemed as though I had been hours in the water and I was about to resign myself to my fate when there came a loud crash behind me. I turned round and saw a life-buoy floating at about ten feet from me. It was all I could do to reach it, get into it, and wait for a rope. They hauled me out and put me in a boiling-hot bath, rubbed me down; gave me a hot drink and put me to bed. I was in the water for about ten

(2)

minutes;

it seemed to me ten hours. . . . . .

Next day, Sunday, we left the Ship and went to Cairo by the 9.30 train. The journey was full of interest, everything so quaint and new and yet so exactly like as one sees Egypt in the pictures. The country is all irrigated and under the most intense cultivation, maize, cotton, sugar-cane and clover, being the principal crops. Along many of the channels were planted Australian 'gums'. The native villages were mere mud-huts, terribly squalid, and surrounded with accumulations of rubbish and filth.

lentils?

Along the roads the natives were riding camels, horses and donkeys. All were clad in gay colours. In the fields ploughs were being drawn by camels a open exactly as they were in Biblical times

We reached Cairo at half-past two after being five hours in the train. We were here supplied with a cup of coffee, a roll and a piece of cheese; we were then put to loading our baggage and fodder on to the Electric trams; this completed, we were all taken on ten miles to Mena ~~House~~ at the Tram-terminus.

I was told-off to take charge of the transport which consisted of 150 niggers with mule-~~carts~~ carts to say nothing of a few dozen camels that I

was able to pick up. – A few words of Arabic were enough, backed by gestures, to make the niggers understand what I wanted – I am writing this in pencil because my pen is at the bottom of Alexandria Harbour ... My watch is also ruined owing to the salt water having got into the works.

Bert Heighway went in to Cairo this evening. He took with him Eight films for development; so, I will send on the prints as soon as possible

We went in to the City last night. It is three times as big as Melbourne and very picturesque ... ...

(4)

7. 12. 18.

Alexandria

Base Camp.

Pharmacy.

Copied 6/8/17 [illegible]

(P.O. No. 2 M.)

EGYPTIAN POST OFFICE — POSTES D'ÉGYPTE

CUSTOM HOUSE DECLARATION FOR PARCELS AND VALUE DECLARED BOXES

DÉCLARATION EN DOUANE POUR LES COLIS POSTAUX ET LES BOITES AVEC VALEUR DÉCLARÉE

Imp.Nat. 645-1911-500,000 ex.

Date stamp.
TIMBRE A DATE

Name of Addressee. / **Nom du Destinataire....** M Miss McCrae Calvin Street

Destination ..... / **Lieu de Destination.....** Hawthorn, Melbourne Australia

DESCRIPTION. ESPÈCE	*CONTENTS.* DÉSIGNATION DU CONTENU	*VALUE* — VALEUR: *In Egyptian Currency.* EN MONNAIE ÉGYPTIENNE L. E.	MILL.	*In Currency of Country of destination.* EN MONNAIE DU PAYS DE DESTINATION £	S.	D.	WEIGHT-POIDS: *Gross.* BRUT	*Net.* NET	*Facsimile of the seal in wax in the case of Insured boxes.* Empreinte du cachet qui a servi à cacheter les boîtes avec valeur.
one parcel	Egyptian Zent work fords			1	–	–			

SERVICE DETAILS — INDICATIONS DE SERVICE

Number..... / Numéro du colis .....

Parcel Bill Number..... / Numéro du Parcel Bill .....

Export dues..... / Droits d'exportation .....

Quay dues..... / Droits de quai.....

