

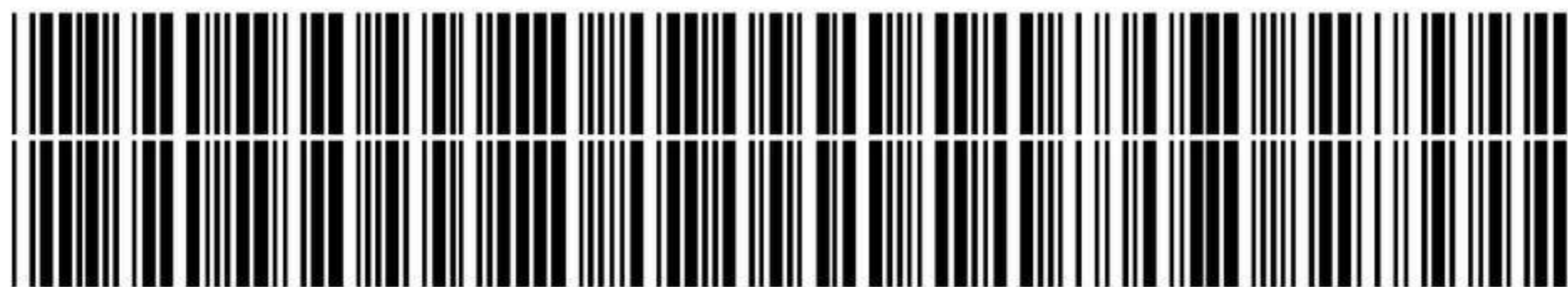
AWM38
Official History,
1914-18 War: Records of C E W Bean,
Official Historian.

Diaries and Notebooks

Item number: 3DRL606/237/1

Title: Folder, October 1914 - 1918

Includes typed and indexed copies of Sir George Pearce's correspondence comprising mainly letters from Sir William Bridges, Sir Alexander Godley and Lord Birdwood.



AWM38-3DRL606/237/1

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1st set

COPY NO. 1 of DIARY NO. 237.

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3DRL 606 ITEM 237 [1]

**DIARIES AND NOTES OF C. E. W. BEAN
CONCERNING THE WAR OF 1914-1918**

THE use of these diaries and notes is subject to conditions laid down in the terms of gift to the Australian War Memorial. But, apart from those terms, I wish the following circumstances and considerations to be brought to the notice of every reader and writer who may use them.

These writings represent only what at the moment of making them I believed to be true. The diaries were jotted down almost daily with the object of recording what was then in the writer's mind. Often he wrote them when very tired and half asleep; also, not infrequently, what he believed to be true was not so—but it does not follow that he always discovered this, or remembered to correct the mistakes when discovered. Indeed, he could not always remember that he had written them.

These records should, therefore, be used with great caution, as relating only what their author, at the time of writing, believed. Further, he cannot, of course, vouch for the accuracy of statements made to him by others and here recorded. But he did try to ensure such accuracy by consulting, as far as possible, those who had seen or otherwise taken part in the events. The constant falsity of second-hand evidence (on which a large proportion of war stories are founded) was impressed upon him by the second or third day of the Gallipoli campaign, notwithstanding that those who passed on such stories usually themselves believed them to be true. All second-hand evidence herein should be read with this in mind.

16 Sept., 1946.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
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C. E. W. BEAN.

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Extracts from Senator Pearce's private correspondence

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1

Extract from private letter from Major-General W.T.BRIDGES
to Senator G.F.PEARCE, dated 31/10/1914.

On medical advise^c I have ordered the discharge of syphilitic cases, but often we are taken in. I have also ordered all men who refuse to be inoculated against typhoid to be discharged. They may become a source of infection to others and also show a bad spirit in not subordinating their own personal wishes to the good of the Force.

. . . .

I stopped all shore leave on arriving here (Albany) - so that when the Mayor asked the officers to a reception I refused explaining that I did not consider it proper to grant privileges of this nature to officers that were denied to the men.

. . . .

We have not, however, done as well as the N.Z. who have only lost 13 horses out of 3800. Their men however are in bunks and not in hammocks and though they are taking tents I fancy are not as completely equipped as we are.

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2

Extract from private letter from Major-General W. T. BRIDGES
to Senator G. F. PEARCE, dated 16/11/1914.

The EMDEN missed us by only 20 miles. If she had passed astern instead of ahead she would have bagged the New Zealanders at least. Her captain told me tonight that he thought we were going direct from W.A. to Aden and therefore it was useless to look for us. I think two very useful lessons can be drawn from the fact that our long delay very nearly precipitated the catastrophe it was intended to prevent. Her captain seems to be what I hear from all sides a very pleasant man. He refused to give me his parole but I think wants to consider the position. I did not like taking in the prisoners - it cramps the men, prevents training and causes much extra work and may cause trouble with the troops. I would not have agreed had it entailed great discomfort to the troops.

. . . .

Extract from private letter from Major-General W.T. BRIDGES
to Senator G.F. PEARCE, dated 25/11/1914.

I have just received a message from the "MILTIADES" which is not intelligible but apparently indicates that 8 men deserted at Colombo. The O.C. troops allowed the men to bathe in the harbour - took no action to prevent it until the HAMPSHIRE threatened to send an armed boat to compel obedience to the Naval Officer's orders. One of these 8 men has been sent in from Colombo by the SYDNEY. I am afraid Major GRIFFITHS^{*} is useless.

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^(English reservists)
^{*} Major Griffiths was O.C. troops in the Miltiades - not
 Capt. Tom Griffiths.

4

Extract from private letter from Major-General W.T.BRIDGES
to Senator G.F.PEARCE, dated 3/1/1915.

Sir H. BARRIN wrote very strongly about the command of the 11th Battalion. I showed the letter to Sir G. REID and General BIRDWOOD - the latter thought some action ought to be taken at once but I felt nothing should be done until there was more to go on, except make arrangements for changing the C.O. if necessary.

. . . .

The deaths from pneumonia are due I believe to men getting drunk and lying out all night. I have appointed HOWSE A.D.M.S. with rank of Colonel and am much happier about the medical arrangements now. He reduced the expenses of MENA Hospital by £30 a day in three days.

. . . .

5

Extract from private letter from Major-General W.T.BRIDGES
to Senator G.F.PEARCE, dated 9th April, 1915.

In case I should not have the chance again I wish to let you know that I think Lieut.-Colonel FORSYTH has done most excellent work - is a very good and loyal commander deserving of recognition. FARR the Paymaster has done very well and should be born in mind. WHITE of course has been my right hand. HOWSE has pulled the Medical Units together and it will be owing to him that the ambulances are fit to do their work. PATTERSON works very hard and in the field with a definite task is quite good. I think myself very fortunate in my Staff who pull very well together.

. . . .

Extract from private letter dated 16/5/1915, from Senator G.F. PEARCE to Major-General W.T. BRIDGES; in reply to letters dated March 18th and April 4th which were received from the latter. (Note : General BRIDGES died of wounds before this letter had time to reach him.)

I am not surprised at your remarks re the Light Horse not being fit for the field. I have always felt that they are the best material but the worst trained and the officers not up to standard. Your comment re RYRIE is also not surprising. I felt that he was not competent for a brigade but as you know it was my predecessor's appointment.

