2·7·15.

Gallipoli Peninsular
2nd July 1915

Dearest mother father & Helen

I have sketched on the back my impression of the landing of the famous 25th April as I thought it would be of interest to you. Things have been fairly quiet lately. Yesterday I had a rather nasty experience I was observing from one of our advanced posts and using a periscope one of these snipers smashed it to pieces with a bullet my eyes were filled with dirt and powdered glass and my face chipped with splintered glass. It gave me rather a shock. I got my eyes cleaned out by our doctor and my face powdered with boracic. My eyes are beginning to get right now but they felt awful all day yesterday. We have not had any mails lately so I cannot do much off my own bat as censorship is of a necessity strict. Someday I hope to be able to tell you freely all things which I am now experiencing. I am in splendid health notwithstanding I get awfully fatigued scrambling over these precipitous hills in the heat. Please God this trying time will soon be over I am beginning to feel the continuous strain, as regards nerves. The least little argument gets me horribly irritable and snappy I try to keep a hold on myself but often my temper leads me give vent to anger. I hope you people are all well and happy also Maude to whom give my love. Wishing you every thing that is good & pleasant

I am
Your loving Son & brother
Geoff.

Opd
Mus

IN THE TRENCHES.

7. 7. 1915

Dearest Mother father & Helen

I find my new job rather strenuous but of absorbing interest for the first forty eight hours I was here I had but two hours sleep I engaged on intelligence work for the General Staff and find my ability to sketch very useful I often work with less. For the last two days they have been pouring high explosive into us from their six inch howitzers they are very powerful and rather terrifying when they come in at the rate of 100 in about three hours but you have to treat the situation philosophically and

and pray to God the next one is
not going to get you. I am in
excellent health and much happier
now I am always got plenty
to do. I have just received some
letters from you which have
been doing the rounds of
the hospitals looking for me
I think we will be the most
easily pleased individuals
extant (those of us who are
lucky enough to get out of this
show alive) We sleep in dusty
blankets in holes we wash when
we can and our menu is awfully
primitive nearly always bacon
bread & strawberry jam breakfast
dinner & tea I haven't had my
boots or clothes off for a week so
you can imagine how we will
revel in the feel of clean linen
and the luxury of a bath. I
have no time to write more thank
you all for your letters also Dorothy
much love to all

From
Geoff.

Dearest Mother Father & Helen

Brother Jack has got me again and I am 14 days in the Same bed in 1st Aust. Stationary Hospital as I scribbled a month ago. I don't think you would recognize your own son if you could see me. My face two days ago it was absolutely featureless swollen mass with two slits where my blackened eyes struggled hard for sight there was not a square inch of whole skin on my face and worst that the swelling has commenced to go down. The Doctors say I have septicaemia or blood poisoning. I am strapped out as tight round here I may get Erysipelas. They say I will get on alright. How I got it this condition is as follows on Thursday we were

14.7.15

1st

(1)

ordered to make a numerous demonstration
to attract the enemy's attention. We succeed-
-ed at any rate in drawing his artillery
fire our guns seemed powerless to cope
with it whether their silence was intention-
al or not I know not at any rate we
suffered a two hours solid bombardment
from twenty every Turkish gun, with
high explosive shells our trenches were
terribly battered. We had to place our
men in tunnels whilst a few of us
remained out in that awful storm
of splintering steel. I admit I was
frightened but there was nothing for it
but to stick it. Shells were continually
screaming round me others striking very
close showering us with dirt and

128

(2)

suffocating us with fumes
but Nonetheless shells fell
shaking the earth and
filling the air with
asphyxiating fumes and
acrid black smoke.
Suddenly there was a
blinding flash and I felt myself
fall into the bottom
of the trench in an
avalanche of earth. The
signaller who had watch
ed dashed me into a
dugout and washed my
bloody face with his hank
ochief from water bottle
I rested there until a lull
came in the shell fire when
I made my way to the
dressing station. I had a
look at my observation
post and found that
a shell had burst in

parapet and blown the contents of the sandbags into my face luckily the fragments of the shell missed me. The doctor sent me down to the beach and I was immediately sent on board a fleet sweeper. The Turks seemed annoyed at my getting off so lightly and proceeded to shell the sweeper until she sailed for here. Well it is an advantage to hold Field Rank when you are wounded. The skipper invited me into his cabin and I had a lovely lunch and afternoon tea. The "Acquitania" is here never was there such a mammoth ship. Col Bryan welcomed me with open arms he comes to see me two or three times

127

4

day and is most affectionate and tells
all the patients how he loves me so
you can rest assured that I am receiving
the very best of attention, even as a
father would give to his son. Helen
I thank you very much for the Tooth
cleaning gear which has successfully
run the gauntlet of the Post Office sharks
who have overlooked all the rest of
my presents. I have used it to my great
comfort I also thank you for your
news of Maude and other kind words
you have spoken of me. Sorrie but as
often I have not heard from mother
lately. If you want to get an idea
of the fighting I have been actually
taking part in lately read Mrs Wolfe

in the "Green Curve". We have been lucky in that our Electrician hasn't landed us through one or two very defective Connection.
I don't think I have anything more of interest to add so will bid you farewell

Much love to all

Geoff

1st Australian Stationary Hospital
14th July 1915

126

6

Cpl Shal.