8th {the / le} Dec 1914

Signature of Sender,
SIGNATURE DE L'EXPÉDITEUR,

K. P. Brothers

MENA CAMP
9. 12. 1914

Dearest Mother, Father & Helen,

We have now pitched our mouvey tents neath the shadow of the Pyramids on the sands of the desert. We are ten miles out from Cairo the fare only being 1 piastre ($2\frac{1}{2}$)d. The city is most picturesque a party of us dined at Shephards the famous hotel you read about in novels I have not time to fully describe it here as the mail closes in a few minutes whilst in town I purchased some Egyptian Jaffeotry for Helen and a shawl the work of the Ladies of the Royal Harem for mother and a scarf for Maude. I hope they reach you safely. The proprietor of the shop is a brother to the man who runs Wassmul Lassmuls and Kreuo both Melbourne & Sydney. My poor watch is ruined I fell overboard in Alexandria Harbour at 10 o'clock at night and was nearly drowned and it got full of salt water and consequently rusty. The same time I lost my fountain pen. I suffered no

all effects from my agonizing
experience I will describe it when
more time is available. I have been
to the top of Cheops Pyramid to the
Temple of Sphinx & the Sphinx and
all the noted places in this country
Mena House is surrounded by a
grove of Australian Genus Acacias
when we used to visit mother at nurse
whiles in East Melbourne I little dreamt
I should ever see its original another
curius coincident is that Mena House here
has been converted into a Hospital and
Sister White is stationed there. I have ridden
Camels and Donkies and have already picked
up a smattering of Arabic am really have
a most interesting time. Trouble is expect
-ed here on 21st inst when the Union Jack is
to be Hoisted and Egypt taken over as a
British Colony. no more Time
Love to All

Geoff

No. 9. in Book

SHEPHEARD'S HOTEL
CAIRO

14. 12. 1914

Dearest ones,
I have not so much as had a line from you yet although I have had three from Maude and one from Erasmus. I have made this "pub" my City-head quarters: it is one of the most magnificent buildings I have ever seen. The entrance-hall is about 200 yards by 30 yds supported by ~~the~~ Egyptian columns with ~~their~~ bught Capitals representing the Lotus and papyrus; the whole is carpeted with Turkish and Persian rugs in which you sink 2 feet. The walls are hung with Egyptian Tapestry This hall leads into the lounge which is a huge domed circular apartment around which

Sofas are scattered and Indian Brass tea tables surround with the easiest of chairs in which recline men and women of all nationalities smoking and drinking to the strains of a gorgeous orchestra. The dining-room is similar; only, ~~there~~ in the centre is an alabaster fountain with shaded scarlet electric lights which make the water look like red wine. This hall is filled with small round tables covered with snowy napkins and sparkling silver & cut glass; each table has its silver lamp-stand with four lamps under scarlet silk shades. Waiters as noiseless & as black as Night, clad in scarlet Fez and Tunic and flowing white trousers with turned up scarlet morocco slippers, flit about amongst the tables, supervised by polished & dandy Frenchmen. It is a sight worth

travelling this distance to see. there are also hung from the roof, clusters of coloured lights which throw wonderful reflections in all liquids. The Grill Room is also a picture. I met Gerald Burston having dinner up there the other evening. This is about the gayest city on earth, a party of us were taken the rounds by a guide the other evening. I saw quite enough to last a life time what with their "Can=Cans" etc. I have seen everything that is to be seen as far as the Pyramid is concerned. The C.O. asked me if I wanted like to see Cairo by daylight and has given me to-morrow off for that purpose. The hour is late and I am far from warm. The nights on the desert are as cold as the day is hot. I enclose a few more photos for you to see. I have written on the back of each what ~~they are~~ it is. We have all been instructed to open Bank accounts in Cairo, roads, Electric tramways and light instalment are being built in camp, and a huge reinforced concrete reservoir is being constructed on the hill; so it looks as if we are going to be shelved here for several months at least, I am very weary, so will say good night.

Much love to all

from

Geoff

Mena.
14/12/14

Dearest Helen

I am sending you a few more photos: am off with my camera to Cairo for the day so am in much haste

Love to all
Geoff.