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7

Extract from private letter from Major-General A.J. Godley to
Senator G.F. Pearce, dated 7th May, 1915.

Colonel MONASH had a very heavy responsibility, and a most anxious time without sleep or rest of any kind for about a week, and has done most admirably.

Of the commanding officers, it is hard to single any out, they have all done so well. Colonel BURNAGE, of the 13th, COURTNEY of the 14th, CANNAN the 15th, and POPE, the 16th, have all proved excellent leaders, and stout-hearted commanders. POPE'S battalion has, I am sorry to say, suffered most, and is reduced to only about three hundred of its original numbers.

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Extract from private letter from Major-General A.J.Godley to Senator G.F.Pearce, dated 19th May, 1915.

I must write a line to express to you my great grief at General BRIDGES having been so dangerously wounded. He was hit, as you will no doubt have heard, by a sharpshooter, and unfortunately the bullet cut the femoral artery of his thigh, and also another artery close to it, and though, fortunately, there was a doctor on the spot, he bled so much, that I am afraid he has little chance. I went out to see him on the hospital ship yesterday, but I fear he will not live to reach Alexandria. I cannot tell you how distressed we all are about it. He had gained the confidence and admiration of the whole Army Corps and had proved himself a most able and excellent divisional commander. He was absolutely fearless in action, and has set a most splendid example to all his men, of devotion to duty and soldierly resolution, under the trying circumstances and desperate fighting that we have had since we landed here.

For myself, I fear I have lost a great personal friend. We have worked together so much, and in such perfect ~~unity~~, that I feel his loss very deeply, and shall miss him more than I can say. Should he not recover, Australia has lost one of her best and gallantest sons, but an example will have been set by him to all our soldiers of the future of the high ideals and steadfast courage of a brave and able leader and commander.

Kamity

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Extract from private letter from Major-General A.J.Godley to Senator G.F.Pearce, dated 5th September, 1915.

I must write a line to express to you, on behalf of this Division, our sincere regret at the irreparable loss of Lieut.-Colonel ROWELL, Commanding the 3rd Light Horse Regiment.

He was an exceptionally brilliant and capable Officer, and one who I had hoped to recommend later for higher command. We all feel deeply the loss of one who was not only such a gallant and able soldier, but also a comrade who had endeared himself with all whom he came in contact.

. . . .

f

Extract from private letter from Major-General A.J.Godley to
Senator G.F.Pearce, dated 7th November, 1915.

I am sorry to say the 7th Brigade is leaving me to rejoin its own Division, and I would like to let you know that during the time it has been under my command, it has done a great deal of most excellent work, and has held, and consolidated, the Post called the APEX, which is probably, at this moment, the key of the whole Anzac position.

Colonel BURSTON, who commands the brigade, has not spared himself, and has shown the greatest possible zeal and energy in carrying out his duties. A senior officer of administrative ability being required to command all reinforcements at Mudros, he has now been selected by the Commander-in-Chief for this important post, where he will have a great deal of responsibility, but where, judging from what I have seen of his work here, I am sure he will not only command excellently the large numbers of men which he will have, but will also be able to give most valuable assistance to all your brigades, by installing into, and impressing upon all reinforcements before they reach here, the various points which his own experience in the Field has shown him are so necessary for them to know when they arrive. I hope he will be granted the rank of Brigadier-General. He has earned it by his work in the Field.

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Extract from private letter from Major-General A.J.Godley to
Senator G.F.Pearce, dated 10/1/1916.

There are many things that are not going quite as perfectly as one would wish but, generally speaking, I think you may be satisfied that everything in connection with your Force has been very well done, and I think the greatest credit is due to SELLHEM and his subordinates, and all others who were left in Egypt, for keeping things going as well as they have, and there is no doubt that all Military and Civil Authorities in Egypt have done everything in their power to help us.

I have arranged to reconstitute SELLHEM'S office, which has not hitherto embraced control of all units of the Australian Imperial Force outside the Army Corps, into what will be called the Headquarters of the Australian Imperial Force in Egypt and on IRVING'S arrival, he will not only command the Australian Training Battalions and other units, but will also be head of this Headquarters, and we will then find some other job for SELLHEM.

This will make IRVING the unquestioned and absolute head of everybody and everything Australian ~~and~~ not actually serving with the Army Corps, and will make him your representative, and my representative and the High Commissioner's representative, and all Imperial Authorities will refer all Australian questions to him. Further, it will be quite clear that he is the recognised head of, and commands, all Australians not serving with the Army Corps. This will put matters on a much better footing than they have been hitherto, and will make his position one of unquestioned authority and responsibility.

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Extract from private letter from Major-General A.J. Godley
to Senator G.F. Pearce, dated 16th March, 1916.

I hope you will be able to do something for General HUGHES, and Colonels BURSTON and SPENCER BROWN. They have all done such excellent service with us and are in all respects good officers, their only disability being their age and consequent physical incapacity to carry out, what is in this war, essentially a young man's job. I had General HUGHES, as you know, under my command for some time, and formed a high opinion of his valour and ability, and I only wish that he had been ten or twenty years younger and that his health would have stood the strain. The same applies to Colonel BURSTON, who did most admirable work as far as his health would allow. He also was under my command for some time. I saw less of SPENCER BROWN, but he also as far as I saw, was a first-rate officer, and all three are deserving of any consideration that you can give them.

In the case of Colonels BURSTON and SPENCER BROWN I think what they would appreciate more than anything else would be the grant of temporary rank of Brigadier-General, which they certainly earned by their command of brigades in the field under conditions which were exceptionally trying for men of their age.

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Extract from private letter from Major-General A.J.Godley to Senator G.F.Pearce, dated 27th April, 1916, in reply to letter received from the latter dated February 28th, 1916.

I am extremely sorry about IRVING, but am afraid there is no question but that he has not risen to the occasion or come up to the mark required for a brigadier. When General McCAY first reported it to me, I arranged for him to be given still further trial, and went into the question very carefully myself. But the result of this was only to confirm McCAY'S opinion, and to cause me to entirely agree with him, and I therefore had no option but to recommend that he should be removed. I hope that he may be given the opportunity of commanding the training battalions at Tel-el-Kebir, which is practically the job for which he was sent out. In view of what has happened to him now, and of the experience which he has gained, I believe he will do this alright, and it will give him a better chance.

I think POPE will do well. He has served under me ever since the 4th Brigade arrived in this country, about sixteen months ago, and I know him well. But, it is of course a great experiment to put a man without professional training into such a position, and it is only the very best who can rise to it. But many of them, as you know, like McCAY, HOLMES, PATON, &c., have done so with great success.

I am sorry about McNAGHTON, too, but he has been quite hopeless lately. McCAY is writing ^{fully} to you about him. McCAY is doing most excellent work, and I only hope that his health may stand. But I am afraid that he is in considerable pain still, either walking or riding, and latterly his stomach has been out of order to add to his troubles, but I would a good deal rather have him lame than a good many of the others sound, and therefore hope that he will manage to stick it out alright.

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Extract from private letter from Major-General A.J. Godley to
Senator G.F. Pearce, dated 31st May 1916.