1st AUSTRALIAN STATIONARY HOSPITAL

17. 7. 1915

Dearest Mother Father & Helen

My face is rapidly assuming its normal condition Eyes and Lips are fast shall even be marked. The Doctors consider it was a miracle that my eyes were not seriously damaged. The Great God has shown me great mercy in this campaign and I trust he shall safely back to you all. When you are continually facing death day after day week in week out you begin to realize the futility of human conceits and ~~their~~ utter dependence on the Almighty. The Dardanelles has lost its beauties of this island and now where there used to be a blaze of brilliant color naught but dust is found.

68

Last night Dr Levick who was down at the South Pole with Scott gave us an illustrated lecture on his experiences it was a most cooling sight to look upon the scenes of ice & snow and most refreshing midst this heat & dust. We have the two giant Cunard Boats Aquitania and Mauretania in Port. Nothing to tell you more

Much love to all

From

Your

80

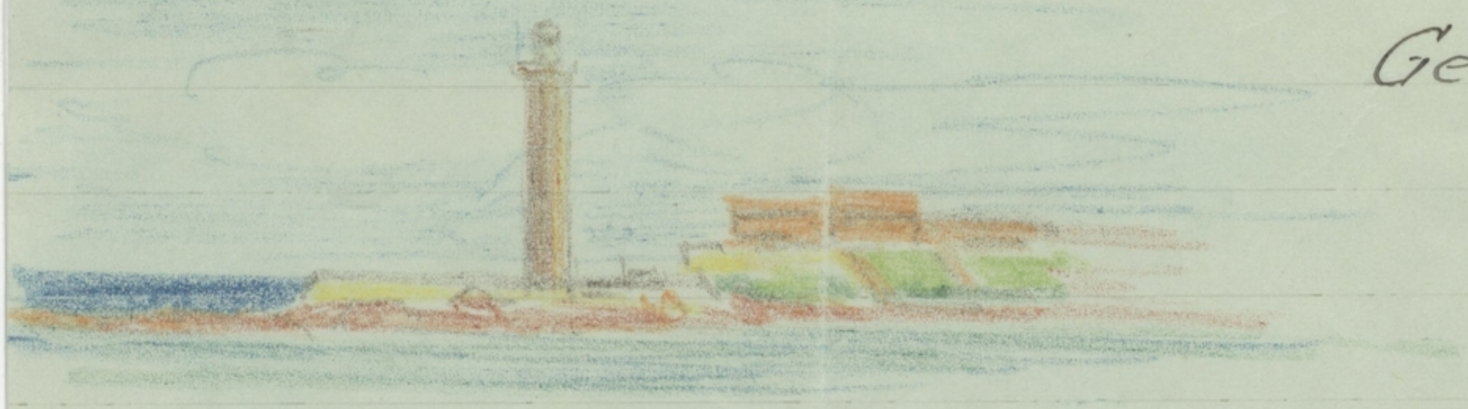
cpd
Mus

1st AUSTRALIAN
STATIONARY HOSPITAL
19. 7. 1915

Dearest Mother Father & Helen
Colonel Bryant is
sending me down to Alexandria
to recuperate my face is
beginning to assume its
normal lines again I am
feeling pretty fit physically
but not quite up to standing
up to shell fire yet. but I
shall be set right up after my
trip. They gave me a little
send off by inviting me into
their officers mess last night
we had a very fine dinner
I really have nothing to write
about but just thought I let
you know what my
movements were I enclose
a cutting from the "Times"
in which is announced

70

my last wound. Poor
old Pennegel had one leg
so shattered that it had
to be amputated and
Bolchart had his head
smashed. I think of he
will live. Here am I
still hanging on having
had two narrow escapes
I wonder what next will
befall me. Although life
is very heavy it is wonderfu
how you hop to cling to it
but it is not our present
life we hang on for it is the
life of the future if we
live returns



General Hospital
ALEXANDRIA
25th July 1915

Dearest Mother Father & Helen.