Cairo (EGYPT) 25th Dec 1914

Dear Mother Father & Helen

This is the quietest Christmas I have spent I have been sitting in my tent most of the day to escape the heat & glare. what this place can be like in the summer I dont know. We had a sumptuous Christmas Dinner. Last night was the anniversary of Captain McKenna's wedding day he invited 9 of us to dinner at Shepheards. There was a huge crowd There a Christmas tree 30 feet high had been put up in the lounge under the dome it was decorated with silver tinsel and myriads of tiny red white & blue lights. most beautiful French women gathered about each new arrival and compelled him to buy a bow made up of the allies

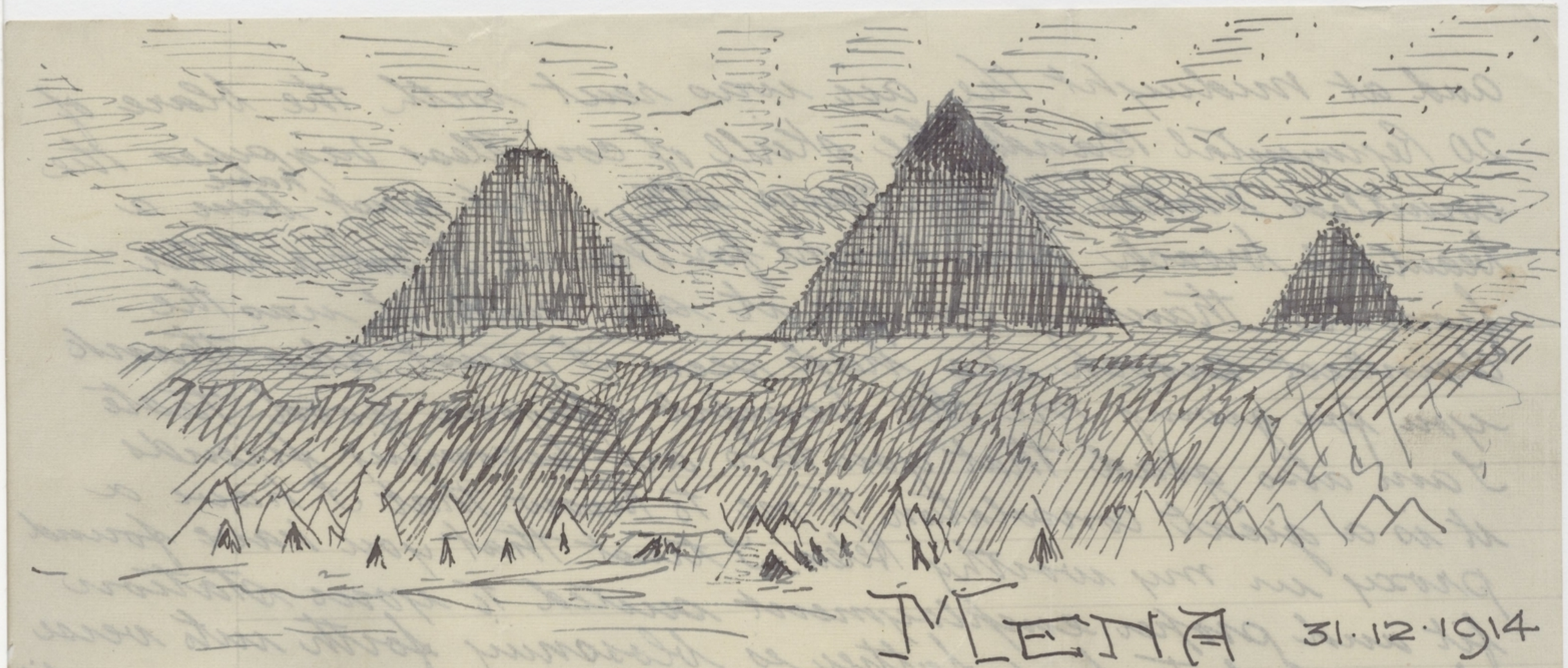
No 8.