The 4th Division begin entraining today, and by the middle of June we hope that both the 4th and 5th Divisions will have embarked. I myself go with my Corps Staff about the 6th June. The two Divisions are now well organised, well trained, and quite fit to take the field, except as regards their artillery, which still requires some practice. This, I expect, they will get when they arrive in France, by being sent to a practice camp, as I believe has been done in the case of those divisions which went with General BIRDWOOD.

The Commander-in-Chief has reviewed both Divisions in the course of the last few days, and expressed himself entirely satisfied with their turn-out and appearance, and I was very proud to be able to show him two such magnificent Divisions as they unquestionably are. They are just as good, if not better, in physique than the 1st and 2nd, and are unquestionably better trained, as we have had more opportunity of getting them together, and establishing bomb schools, bayonet fighting schools, musketry ranges, &c., &c., which there was not much opportunity of doing for the 1st and 2nd Divisions, as they were out on the front line almost all the time since they arrived back from Gallipoli till they went to France.

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We have got now quite an averagely good lot of regimental officers with the training Units, but it is the higher command that is weak, and excellent though he is in many ways, SPENCER BROWNE'S limitations do not admit of his satisfactorily training and administering such a large body of men. What is really wanted is a good, live, young, active, energetic Major-General.

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Extract from private letter from Major-General A.J.Godley
to Senator G.F.Pearce, dated 28/7/1916.

McCAY handled his Division excellently and did very well, though naturally he felt the responsibility of such a big command for the first time, and the casualties, very much. The three Brigadiers did very well, and handled their men particularly well, especially TIVEY and ELLIOTT, but POPE unfortunately broke down completely before the end of the battle, and McCAY was compelled to relieve him of his command, and it has been necessary to send him back to Australia. He is a gallant officer, and did extremely good work, as you know, under me with the 4th Brigade on the Peninsula, and, till this happened, has done extremely well here too, so I hope that his having failed now, under great strain, will not be counted against him for any work that he can do in Australia. I think few people realise what a terrific strain is put upon a man in high command in these desperate actions of modern warfare, and I do hope that you will not allow people to judge him hastily, or fail to give him full credit for all the good service he has done during the past two years.

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Extract from private letter from Major-General A.J.Godley to
Senator G.F.Pearce, dated 12/6/1917.

The attack of the 3rd Division was completely successful throughout its entire front, and the 9th and 10th Brigades established themselves on the final objective in a most gallant and skilful manner. General JOBSON did excellently, and proved himself, at his first trial, a thoroughly good and dependable Brigadier. General McNICOLL, who, as you know, has been proved before, was quite excellent, and both he and his Brigade came in for the heaviest shelling, and consequently, I am sorry to say, the heaviest casualties of any Brigade in the whole of the Corps. Notwithstanding this, they stuck most gallantly to the line they had won, and when I was eventually able to get them out of the line, they left for the 11th Brigade, which relieved them, a most thoroughly consolidated position. The 11th Brigade also did very well, and General CANNAN proved himself a good leader.

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Extract from private letter from Major-General A.J. Godley
to Senator G.F. Pearce, dated 8/7/1917.

I was very glad to get your cable of condolence on the death of General HOLMES, and am very much obliged to you for having informed his relatives of the remarks I made to you about him.

I think you will like to know from me that the circumstances of his death were such that no blame could be attached to anyone. He had asked me if he might take Mr HOLMAN to see the battlefield, and I had expressly stipulated that he was only to take him to a hill, which was reasonably safe, and from which he could get a view of it. He carried out these instructions strictly, and the place at which he was killed was a long way behind the trenches, and the shell which killed him was absolutely a chance shot, fired at a very long range, and on a spot which has been seldom, or never, shelled since our advance.

It was a pure bit of bad luck, which might happen to any visiter, or anybody, who comes to see us here, and I thought you would like to know this, in case it might be said by anyone that General HOLMES had taken Mr HOLMAN where he should not go, or that either of them had taken undue risk simply out of curiosity for sightseeing.

I have already written to you how HOLMES commanded his Division at the Battle of Messines, and I have good reason to know what a great loss he is to you, and to us all, as he was under my command for two of the biggest operations of this war, namely, the Evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula, where you will remember he was in temporary command of the 2nd Division, during the absence of General LEGGE, sick, and at this Battle of Messines.

I found him not only a most fearless and resolute Commander, but a very capable ~~man~~^{one}, and what I have said about his loss, not only to the Army of Australia, but to the Armies of the Empire, is no exaggeration. He was, in addition, a particularly lovable and delightful character, and we all mourn his loss most deeply and sincerely.

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(1)

Extract from private letter from Senator G.F.Pearce to General Sir W.R.Birdwood, dated 11th September, 1915, in reply to a letter dated 3rd June, 1915, received from the latter.

I trust that General LEGGE will be successful. I am aware that there has been some criticism among Australian Officers as to his being appointed to command the Division, but, as you may surmise, I know all our officers fairly well because of my long association with the Department as Ministerial head, and I also know there is some jealousy regarding LEGGE.

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On the introduction of our Defence Acts and the scheme for Universal Training he was my chief adviser on many points, and many of his recommendations were much too revolutionary for those Officers who clung to their old ideas.

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The Army Council on more than one occasion since the war have asked for his services. Under all these circumstances the Government felt that, on the death of BRIDGES and the desirability of appointing an Australian officer to the command, General LEGGE was the best available officer. Looking over the matter since I feel that I should have obtained the advice of Sir Ian HAMILTON and yourself before making my recommendation to the Government, as you were of course in a position to give us your opinion of those officers under your command. I feel with the utmost confidence that, if LEGGE is given the opportunity, he will more than justify the trust the Government have placed in him.

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Extract from private letter from General Sir W. R. Birdwood to Senator G. F. Pearce, dated 8/11/1915, in reply to letter dated 11/9/1915, received from the latter.

You will I know be glad to hear that General LEGGE is doing all right, and that I am quite satisfied with him, for I feel that he has justified his selection. Before he arrived, I of course heard all about the unpopularity and criticism regarding him, which you mention, and which one can to some extent understand, as he is possibly not altogether too thoughtful sometimes of other people's feelings. Several of the more senior officers let me know how hurt they felt at LEGGE'S selection, and even suggested that they could not serve under him. I of course pointed out that, being on active service, it was impossible to do anything but to accept his appointment loyally, and to do their very best to work for and under him. I am glad to say that they entirely in every case accepted what I said in the light I wished, and they have all played up absolutely loyally and well.

Since LEGGE joined us, we have of course been living entirely in trenches, so there has been no opportunity whatever of judging of his military qualifications as a general in the field, but he has tackled the problem before him, and has set about to organise his command in a thoroughly satisfactory manner, while I am always glad to be able to take advantage of his opinion and advice regarding any large question affecting our Australian troops as regards organisation and administration.

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I have placed CHAUVEL to act in command of the 1st Division. You will know that I originally did not feel justified in recommending him for this, but he strikes me as having become ^{much} more alert and resourceful of late, and to be more ready to assert himself and come to a decision than I had originally thought possible, so I feel it is only right that he should be given this acting command.