I am almost myself again with the exception of my internal economy which has not yet quite righted itself. I was a week up there in the Field Hospital and had a beautiful trip here in a Hospital Ship. This is an earthly paradise after Gallipoli. I am sleeping out in a tent on the square it is beautifully airy and kept spotlessly clean and the meals are simply gorgeous after what we have been accustomed to. The Sisters and nurses are awfully good to us My face is alright except it is pockmarked where the skin was torn away. I shall probably always bear these marks as a memento. I am sending several things home by Major Blezard which I hope you will like I am being sent to Cyprus for a holiday. Yesterday I went for a sail on the Harbour which was "par excellence." Day before yesterday I was acquainted with the beauties of the Egyptian summer gliding through shady avenues of brilliant foliage along canna bordered canals in a huge magnificent Rolls Royce then dashing out along the Cairo Road through crops

of maize and sugar cane and groves of bananas and date palms then through the magnificent Muza Garden out to San Stefano and back through the fashionable suburbs of Victoria and Ramleh which are composed of beautiful dwellings set in lavish gardens such as the ones seen used in the setting of Photo-plays.
everywhere in this vicinity is there evidence of wealth & opulence. I much prefer this place to Cairo the heat is not so terrible it is exactly like summer in Sydney. I have had to fit myself out with a summer kit seeing everything I brought away was winter clothing I have found as Helen has done before that new clothes are as good as a tonic. In the old things I came down from Gallipoli in I was often taken for a private and rudely ordered from places reserved for officers until I drew attention to the crowns on my shoulder straps, which brought confusion and abject apologies from many a pompous & officious N.C.O. Nothing more of interest just now

Will write again when I have

Much love to all

from

Geoff.

CONVALESCENT HOME
MT THROODOS. CYPRUS.
4th August 1915

Dearest Mother Father & Helen

A thousand thanks for your letters and congratulations of 29th June. I have come up here to get fit and one could not imagine a better chosen spot. We are 6000ft above sea level in a pine forest there is a most glorious drive up here a distance of 40 miles climbing over hills all the way there are altogether 964 turns in the road. Which in many places hangs on to precipitous cliffs by its eyebrows and as the cars run along here at about 50 miles an hour its fairly exciting far more so than Gallipoli; you dash down a steep incline and the road seems to end in a cliff face and just as you think you are about to be dashed into eternity you find the road suddenly swings back almost in its own tracks and the car swings and almost collides with its own back and dashes on along the next stretch only to repeat the performance times out of number. ever getting higher and the scenery more magnificent.
I am sharing a tent with a Chap called Bruce from Christchurch New Zealand. an awfully nice fellow we chummed up in The Alexandria Hospital

and have knocked about together ever since. This is the summer resort for the Government officials of the island and Egypt; there are lots of them up here now with their wives. The Governor gave a garden party yesterday but I did not go. Most of the women look prematurely old. I have not met any of them yet but they are awfully good and give three concerts a week. There is a good tennis club here and the life appears to be exactly similar to that you read of in stories about the Hill-Stations out in India. I am writing this out on the verandah of the Mess House, which looks out over mile upon mile of pine covered mountains and deep ravines, here and there the sombre green of the pines is relieved by the bright vineyards. The atmosphere is marvellously clear and you can see the whole Island from the summit of Mount Olympus.

No more news

Much love

from

Geoff.

Cpl Wheel

M.T. TROODOS
CYPRUS. 14.8.15

Dearest mother father & Helen

I am sending you some photos I have taken during my stay here. I am quite well again and able to leave here after a stay of Ten days rather than a month as originally intended. I have been playing very strenuous Tennis and Hill climbing alot. I lunched with the Governor at Government House yesterday. No time for more

much love
from Geoff.

S. S. "SURADA."
Mediterranean
16. 8. 1915

Dearest Mother father & Helen,

Having become perfectly fit I am now en route for the Peninsula once again. I have left Cyprus with it's beautiful scenery and air, it's sour wine and cliquey community. I am very glad to have been there, as it is out of the general run of places one expects to visit during the ordinary course of one's life, and I have been able to get some ripping photos: which will give you some idea of the island. I had the privilege of dining one evening with the Kings Advocate for Cyprus: he had a most luxurious cottage in the fastnesses of the pine-covered mountains furnished with exquisite taste; the dinner was equal to that served in the best of restaurants and the most glorious madeira I have tasted. It was a most pleasing surprise to find oneself in such comfort after an hour's mule ride along a rocky trail through the dark pine forest. Thus this learned bachelor spends his summer months in the wilderness. I also lunched with the Governor at his pretty summer residence. He has