25.5.12

colours as the australian girl makes you buy wattle on Wattle day they were charging 5 piastres but it was a fund in aid of wounded French soldiers so one willing bought. These women were absolute fashion plates never have I seen such materials and design and their hats with wonderful egrette feathers & osprey shows. stuking feet high in their very small almost skull caps. of hats. The dining Hall was crowded with English Indian Australian & New Zealand Officers many more women glittering with jewels never have I realized such a display of wealth and luxuring possible. Champagne litterally flowed in rivers from the bottles reposing in ice in silver buckets. Having dined we visited several Cafés Chantant and returned hither at 12 a.m for supper here the gaiety of Cairo had reached its zenith the huge

dinny room was crowded with officers in brilliant mess dress and women in most wonderful creations a huge orchestra played the latest Rags and here & there a couple would rise and tango between the tables. Everyone was throwing coloured paper ribbons until it looked as if everybody was enmeshed in a rainbow cobweb. I have never before witnessed such a sight. Last Sunday we were marched from Camp to Cairo a distance of nine & a half miles to take part in the ceremony of the accession of the new Sultan and proclamation of the establishment of the British Protectorate over the Country our job was to line the streets together with the 3rd Battalion & the Ceylon Contingent

It was an impressive sight a wall of Kakki topped with gleaming bayonets as far as the eye could see and behind it all the scarlet fezes it looked like a road passing through a poppy field. The procession consisted of a squadron of British cavalry mounted on white arab horses these were followed by Egyptian cavalry who looked most theatrical in their ultra marine Blue uniform faced with white & silver, white gauntlets and black patent leather jack boots. Vermilion fezes and lances with scarlet & green pennons floating from them the Sultans was drawn by four magnificent horses with coach man & footmen clad in vermilion and gold and four native out runners in the flowing white Turkish trousers and cloth of gold tunics. then came the ministers of State & A D Cs more cavalry then at a distance the King's Representative. The procession having passed we marched through Cairo to the Kasr il nil Barracks where we had breakfast and afterwards we returned to Camp per Electric tram. Dooty calls more in my next not had a letter from you yet. Love from Geoff.



Dearest Mother Father & Helen.

I received your cable the day before yesterday it was the first I have heard of you since we left Melbourne it was a ray of light through the darkness. Yesterday Sir George Reid came out to address us. I am forwarding with this a paper which has it taken down verbatim. I have just received your letters dated 1st November accusing me of not writing from Albany this is most unjust I wrote no less than five letters home besides several to Maude I also sent a wire to let you know that I was well as it was rumoured in Albany that it had been published in the Herald that the "Hororata" had been sunk all our letters were subject to censorship so I exspect that was the cause of delay. We exspect to leave here for the front early in March. To day is New Year's Day

and at midnight the air was rent with the blare of 20 Regimental Bands the skirl of countless bagpipes the countless beaters of tin cans etc That must have been a beautiful broach you bought for Maude I got a letter from her thanking me for it she said it was the daintiest brooch she had seen I must also thank you for giving me the benefit of your good taste I am also glad that you two are becoming friends it is a great consolation to me to know that I have a proxy in my worthy Helen. I trust that you have found fit and proper employment suited to your station I am glad to hear father is blossoming forth into verse and that he and mother are taking the air at Queensdiff which by the way looked very inviting yet warlike with its scrub cleared and entanglements as we passed out on 19th of October last. I am very glad to get Hugh's address I will write him this month when I get sometime at present we are very busy converting the Battalion from the old 8 Company Organization to the Double Company System. so as to conform to the same arrangement as the Regiments at the front. I enclose a few more photos for your perusal I hope you will make a collection of them for me as they will be very interesting in years to come if I get back. I would like you to send me a copy of "The fleet + Convoy" one of my men had a cutting from the Argus sent to him in a letter, in reference to Dorothy's book dedicated to your humble servant. On Sunday went out to Mateneh to tea with the Vaughans they took me to see the remains of the Town where Moses was educated, the twin to Cleopatra's needle and the tree underwhich the Holy family was supposed to have rested during the flight to Egypt. I got photos of these places and will send them along when ready I hope and trust you are all well.

Good Luck love from

Geoff.