FORSYTH made a first-class commander of the 4th Light Horse Regiment, in which I know he was much respected and thought highly of. It was this that decided me to post him to the 2nd Infantry Brigade when the vacancy occurred, as there was no other senior officer available who seemed to be as good as he. As an infantry brigadier, he strikes me as not having fully risen to the occasion, and has always given me the impression that the command is just a bit too big for him. This being the case, I have felt he would be better placed in a brigade of some 1500 instead of 4000.

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I think there are likely to be other changes in brigade commands shortly, for I am afraid I have come to the conclusion that both Colonels BURSTON and SPENCER-BROWNE, though both of them most gallant, keen, willing and hard workers, are really rather on the old side to be able to be of full value where they are. I consequently recommended to the C.-in-C. here a short time ago that Colonel BURSTON might be given command of the large reinforcements' camp and organisation which exists at Mudros, and this was approved by him. I fear that Colonel BURSTON may not perhaps altogether be pleased about it, but I feel it is really in the interests of the Force that he should be succeeded by a younger man.

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On the breaking up of the 4th Light Horse Brigade I transferred SPENCER-BROWNE to the command of the 6th Infantry Brigade. I had then not seen him, but the transfer was carried out on LEGGE'S recommendation. LEGGE, however, now fully acknowledges that he made a mistake in this, and is very anxious to replace BROWNE.

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Extract from private letter from General Sir W.R. Bidwood to
Senator G.F. Pearce, dated 29th January, 1916.

I very much doubt if anyone, who has not been on the spot, can fully realise all the wonderfully good work which SELLHEIM has done here. He has been beset by worries and troubles of all sorts and from all sides, but has always kept his end up well, and has I think earned the gratitude and appreciation of all our senior Australian officers, as well as of General MAXWELL. Several of the senior men have spoken to me about him since my arrival here, asking me to make sure that his good services would not be overlooked. Before General BRIDGES' death, I remember he spoke to me about the possibility of giving SELLHEIM a brigade, while WHITE has more than once urged me to do this. Both of them were very emphatic about SELLHEIM'S gallantry, and ability to make a good brigade commander. This may be the case, and it is possible he may still be appointed as such, but personally I should be very sorry to see him leave his present appointment, as it would take any other man a considerable time to get all the various threads into his hands, and to carry on as well as SELLHEIM does. Also, I feel that, though what BRIDGES and WHITE told me may be right, SELLHEIM'S figure and stammer would make it difficult for him to carry out the very active work of a brigade-commander nowadays as well as a younger and slimmer man could do.

On IRVING'S arrival SELLHEIM wrote me a very nice letter pointing out that he felt his status was so much reduced, that he would like to be relieved of it, and be considered for a position in the field under me. He pointed out that he is seconded for ~~active~~ service with the A.I.F. from his peace appointment of A.G. of the Commonwealth, and 2nd Military Member of the Army Board, and is now asked to serve on the staff as D.A.G. of an officer who has been junior to him throughout his service, which he perhaps naturally looks upon as a humiliation. As I say, he writes perfectly nicely about it, and I hope I have been able to give him "the soft answer that turneth aside wrath." I have merely told him that I wish things to remain in statu quo for the present, until the question of the formation of our Australian Army is decided. Should this be accepted, and all the men here drafted into new formations, it would leave us with practically very few men here for training outside.

In these changed conditions, I think you might wish to alter the proposals, under which you originally sent IRVING here. He strikes me as rather too good to be left not doing very much, while he tells me his own inclination would be towards active work in the field. It seems to me, therefore, that he might well be employed as either a Brigadier-General on the General Staff of the Australian Corps, or in command of an Australian Brigade, while if we still want a senior officer to supervise matters here, we might perhaps nominate General HUGHES for this - however, I will telegraph to you about all this shortly when things are more settled. In the meantime, I have asked IRVING to look around, and get all details thoroughly into his head. After doing this, and seeing what he thinks can be done for the best, I will probably wire to you. ^{so}

In connection with this, I should be very glad if you could now see your way to grant SELLHEIM the rank of Brigadier-General. As I say, he really has carried on excellently here in most uncongenial work, which he has stuck to without grumbling though I know he wanted to be with us at the front.

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Extract from private letter from General Sir W.R. Birdwood to
Senator G.F. Pearce, dated 20/2/1916.

We are rather pleased to hear that seventy senior German and Turkish officers are now being tried by court-martial at Constantinople for having let us get away untouched - a rather amusing commentary on the yarns started at Home that we bribed the Turks to let us get away!

I do not know if you have seen an article, which appeared recently in one of the German papers, from an officer apparently in charge of a big Austrian howitzer battery, describing how he had got his guns into position the day before we evacuated, and that they were actually going to start bombarding us on the morning after we had left. His disappointment at finding he had no target was quite dramatic!

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You will have seen that we have given brigades to ELLIOTT, GLASGOW, IRVING, and GLASFURD. The first named I have only put in temporarily so far, as I have heard conflicting reports as to his suitability. I hear that some of the infantry officers are indignant at the selection of GLASGOW, thinking that some of them should have been selected in preference to a Light Horse officer. GLASGOW has, however, proved himself to be such an efficient commander, that there was I think a general consensus of feeling among the senior Australian officers that he was undoubtedly the man to select. I had, as a matter of fact, in the first instance, thought of BRAND, and I think it quite possible that he may get the next brigade; but CHAUVEL was so emphatic about the want of discipline in his battalion, that I have had to tell him he must improve this before he can be considered.

I find WHITE - HOWSE - AUSTIN and GRIFFITHS invaluable. I will ask for rank of Major-General for WHITE directly an Army is sanctioned. He can be appointed my Chief Staff Officer.

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Extract from private letter from General Sir W.R. Birdwood to
Senator G.F. Pearce, dated 24th March, 1916.

When I had to raise these two Divisions here - the 4th and 5th, the question of their commanders of course was one of the first to be considered.

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MONASH I regard as a man of very considerable ability, and with good administrative powers, and I think he would do capitally commanding a division in peace time. It was owing to the fact that I was not, however, at all so sure of his ability to do this, and to do full justice to the troops serving under him that I felt I could conscientiously recommend him as suitable in all respects to command a division in the field, when actually fighting the enemy. He has not shown that resolution which is really essential, while, as you probably know, there is I believe among a considerable number of the force a great feeling against him on account of what they consider his German extraction. I of course heard about this at the time he joined us, but I had equally of course set myself against listening to such stories, but knowing as I do that a feeling does exist against him among a large proportion of the force, I ~~cannot~~ can hardly perhaps be expected to urge his advancement, unless I feel confident that there was no doubt whatever about his being really exceptional as a commander in all other respects, and this you will see I do not consider to be the case.

HOLMES I have always taken a fancy to, and personally like much, but he is practically untried, and has not shown any such outstanding qualifications as a brigadier as to warrant his being given ~~such~~ an important appointment as Divisional General now. He officiated for some time in command of a division during the latter days at Anzac, when LEGGE was away sick, and when General GODLEY was commanding the Army Corps; I myself being away at that time in command of the Dardanelles Army. I may mention that General GODLEY then informed me that he had not his confidence as a divisional general, and was anxious that he should be replaced. To this I did not agree, as I wished HOLMES to have a chance of showing his value. I am sorry to say that no such chance occurred, as we shortly after evacuated without incident.