a very charming wife who at once made you feel quite at home. The Vaughans from Cairo where staying at one of the camps, and through him and an American named Connor, I was able to get some tennis; otherwise, I would have had a fairly miserable time, as the rest of the community surrounded themselves with a wall of icy exclusiveness through which one Australian I know, tried to penetrate, with the result of a severe frost-bite (or snubbed by snobs.) It was a most peculiar position up there: we were made honorary members of their Clubs and when we visited the place we were absolutely ignored and treated as if we did not exist. I am sure if they had been Australians they would have received us with hospitality. I like this old ship. The Chief Engineer comes from Melbourne and is very friendly in consequence. all the other officers are equally friendly and give me a very bonny time. Yesterday, five of us took a boat ashore and spent the whole morning swimming, and diving off Karavostasi Pier, and got a whole pillowslip full of lovely big figs for a "bob." To-morrow will be the anniversary of the commencement of our training at

Broadmeadows. — Thus, I will have given a year of my life to my country and I trust not in vain. I do hope that we will finish this "show" before the winter. I am longing to get home and get to my own work again. I am getting horribly old to be an articled pupil. Thank heaven, I will now be in a position to pay off my own premium. I am afraid Maude's patience will be exhausted ere I shall be in a position to ask her to be my partner in this game of life. This is my cherished ambition, and I pray God that I may be spared to realize the happiness that this union would bring to me. Unless something unforseen is to happen I am afraid the question of finance will be the stumbling block of my happiness if I come out of this business with a whole skin. I hope everyone is well at home. Give my love to them all

Farewell

Much love

from

Geoff

16.8.15.

Cpd
WMc

Cpl. Smith C.

CABLE & TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS
"UNION ALEXANDRIA"
TELEPHONE Nº 1221.

18th August. 15

UNION CLUB,
ALEXANDRIA,
EGYPT.

Dearest Mother Father & Helen

I have returned here from Cyprus and am waiting for a boat for Gallipoli: I am getting the Kodak to send you some films I took in the island: there is one of me with my Yankee pal, and another of me sitting on the cairn on the summit of Mount Olympus. Mr Vaughan is sending one he took of me also. Please have prints taken off for Maude and charge it up to me. I am glad you have asked Mrs McKenna to see you: her husband was my dearest friend; poor man! he

man had his leg blown off and bled to death before anything could be done for him. Maude wanted a negative of one of the photos he took of me at Sunrise in the desert she wants to have it enlarged so you might ask Mrs McKenna to lend it her. I am sure we all are heartily grateful for all that you splendid women are doing on our behalf it makes the burden much lighter when you know everyone who can is helping to bring this ghastly "show" to a swift and righteous termination. I am glad you liked the photos taken on Gallipoli I am sorry there weren't more but I lacked

filus. I feel very "buckedup" that my promotion has brought such lustre to the annals of the family. I am doing my best to be worthy of the honor despite the fact that crusty old imperial colonels and majors look askance at the crown on my youthful shoulder straps. I am glad Maude & Gwen are being prepared for confirmation by Charles. Dorothy tells me Maude is quite one of the family down at Auchoufield and this will yet be one more tie. The old saw "Absence maketh the heart grow fonder" is all too true and this tedious exile is becoming hateful. "Gott Strafe Deutschland" I was

stopped in the Rue de Rambuteau yesterday by one McDonald a journalist friend of Hughes, for whom he tenderly enquired he told me he had had a letter from his wife in New York saying Hugh had paid her a hurried farewell visit Well I must hie me to the dining-room and appease my hunger

Much love

from

Geoff

THE TRENCHES
ANZAC 28/8/15

Dearest Mother Father & Helen

I have arrived back having had a lovely trip on a beautiful prize ship there were nine nurses on board so we had a jolly time after all these months of turmoil. I just got back in time to take command of the Battalion the Colonel has been ill for some time but would not go away until one of the senior officers returned. Thus have I had great responsibility thrust upon my shoulders but with God's help I hope I may quit myself creditably. I am very glad you contradicted Mr Biggs flattering note on my promotion. By gum you're killing the fatted calf for the recruits. I never received Maudie's cable never reached me. We are at present occupying a position recently captured from the Turks it is an absolute master piece of Trench digging it is rather a warm corner, we get rather heavily shelled by the Turks 75mm gun which is uncomfortably accurate and does much damage to our parapets it however causes but few casualties. We get a

good number of bombs which are rather horrible things, fortunately Abdul is not a very good thrower. The trenches are rather well stocked with animals so sleep is not very easy unless you are dead tired. I find the less personal property one has the better as we have no where to keep things and no means of carrying much stuff consequently all I now possess is a change of underclothes a blanket & waterproof all my other gear is heaven only knows where. Food is very good & plentiful and we can now obtain extras such as pickles fruit choclate etc which enables us to vary the monotony of our diet. The nights are becoming very cold and the trenches are very drafty when there is a breeze. The daylight is fast fading and as we are not allowed lights up here I must conclude

Wishing you all good things

Believe me

Your loving Son

Geoff

1 DEC 1937
4/13

ON ACTIVE SERVICE

28.8.15.