There remains WHITE, about whom I cannot say too much. He is undoubtedly fitted to command a division and would I am sure do it admirably, but occupying as he does such a very high position on my staff, I feel he is of far greater value to the Australian force and to the Empire as my Chief of Staff than he would be as a divisional general. He helps me and advises me on all Australian matters, and I always feel he is a man whose advice is of real value - indeed, I should feel very lost without him. I am most anxious to see him promoted to Major-General, but until an Australian and New Zealand Army is formed I hesitate to recommend him for this, though I have just recommended that he should receive pay at the rate of £1,200 per year, and I do most earnestly hope that this may be approved.

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RYRIE, as you probably know, is no great scientific soldier, and would certainly want a very good staff officer to help him, but he has some character, and is I think popular and trusted throughout his brigade.

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A man of whom I had first thought was BRAND, who had always struck me favourably when commanding his brigade in the trenches. When discussing his qualifications with CHAUVEL, however, he told me that his battalion was now in such a bad state of discipline that it was impossible for him to recommend him to move up to brigade command. When the appointments were announced, BRAND sent in a representation ~~arguing~~ regarding his supercession, and I am glad he did so, as it enabled me to inform him of the reason why he had not been selected, and I sincerely trust he will take steps to rectify this, and I hope be qualified when another vacancy may occur.

Two men, who impressed us all rather favourably, and whom I always hoped to consider, were ELLIOTT and A.J.BENNETT. The latter is still away sick in England, so cannot be considered now, but ELLIOTT as you know I recommended. I am sorry to say he does not seem to have begun at all well, and I am very doubtful as to whether it will be possible to confirm him, though I trust he may improve. He suddenly seems to have become a bull in a china shop, and has already put up the backs of three of his commanding officers. I have every sympathy with the territorial feeling as likely to produce esprit de corps, and for that reason it was that I put him to the 15th Victorian Brigade. He, however, apparently wishes to ride the territorial system to death, and because he happened to find officers commanding battalions who were not Victorians, he at once seemed to make a set against them, and reported upon them as useless. He drove IRVING (who was officiating in command of the division pending McCAY'S arrival) nearly wild, so I am glad McCAY has arrived to judge for himself. ELLIOTT as a battalion commander served in McCAY'S brigade, so they know each other well, and I know McCAY is well disposed towards him, so they start fair. I have told McCAY of the difficulties I have had, and that I rely upon him to keep an eye on ELLIOTT, and I hope make a good brigadier of him, but that if he finds that impossible, he will have to be replaced.

The last brigade to fall vacant, in place of Colonel GWYNN, R.E., who has gone to the Staff, I have filled by the appointment of GELLIBRAND, whom you probably know. He is a very quiet, unassuming man, who does not attract one at all at first, as he is not forth-coming by nature. He possesses, however, an extraordinary influence over the men generally, and I understand his appointment gives satisfaction.

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Extract from private letter from General Sir W.R. Birdwood to
Senator G.F. Pearce, dated 3rd July, 1916.

I am not sure if I have ever properly thanked you for approving the higher rate of generals' pay to General WHITE. I am indeed most grateful for this, as he has done such a lot of really good work for the A.I.F., and so thoroughly deserves anything he gets. I think I told you I feel he is perfectly competent to command a division, but I feel that his services are so much more valuable here as Chief Staff Officer of the Force, that it is better to retain him.

. . . .

I am very sorry about IRVING. The trouble with him occurred after I had left Egypt, so I really knew no details then. McCAY has, however, spoken to me a good deal about it since he arrived here, and he assures me he found IRVING quite incapable of commanding his brigade properly. I gather that there was a most regrettable incident when the Prince of Wales came to see them. The Brigade had been marched down from Tel-el-Kebir to Ismailia in extremely hot weather, and I rather gather that this was bad management on IRVING'S part, who did not arrange for them to do so during the night. The result was that many men were knocked out, and I understand that some of them even died. The Prince came to see them shortly after their arrival, and I hear that after giving cheers for him they hooted the Brigadier - a really terrible thing to happen, for it is liable to give such a wrong impression about our men, and I cannot think that such a thing could happen, if the men had been handled ~~judiciously~~ judiciously generally by IRVING.

TIVEY has arrived with his brigade, and I must say he always strikes me most favourably. I mentioned this to McCAY, saying that I presumed that he regarded TIVEY as his best brigadier, and rather to my astonishment he told me that he could not say he considered this to be the case at present.

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I will answer your official letter about the chaplains later on. Just before we left Egypt, I took the Prince of Wales to a church service with the 3rd Brigade, when I ordered a united service of all denominations but Roman Catholics. I was rather amused to hear afterwards that the Senior Chaplain in Egypt had called upon the chaplain of that brigade (who has since returned to Australia) for an explanation. I heard nothing of this till I got to France, when I at once wrote to Egypt explaining that we held these united services in accordance with the note at the beginning of the "form of service" which you issued to the troops, and with which I personally most thoroughly agree, and I may add that I invariably attend such services every Sunday with all the different brigades in turn.

I am afraid I am no theologian, and am not prepared to enter into controversies on the subject with the Bishops, but I must say it always seems to me as a broadminded view to take that we all worship the one and same God, and that it only seems right to do so together - "One in faith and doctrine, one in charity" - however, those are always dangerous subjects to enter on!

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This I think would mean the elimination of SPENCER-BROWNE, which I should not altogether regret, as I fear he is not really good enough for the work required.

. . . .

Headquarters, 2nd Anzac,
21st July, 1916.

Confidential and Pressing.

A.M.S.,
2nd Army.

I beg to report, for the information of the Army Commander, that I have been compelled to relieve Colonel H. Pope, C.B., commanding 14th Australian Infantry Brigade, of his command. His Divisional Commander found him yesterday afternoon in a state of collapse and quite incapable of exercising his command, and after investigation of his conduct and bearing in the fighting of the last two days, I arrived at the conclusion that he was not competent to continue ~~xxxxxxx~~ to command his brigade. Under these circumstances, I have ordered him to report at his divisional headquarters at Sully, and will be glad of instructions as to his disposal.

In the meantime, I have telegraphed to Lt.-General Sir W.R. Birdwood, commanding Australian Imperial Force, asking him to send another officer this afternoon to relieve Colonel Pope, and failing his being able to do this, I have said that I wish to ask the 2nd Army to nominate an officer to succeed him in command of this brigade.

(S'gd) A.J. Godley,
Lt.-General,
Cdg. 2nd Anzac Corps.

(2)

M.S. to C.-in-C.

No. 15931.

I have gone into this very carefully with the Corps commander, and I entirely agree with his action in relieving Brigadier-General Pope of the command of the 14th Australian Infantry Brigade.

I recommend that he be sent back to Australia.

I do not know if Sir W. Birdwood is able to nominate an officer qualified to succeed Brigadier-General Pope.

If he cannot do so, I recommend Lieut.-Colonel C.J. Hobkirk, Cdg. 11th Battn., Essex Regiment.

It is very important that the vacancy should be filled as soon as possible.

(S'gd) Herbert Plumer,
General,
Cdg. 2nd Army.

22nd July 1916.

Headquarters, 5th Australian
Division,
21/7/1916.