Mrs G. G. McRae
"Anchorfield"
Calvin Street
Hawthorn
Melbourne
AUSTRALIA.

AUST. INF. BDE. FIELD P.O.
21 AU 15

PASSED BY
№ 22 19
CENSOR

Acknowledged
Cpd
MMc

28.8.15. Angie
Took over Command of the
Battn. Colonel being ill -
MMc

ANZAC 3.9.15

Dearest Mother Father & Helen.

Nothing much has happened since I last wrote just the usual daily shelling & bomb fighting at night. One of the reinforcement birds new to the trenches made us laugh the other night a bullet struck the steel loophole and went singing away into the night the new chum asked what it was he was told it was a ricochet oh he said and do we use them too. The Colonel is still absent. I am enclosing a copy of a Turkish note we have occasionally thrown into our trenches I dont know what it is all about but still it will be a relic of this Gallipoli stunt. I am in the best of health and am not yet weighed down with my responsibilities. I went for a swim last night the water was ~~very phosphorescent and we looked~~ like ~~bom~~ many electrically illuminated bumps in the dark water leaving a veritable trail of liquid fire as we swam. From the summit of the dark hills above us came the constant crackle of rifles and the thudding explosion of many bombs and behind swept the long rays of the searchlights from Kaparra & Chanuck. You see we do our bathing under rather weird circumstances No more recov

Much love to all

from

Geoff

1 DRL 427
4/13

3.9.15

ON ACTIVE SERVICE

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE BDE POST OFFICE 3 SEP 15

PASSED BY NO. 6 CENSOR

Mrs G. G. McRae
Calvin Street
Hawthorn
Melbourne
AUSTRALIA

Mrs G. G. McRae
Calvin Street
Hawthorn
Melbourne

TELEPHONE 11 N. SYDNEY

HOURS OF CONSULTATION:
8 TO 9 A.M.
2 TO 3 P.M. } (EXCEPT SATURDAY
7 TO 8 P.M. } AND SUNDAY)

LONE PINE
ANZAC
7. 9. 1915

"GARSTON,"
243 MILLER ST., N. SYDNEY.

Dearest Helen
Thanks so very much for your letter for the flowers and the soft little verse about big Laggie but most of all for the news of Maude. She has been most loyal. To day I received some photos of her and my heart is near worth a great yearning. One is especially good I suppose you have seen it, she is reclining on the grass in the shade. It looks as if we are going to be here for months & months & months the whole world has under estimated the power of the Hun and his accomplices if Bulgaria comes in with them as it is at present rumoured locally, we are going to have a hell of a time here the Dardanelles are not forced

on us for daftly cute idle
and careless ways. Do those
weekend camps still flourish
as they used and is real
religion so ignored as it
was. Dont think I have
become a religious maniac
because I haven't I only
think that the world as
a whole has brought these
evil days upon itself
if one is honest with oneself
you find how mean one
has been in the past, only
when the go hunt or in fear
of it do we run to God but
when the world was run-
ning smoothly how little
did we appreciate the
goodness and tell him
so. Now I see the whole of
Melbourne is crying to him
publicly at noon each day
surely this shows signs of
a great awakening — over

and the opening of them is daily becoming a matter of greater difficulty. I am not a pessimist nor do I in any way doubt that we will eventually accomplish our object but of this I am certain that it will cost us thousands of more precious lives. Day by day I sit and watch the Turks stronger and stronger ~~daily~~ and each day Australia appears to fade further & further away from my longing eyes. Still we are out to do the job so must not complain if it is more arduous than we expected We live in a desolated paradise neverone green

TELEPHONE 11 N. SYDNEY

HOURS OF CONSULTATION:
8 TO 9 A.M.
2 TO 3 P.M. } (EXCEPT SATURDAY
7 TO 8 P.M. } AND SUNDAY)

"GARSTON,"
243 MILLER ST., N. SYDNEY.