Headquarters,
2nd A.N.Z.A.C.

1. I regret to have to report that I was compelled to have to relieve from duty this morning Colonel H. POPE, C.B., commanding 14th Infantry Brigade.

2. The Corps Commander is aware of the position.

3. The reason for relieving Colonel POPE from duty is that yesterday afternoon, 20th instant, I visited Colonel POPE'S Headquarters to talk with him over the reorganisation of his brigade. I found him, despite the gravity of the situation following on our heavy losses of the previous twenty-four hours or so, and our having had to retire from the German trenches, incapable of comprehending or doing anything.

4. He has now (3.30 p.m.) reported in pursuance of a memo I sent to him at 10 a.m. as follows :-

(Copy.)

H.Q., 5th Australian Division,
21/7/1916.

Colonel H. POPE, C.B.,
Commanding 14th Infantry Brigade.

"Yesterday afternoon, 20th July, about 4.30 p.m., I myself found you incapable of comprehending an order, or performing any part of your duties.

"I now relieve you of your command, and direct you to report to the A.A.&Q.M.G., who will allot you a billet.

"I am recommending that you be returned to Australia forthwith for discharge."

(Sgd) J.W. McCAY,
Major-General,
Commanding 5th Australian Division.

5. I accordingly recommend Colonel POPE'S return to Australia forthwith for discharge.

6. I regret this exceedingly, for Colonel POPE behaved with skill, courage and energy during the whole operation of 19th/20th July; but it is impossible to continue him in command, when there is the least liability of his suddenly making himself unable to command, and I have reason to believe the occurrence is not isolated.

(Sgd) J.W. McCAY,
Major-General,
Commanding 5th Australian Division.

Extract from private letter from General Sir W.R. Birdwood to
Senator G.F. Pearce, dated 14/7/1916.

I yesterday received your telegram asking my views as regards disseminating the powers vested in me by Order-in-Council of 15th September, 1915, to the G.O.C., 2nd Anzac, and General CHAUVEL. I at once replied without hesitation recommending that the present status quo should be continued without alteration.

In doing this I was chiefly actuated by the fact that it is I think so very essential that there should be one head for the whole A.I.F. as the only possible means of ensuring uniformity, coordination, and justice to all. With the one head it is possible to keep a general list of officers and to balance the claims and qualifications of all, when an appointment has to be made. If identical powers were vested in more than one authority, it would mean that we should have ~~one~~^{two} or three small groups or circles, each of which would inevitably become a watertight compartment, with perhaps undesirable rivalries and jealousies. As it is, if the command, we will say, of a brigade or a battalion falls vacant, I can look through the whole of the A.I.F. and nominate the most suitable officer. If, however, powers were vested in the G.O.C., 2nd Anzac, he might be inclined to consider nobody outside the divisions in his own corps, etc.

As regards the 1st and 2nd Anzac Corps, however, there is no difficulty at all, and, as a matter of fact, there was no difficulty even when the 2nd Corps was in Egypt and the 1st was in Egypt France. Mr Hughes will have told you that he urged on the Commander-in-Chief here his wish that, failing the formation of an Australian and New Zealand Army, at all events, the whole of the Australian troops should remain under me for administrative purposes. Sir D. HAIG quite saw the point of this, and at once agreed.

As regards CHAUVEL, the matter is of course slightly different in that his division has remained in Egypt, though I still have some hopes that it may eventually come to this country. Even though it is not here, I would not recommend making any changes. The powers which I have passed on to CHAUVEL enable him to carry ~~on~~ on perfectly comfortably, and without delays, for it only means that he has to send in his higher appointments for approval. At the same time, while his troops remain part of the A.I.F. under me, it enables me to call upon Light Horse officers, if necessary, to fill staff appointments with the rest of the force, and, as a matter of fact, I have just done this in getting an officer over from Egypt for a vacancy caused by the formation of the staff of the 3rd Division.

The other point which also weighs with me in suggesting no alteration is the fact that at present things seem to be running ~~par-lyx~~ very smoothly, and I understand to the satisfaction of all the senior Australian officers, and this being the case, it would seem a pity to make any alterations.

I think you might very well consider the advisability of wiring to the War Office and suggesting that the camelry and indeed all surplus men in Egypt should at once be sent over to England as general reinforcements for France, leaving in Egypt the bare Light Horse regiments only; or you might even go further, and suggest that the 11th and 12th Light Horse should also be sent over as dismounted reinforcements, for they are really only attached to brigades, and I understand have not yet even been mounted. Why I suggest this to you is that I think that, unless such a proposal is made by you, it would not strike the War Office, while they would probably not welcome such a proposal coming direct from me for reasons which I think I mentioned in my last letter.

Extract from private letter from General Sir W.R.Birdwood to
Senator G.F.Pearce, dated 23rd July, 1916.

Your telegram approving the grant of the rank of Brigadier General to POPE was just about to be issued, but as it had not actually been promulgated, I have decided not to publish it at all, and there will therefore be no question of his ever having been granted the rank and having to relinquish it again, as he of course naturally would do on giving up the brigade command.

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Extract from private letter from General Sir W.R.Birdwood to
Senator G.F.Pearce, dated 1st August, 1916.

With reference to my letter of the 23rd July, in which I enclosed correspondence about Colonel POPE, I write to let you know that soon after I despatched it, Colonel POPE asked if he might have an interview with me. I of course at once agreed, when he came to see me and laid his case before me. He assured me that he had not been drunk, and that he would not have felt being relieved of his command, and would have been quite prepared to go, but for the imputation made against him of having been drunk. He explained to me what had happened to him from his point of view, and I had to tell him that, looking at it from an entirely unprejudiced attitude, the impression left on my mind was that there were certainly good foundations for the accusation. I, however, told him that, as this had been made, and as he naturally wished to stand clear in your eyes, it was permissible for him to make any statement he desired, and procure the statements of any witnesses he would like to call, and that I would like to see that these were all forwarded to you together with General McCAY'S statements, and these you will receive in due course.

. . . .

You will have seen a wire from Sir D. HAIG regarding the capture of Pozieres. As a matter of fact, after all the heavy fighting we had on the Peninsula, I think we Anzacs have not looked upon it as such a great feat as the Commander-in-Chief and others here regard it, for it certainly does not compare with the attack on Lone Pine in actual hand-to-hand and determined fighting.

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Extract from private letter from General Sir W.R.Birdwood to Senator G.F.Pearce, dated 14th August, 1916.

I have just sent you a telegram containing my recommendation regarding the removal of Brigadier-General RANKIN from the command of his Brigade. I am only so sorry I have not had a chance of seeing him personally, but on receipt of the memorandum regarding him from General MONASH, copy of which I now enclose, you will I know agree with me that there was no alternative but to remove him. I need not say how sorry I am about this, as I would naturally so much have liked to see him having a chance of commanding his brigade in the field, but in view of General MONASH'S report, I am sure you will realise that we could not possibly risk this. Colonel CANNAN has done very well in the recent fighting we have had here, and as he commanded a battalion in MONASH'S brigade through the whole of the Gallipoli fighting, and was I know approved of by him, I have every hope that he will make a good and efficient brigadier

In addition to General MONASH'S report, I also received a letter from General Sir H.SCLATER, who is the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Southern Command, telling me that everything was going well with our 3rd Division on Salisbury Plain with the exception of General RANKIN, with whom he was not at all satisfied. I may mention that before sending me his first report on the subject, General MONASH had shown this to General SCLATER, and informed him that he was submitting it to me.