As I write the grass and willow are waving with the breeze & 3 flying over us farewell with much love from Geoff

Green shrubs and flowering plants now line the blunt & shattered stems in a barren desert town and rent by shells and scarred by many trenches edged with torn sand bags & tangled barbed wire everywhere lie the blackened & festering remains of Australians & Turks who have given their country their devoted service unto death they have made the great sacrifice and we honor both alike. This war is chastening the earth and is perhaps God's judgement

ANZAC
7.9.1915

Dearest father & mother

Thank you very much for your letters but of the forty of which you speak I have only received eight and "devil a parcel" I have not seen anything of Manfreds E.S. The Colonel is away sick so I am still in command Swift is well poor Bryan lost his brother in the last scrap on our left when we captured Hill 60 he was lying out wounded and he moved so the Turks shot him if you are wounded here you have to face death or you will merely be shot Arthur Dodd is looking awfully well just come up here from Mulles I have not yet got your Fleet & Company but look forward to receiving a copy I am feeling very well and enjoy being C.O. I have just been going round visiting the newly arrived australians and have found many old friends lots of old Melbournians and people I used to soldier with in the spring times of Peace

The weather here is perfect at present and Tommy Turk has been very inactive for the past fortnight (touch wood) We are having a rest every second day from the trenches and we are then able to swim and stretch our legs this is essential because our position in the front line is a cemetery trenches are cut through the middle of a dead Turks can see portion of their bodies one side and their legs the other in addition there are bodies festering in the open in front and behind the firing line we get all we can in by means of a grapnel and bury them but the odour is thick and 48 hours up amongst the dead men is as much as you can stand at a time in addition the place is alive with vermin (a bequest from the Turks) so sleep is not easy. It is wonderful what you can stand when you are put to it I wish I was back amid the flowers you have sent me alas nearly all our hills have been denuded of greenery. I hope you are all well

Much love

from Geoff

ANZAC

11.9.1915

Dearest Mother Father & Helen

I thank you for letters of 27th July I will be very glad to get the chamois vest as already the chill of winter makes itself felt on our thinned out blood. Things have been abnormally quiet here lately we are in one of the most exposed positions and have only lost one in four days. Jackson came back yesterday but alas he is very jumpy and consequently worries me a lot asking when ~~every~~ bomb explodes whether it is ours or the enemy's and any one who moves past head quarters during the night he wants me to get up and ask them who he is and what he is doing. You can hardly blame him having been away so long but its a curse being awakened every half hour or so for nothing. Its bad enough trying to get to sleep despite the lice with which these trenches are

infested. It is remarkable the number of old Grammer boys are out on this stunt. I believe we hold the record for the public Schools. Gerald Buston seems to be having a rosy time I am awfully glad you & Mrs McKenna have made friends. As for falling in love with anyone in Alexandria I have never seen anyone since I left Australia who can compare with Maude and my affection for her is as staunch as ever. and her letters and yours are the bright spots in this dull and sordid existence a side of our trench caved in to day and we had to carry out the remains of some Turks & Aust salvos which have been there since the eighth of August they absolutely fell to pieces and the stench was horrible. If we ever get back we will be able to put up with anything. No more news am in good health

Much love from

Geoff.

WEST MUDROS.
LEMNOS 17.9.15

Dearest Mother Father & Helen

We have been sent over here to rest and refit. and have had three days at this spot. A ploughed field surrounded by low hills and fronted by the harbour. The weather has been very inclement and yesterday there was a regular cloud burst and the whole surface of the camp area was one huge morass we had two inches of water in our tents all the cook's fires were extinguished so we were not very comfortable however we maintained good spirits. I have been down with dysentry for the past two days and am feeling rather weak, but still manage to play along thank heaven we managed to get away from the trenches before the weather broke. I do not know how long this shell will last but I expect they will give us at least a month anyway the boys deserve it and more. I hear there is a mail in but it has all become so much pulp as it is only in hessian sacks and was left out uncovered on the decks of a transport

in all yesterday's downpour.
Lough has been made a temporary
major and Bruff a captain
they are both the same cheerful
souls as they ever were and
staunch pals of mine.
Everything points to another
winter campaign so I expect
many months will elapse
before we can look to that
joyful home coming which
seems like the dawn after a
long weary night, never to
be going to break. My eyes
look eagerly to see the first
grey coming on the horizon
but up to now they go unrewarded
There is nothing to do but
wait with philosophical
patience until God's own
good time. You can see by
the above screed there is
nothing of local interest
to write about
Farewell then
much love
from
Geoff.

Have just at last received a letter which has been since 13th. Since hearing for me, I feel very depressed at what you have said about Wander's relations. She has been all in all to me during the days of my trial and her name is ever in my prayers and in her are all my hopes centred so your letter has come as a sad blow and I feel very miserable

WEST MUDROS
LEMNOS. 18. 9. 15.

Dearest Mother & Father

I thank you for your letters 1st – 9th Aug which we have managed to get after much trouble. The British authorities here would not provide us with hairshirt so after waiting days of waiting we took the matter into our own hands and hired a boat for ourselves and went & collected it from off two different piers where they had been lying in hessian bags in all the rain not even protected by tarpaulins. I agree with father in his ideas about the Russian movement I consider it the most gigantic strategical retirement the world has seen and I have no doubt that when the time comes the gallant troops of the Czar will burn and crush the Hunnish hordes. As far as information goes I do not feel at all sure that this counter stroke has not already commenced. I must thank you very much for the "Clear Call" which contain the most excellent verses and acurate descriptions of what took place on the bloody hills of Gallipoli. I especially like the verse entitled "My Soldier" which terminates

"God! how I love him for his need of me"
Yes happy live! ~~Know~~ no one knows who has not experienced the awful horrors of standing in trenches under shell fire unable to do anything to help yourself yet having to stick to your post with hell let loose around you how much we need our loved ones at home and when you feel they are looking to you (individually) to play the man and stick it. it becomes easier and you see in your minds eye your loved ones and you are able to make the best of it and try and put a cheerful complexion on the terrifying circumstances. A cheerful man in a trench is worth an army of pessimists
I am sorry you were bombarded by the defence people over my return on the Ballarat I am not surprised it is how everything seems to be at present a muddle. It is very gratifying to hear of the reception that was going to be accorded to me, but I think when I arrive I would like to drive into the fastnesses of the Buffaloe Mountains and escape the invitations that seem to be inevitable and just have the family and Maude with me. You don't appear to have ~~appear to have~~ got my letter I wrote when I was wounded. The Intelligence stunt put me more in the funny line than anyother job I had to get about all sorts of places to observe and sketch enemy positions ~~dwad~~ to try and

locate guns when they opened on our position so I was constantly in the firing line and had a fixed observation station from which place I was blown out. Early in July we made a demonstration and the Turks opened up an enfilading fire on our trenches with 6 in howitzers and 75 mm guns for an hour the air was filled with dust flying clay shrieking fragments of bursting shell clouds of black smoke and stinking yellow fumes of the T.N.T. each shell seemed just to graze your head and send spadefuls of dirt down your neck and dimmed periscope glasses I hung on in a holy funk I admit but as Dorothy puts it in her verse I had need of someone. A vision of Maude came to me and saved me from going and crimping in a dug out away from my post. All of sudden there came a vivid flash and biting pain and I found myself on the bottom of the trench amongst a pile of earth and tattered sand bags. What had happened, a shell had burst just in front

of me in the parapet and blown the contents of the sand bags into my face and hands making a gorgeous gravel rash and swelling my face like a plum pudding so that it was hard to see out of my eyes. The sergeant I had with me led me into a tunnel close by where he washed my face with his handkerchief and contents of a waterbottle we stayed there until a lull came and then we made our way for the dressing station. Alas our poor trenches I shall never forget that walk along the line in places the works were battered out of all recognition and half filled in, making it necessary to dive over places fully exposed to enemy's rifle fire then you would come on battered and blackened things that one short hour before had been men. When I reached headquarters no one recognised me at first however the doctor bandaged me up and packed me off to Lemnos from thence I was sent to Alexandria to be the constipation was they said a result of the shock I had received. I thank you for news of Maude and hope I am spared to return to you and her when we have finished.

Much love
from
Geoff.

REST CAMP
MUDROS . 19 . 9 . 15

Dearest Helen

Thank you awfully for your letters and these vivid descriptions of beautified and awakening Hawthorn I am indeed sorry I disappointed you all in my non-arrival by the Ballarat. Still had I been on board her I would have necessarily been pretty badly hurt whereas I still am in excellent health (save for the prevalent Anzac disease diorrhea) though in exile which may last for many more weary months I would like to stick it out to the end if God sees fit. I am indeed proud of Australia and the magnificent work that those who remain at home are doing in order to cooperate with our efforts and minister to those of us who are hurt in the struggle for right and justice. I am glad to hear there is still a garden and expect it flourishes under your tender care I wish all success to the mignoette & sweetpeas and hope I may one day enjoy the fragrance of their offsprings. James & Roy Bruston landed at Anzac the day we left so I had no opportunity of seeing them. The Commander of the "Agamemnon" kindly sent the ships Band to play to us the other afternoon. It is a long time

since I enjoyed music so much
by the way I heard a doctor singing
"Melisande" the song Winifred used
to sing the other day. I wish you
would get a copy of it for Maude
and get mater to change it up
to me I love the song and Maudes voice.
Those primroses do remind me
of the Broadmeadows how I wish
the Calander could be put back
twelve months it is great about
that since we had that dinner
at Café Francais. I still have
the Australian flag that flew
to fly over the door of my tent
I guess that about finishes my
news as ive are back again to
the dull routine of training
camp again, but there is no
distractions so it is rather a
painful grind and we are
at an end of our conversation
and all we have to live for is
mail day

Much love
from your loving Brother
Geoff

REST CAMP
MUDROS 19.9.15.