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The next vacancy, however, that does occur in this way, I propose putting forward the name of General HOLMES, who has certainly done very well in the recent fighting while commanding his brigade. Between ourselves, I wish I could say that I was equally satisfied with LEGGE. The latter is no doubt a very able officer with good powers of administration and organisation, but I am afraid I am never able to feel anything like the same confidence in him as a divisional commander that I do in both Generals COX and WALKER when their divisions are engaged, and I feel that but for the fact of his having a really excellent staff officer in Colonel BRIDGES, I should have experienced considerable anxiety about the division. Things, however, I am glad to say worked out most satisfactorily, and his three brigadiers - Generals HOLMES, PATON, and GELLIBRAND, were all excellent.

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You will I am sure be delighted to hear that our troops have not only maintained the reputation they gained on the Peninsula, but have if anything considerably added to this, and no words of mine could possibly express all I feel regarding their magnificent behaviour in all the heavy fighting we have had round Pozieres since we attacked it on the 21st of last month. A French officer, who was up there with me the other day, told me that he thought our mutual bombardments were as heavy as anything the French had ^{had} to face at Verdun.

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I am so glad to know from what I have heard that you take the same view regarding this wretched Dardanelles - and I expect this Mesopotamian Commission, as I do. I cannot help feeling that the appointment of both commissions, at all events, while the war is going on is a most appalling mistake. I cannot see that such things can result in anything but recriminations, while I am sure that none of us want to see anything done but what is going to help us to win this war. If, when the war is over, commissions can show us what to do to help ^{us} to win the next, then by all means have them - otherwise far better to leave them alone altogether. I am most earnestly hoping that I will not be called upon to give evidence in any way when the commissions assemble. I was, as a matter of fact, only in a subordinate position ~~when~~ ^{until} Sir Ian HAMILTON left the Peninsula, so I am hoping that I will not be considered to be necessary. I cannot think that there is anything that I could say that would (as I have said) tend in any way to help to finish the war, while in unguarded moments, or when taken at a disadvantage, one might be led into something which would hurt the feelings of others, and without doing

any good. I do hope that the members of the commission will all take this view, and do their best to avoid washing more dirty linen in public than they can help - but I suppose if this is the line they take, the commission might just as well never have assembled!

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I doubt the advisability of utilising Colonel BRUCHE'S services at the front - at all events at present. Once the men got hold of the idea that he had German proclivities, I fear that he would lose their confidence, and consequently could be of little value.

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Extract from private letter from General Sir W.R.Birdwood to
Senator G.F.Pearce, dated 22nd August, 1916.

The Imperial Camel Corps does not form part of the A.I.F., and personally I was very sorry that Sir John MAXWELL, wired to you asking if he might form some of our men into camel companies. I was at the time just arranging the evacuation of the Peninsula, and by some accident his telegram on the subject was not referred to me, otherwise I should have advised on the subject.

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Extracts from Report from General MONASH, dated 4/8/16, on General RANKIN, and enclosed in a private letter from General Birdwood to Senator Pearce, dated 22nd August, 1916.

I regret that I have to report unfavourably upon Lieut.-Colonel (Temporary Brigadier-General) C.D.W.RANKIN, V.D., Commanding 11th Australian Infantry Brigade, and that I consider him unsuited and unqualified for the command of a brigade, and I recommend that he be transferred to other duty, or otherwise disposed of.

The reasons upon which this recommendation is based are set out in detail in statement annexed.

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On July 21st, during my first tour of the Divisional Camp at Lark Hill, I visited the Headquarters of the 11th Brigade, and after some little delay, saw Brigadier-General RANKIN, and briefly conversed with him. He smelt strongly of alcoholic liquor, but was otherwise coherent.

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On August 1st, the Division was inspected by the Commander-in-Chief, Southern Command. The Brigadier of the 11th Infantry Brigade made a very bad impression upon him and me. There was considerable delay before he reported, in spite of two messages sent to him to hurry up. When he rode up he did not appear to know where his several units were, or what work they were doing and showed a general ineptitude in the situation. There was hesitation and confusion in his answers to the Commander-in-Chief's questions; and he failed to ride beside him during the remainder of the inspection of his Units. Sir H. SCLATER expressed himself to me as dissatisfied with his bearing and demeanour.

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He did not put in an appearance at the conference, and I then sent the acting A.D.M.S. to visit and examine him. The latter (Lieut. Colonel MAGUIRE) has since reported that he called on him about 7 p.m. and that he had to wait some time before he could see him. He did see him and spoke to him for some time, and formed the very decided opinion that he was under the influence of liquor; his appearance was flushed and his speech slightly incoherent. Although when asked, he complained of rheumatic pains in the shoulder, there was, in the opinion of Lt.-Col. MAGUIRE, nothing in his physical condition in this particular respect to have disabled him from keeping an important engagement such as the conference, had he really wished to do so. On again calling upon him this morning at about 9 a.m. Lt.-Col. MAGUIRE was informed that the Brigadier was in his quarters but that he could not be seen.

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Extract from private letter from General Sir W.R. Birdwood to Senator G.F. Pearce, dated 16th October, 1916.

I want to explain to you about the raising of those five howitzer batteries (116 to 120) as I am particularly anxious that you should not think I have been guilty in any way of discourtesy towards you in the matter. As you know, I wired suggesting that we should raise the ~~battalions~~ ^{batteries} here from ~~our~~ our surplus artillerymen, and that the men you now have in Australia should be used as reinforcements. As soon as I got your wire saying that you would rather send the batteries complete from Australia, as they had already been raised, unless the War Office particularly asked to the contrary, I at once fell in with your views which I communicated to the War Office, hoping that they also would agree. I found, however, that the War Office had, before receipt of your telegram, already wired to you asking that the batteries should be formed in England, and I only wish to assure you now that this was done entirely on their own initiative, and without either a reference or hint from me on the subject.- indeed, on receipt of your telegram I hoped that the War Office would cancel theirs and accept your views. I gather, however, that you are now willing to have the batteries raised here, and will use the men in Australia as reinforcements.

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Extract from private letter from Senator G.F.Pearce to
General Sir W.R.Birdwood, dated 6th October, 1915,
in reply to letters dated 14th and 22nd August.

In regard to the removal of Colonel RANKIN from his command of a brigade, I regret of course that his behaviour has made this necessary. Before he left Australia I knew he had a failing in regard to alcohol but he gave me a promise that he would entirely abstain from it and I trusted him.

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Extract from private letter from General Sir W.R.Birdwood to
Senator G.F.Pearce, dated 12th November, 1916.

Sir Douglas HAIG came to see me a day or two later, and told me he had informed the DUKE OF CONNAUGHT that he regarded our army corps as among the best disciplined troops here!

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He told me that the DUKE OF CONNAUGHT had expressed surprise at his remark, at which he replied :- "Yes! because when they are ordered to attack they always do so!