Thank you awfully for your letters and their vivid descriptions of beautiful and awakening Hawthorn

I am indeed sorry I disappointed you all in my non-arrival by the "Ballarat": still, had I been on board her, I would have necessarily been pretty badly hurt, whereas, I still am in excellent health (save for the prevalent Anzac disease (diarrhoea) - Thanks an exile ~~for~~ which may last for many more weary months. I would like to stick it out to the end if God sees fit. I am indeed proud of Australia and the magnificent work that those who remain at home are doing in order to coöperate with our efforts and minister to those of us who are hurt in the struggle for right and justice. I am glad to hear there is still a garden and expect it flourishes under your tender care. I wish all success to the mignonette and sweet-peas and hope I may one day enjoy the fragrance of their offspring - James and Roy Burston landed at Anzac the day we left so, I had no opportunity of seeing them - The Commander of the "Agammemnon" kindly sent the Ship's band to play to us the other afternoon. It is a long time since I enjoyed music so much -

(1.)

By the way I ~~know~~ heard a Doctor singing "Melisande", (the song Winifred used to sing.) the other day. Those primroses do remind me of Broadmeadows... How I wish the Calendar could be put back twelve months; it is just about that time since we had that Dinner at the Café Français. I still have the Australian Flag that used to fly over the door of my tent.

I guess this about finishes my news as we are back again to the dull routine of training=camp: but there are no distractions; so, it is rather a painful grind; We are at the end of our conversations and all we have to live for is Mail-Day

(Sd.)

Geoff.

(2)

19. 9. 15.

God bless

REST CAMP
LEMNOS 19.9.1915

Dearest Dorothy

Thanks very much for your letter of 3rd Aug. I have received a copy of the Clean Call and we are all very engrossed in it the verse which specially appeals to me as "my Soldier" you must have known something when you wrote that. Ah! but we have need of our loved ones at home who are in reality the main springs of our earthly and higher life. I am awfully glad you like Maude and thank you for the news you have given me of her, each word is as a pearl of great price to me. We are here on the island for the purpose of recuperating our health and resting after (for some) five continuous months under fire I dont know how long we are to be here but I am sure the relaxation will be a boon to us all It is very peaceful here beside

19. 9. 15

the blue waters of the crowded harbour on a yellow stubble field surrounded by low hills upon which are flocks of sheep with bells about their necks and as they feed the tinkling bells sound exactly like a brook running over pebbles Then of course there are the sky larks which sing their morning and evening carols as they do even on our battle scared field at Anzac. But here there is a blessed hush and no continuous rattle of rifles or roar of cannon or drowning humanity are exerting to disturb the tranquil air. which in itself is a great relief I have nothing further to say so well conclude wishing you Charles & the Kiddies all happiness & good health

Much love

from

Geoff.

Lemnos
27. 9. 1915.

Dearest Mother father & Helen,

Only a few minutes before the mail closes so cannot write a lengthy letter we are very busy preparing for the trenches again I have been for the last five days on a cruise on a Destroyer had a most beautiful time went sailing and fishing in her whaler under the Turks very noses they put a smoke screen between us and the enemy until we got the sails set. no time for more much

love from
Geoff

27.9.15.

Cpl [illegible]

REST CAMP
LEMNOS 29-9-1915.

Dearest Mother Father & Helen,

I am awfully tired of this place I haven't felt well since I have been here my energies are sapped by diarrhea and my skin tormented by what seem to be insecticle vermin at times I stay awake all night nearly tearing myself to pieces. Time hangs heavily on our hands and I grow more homesick daily. Yesterday the strain was alleviated considerably. We arranged a cricket match against the Eighth Battalion and had a marquee erected and afternoon tea provided. 30 Australian nurses from the Hospitals came over in response to our invitation so the otherwise dull afternoon was spent pleasantly. We were easy winners of the match I made four runs & caught two. I have just received your letters of 23rd August and the scent of the baronia made my heart ache. how I long for you all and for Maude. Yes that is poor old Flockhart with me in

that photo outside my dugout. I think I have already thanked you for the flynet Freda's £3 has also at last found its way to me together with a batch of old letters dating back to 13th April which have been wandering round in the military postal whirlpool. I also got a letter from Andrew McRae Bruce inviting me to his home in the Channel Islands to recuperate. If I ever get to England I shall certainly avail myself of the opportunity to visit Jersey of which I have read many fascinating descriptions by John Ocenham etc. I have also been invited to a place called Darlington by a Mrs Robson her son was in my Company at Broad meadows and I was his best man when he married out there. They people are very well to do folk and great hunting enthusiasts.

Farewell

Much love

from

Geoff.