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ANTILL^x has taken over the 2nd Brigade from FORSYTH. The latter went sick, but I had hoped only temporarily. The doctors, however, told me they did not think he would be fit to return to active service in France for some considerable time, so I thought it just as well he should go back to Australia, where his services will undoubtedly be of value in exchange for one of the eight officers whom you are sending to us.

^xI am a little doubtful about him - he seems to have aged and is so far not the success I had hoped.

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Extract from private letter from General Sir W.R. Birdwood
to Senator G.F. Pearce, dated 30th November, 1916.

In HOWELL-PRICE we have lost a most excellent commanding officer - hardworking, conscientious and brave, in whom I have always felt the greatest reliance.

WISDOM has taken over PATON'S brigade, and I hope will do much in the way of pulling it together, which it really wants, as PATON, though a good, brave officer who refuses to see difficulties, yet is rather inclined not to go sufficiently into details. WISDOM I hope will put this right.

I have just had to remove two commanding officers in that brigade in WALKER and O'DONNELL. The former is as brave as a lion, and would I think always be prepared to attack anything. He is, however, inclined to be the "bull in the china shop", and I doubt if he has the ability to command a battalion properly. Both he and O'DONNELL failed the other day, when their battalions were serving under General HOLMES, and both he and LEGGE reported to me they had lost their confidence. This being the case, there was nothing to do but to remove them, and I hope that in TRAVERS and MURPHY from the 5th Brigade I have got better men to replace them.

WALKER is very indignant about it, but I told him I have to consider the efficiency of the force and the lives of our brave men rather than his own feelings. I have pointed out to him that I consider (as I do very strongly) that he had done his full share of work, and that being over 50 years of age he really is too old to command a battalion in these strenuous times, and must be prepared to make way for a younger man. He certainly is a marvellously energetic ~~and~~ and young man for his age, and I do not think we have a single individual who could beat him for courage, while I know that time after time he has himself led his battalion over the parapet to an attack, and set a magnificent example in this way. I consequently cannot help feeling sorry for him, as I know he hates going, but I have explained to him that it really is no slur whatever on a man to be overtaken by "Time", and that this is what I feel is against him now.

. . . .

Another officer I am losing, but I hope only temporarily, is Colonel GRIFFITHS, who has been seedy for some little time, and who I feel wants a change. I am therefore sending him over to London to ANDERSON, and am getting WHITHAM in his place. GRIFFITHS is, however, so very averse to the idea of leaving us that I have promised he shall come back to us again in three weeks or a month, if he is really fit by then.

I am moving Colonel BLAMEY from G.S.O.I. of the 1st Division to the command of a battalion. He has undoubtedly proved himself a good officer, and is anxious to get a brigade command, for which his seniority is now ripe. I have told him that I am not prepared to entrust him with a brigade until I see how he can command a battalion, for he has not yet had an opportunity of proving himself a leader or commander of men. He does not like this decision at all, thinking he should have been given a brigade straight away, but I have told him that, if he is going to prove a good brigadier, I know that his value will be enhanced tenfold by the experience gained as a battalion commander, in which position one finds out exactly where the shoe pinches, and what has to be done for the welfare of the men, and to utilise to the greatest advantage their magnificent fighting qualities.

. . . .

LEGGÉ is doing better again now. He undoubtedly has the best interests of the A.I.F. at heart, is energetic, and has good knowledge, but I often wish he had more of the personal factor which engenders complete confidence in all those serving under him.

Colonel McGLINN, A.Q.M.G. of the 5th Division, has lately been invalided, and in his place I am getting out BRUCHE. The latter struck me as an energetic and a "live" man, when I saw him at Salisbury, and I hope that after his time there any feeling against him may have died down. Bringing him out, too, for trial in an administrative ~~department~~ appointment should give him time to settle down quietly here and if he does well, to gain the confidence of those in the Division. I spoke to McCAY about it before coming to a decision, and McCAY after thinking it over said he was quite prepared to take him - and I think quite glad of the change, for though McGLINN is a good man, his figure is much against his being able to be active and about the place seeing to things as he should do.

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Extract from private letter from General Sir William Birdwood to Senator G.F.Pearce, dated 15th February, 1917.

I hear LEGGE returns to Australia almost at once. He has I hear been very sore while in London at losing the command of his Division and may I think be ungenerous in what he says when he gets back, so I hope you may be able to take "cum grano" unfavourable remarks he may have to make about things here generally.

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Extract from private letter from General Sir W.R.Birdwood to
Senator G.F.Pearce, dated 11th March, 1917.

After receiving your telegram about the possibility of Anderson returning to Australia, I spoke to him on the subject with a view to ascertaining what his real wishes were on the subject. He has done such good work for us, that I am only anxious to fall in with what will be to his own interests. He very kindly told me that he would place himself entirely in my hands, and would either remain on in England or return to Australia, as I thought best. I had to say that he was in really a better position to judge as to where his services could be utilised to the best interests of the Commonwealth Government, as he was naturally so much more conversant with the value of the role which he would be called on to undertake in Australia, while he, too, would know better than I should as to the back of the work in connection with his office in London being really broken. He assured me that he really has got to the bottom of all the intricate financial arrangements at the War Office, and from now onwards he thinks that any successor could carry out such work quite satisfactorily. I gather on the whole that he would prefer to return to Australia, and we finally decided that he should wire to you placing the matter in your hands.

. . . .

Extract from private letter from General Sir W.R. Birdwood to
Senator G.F. Pearce, dated 2nd April, 1917.

Thank you so much for your letters of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd of February, all of which I have just received.

I am delighted to hear the excellent account you have given me of Colonel Heritage, about whom I had heard exactly the same reports as you have written, and you may be sure that I will do everything possible to place him to the greatest advantage. It may not be possible to put him straight away into a good, suitable appointment on his arrival, owing to want of opportunity, but I will see that he is not overlooked, and that he is suitably placed when a vacancy occurs for him, as I shall be very glad indeed to have him.

Thank you so much, too, for having wired to me about Colonel Dodds, who will I am sure prove to be a capital A.A.G. in place of Griffiths. It will I am sure be an advantage, too, that he should have come straight from you, and be able to give me absolutely up-to-date information regarding all that is going on in Australia, and about your ideas generally, for, as you know, I am always naturally anxious to do ~~anything~~ everything possible to carry out the wishes of the Commonwealth Government.

I am only a little apprehensive that with these elections before us anything may happen resulting in a change of Government. It would I am sure be most disastrous in the interests of the A.I.F. to have any change in our Defence Minister, but I trust there is no likelihood of this. I had hoped at one time that you would be coming to represent Australia at the Conference, and it is a matter of the deepest regret to all of us that she alone is not being represented. However, that cannot be helped, and we can only hope that she will shortly work out her own political salvation, and that we may see Mr Hughes settled down ere long with a strong Government determined to look after the best interests of the country - which from our purely local point of view ~~means~~ here means the keeping up to strength of our magnificent A.I.F. units. It was the honour and privilege of Australia to originally send them, and they have I am sure fully upheld and added to the honour of Australia. Should the time come when we have to begin breaking up units, I am afraid that the heart-burning will be terrible, and I really shall not know what to do as regards starting on the slaughter of the innocents!

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Thank you so very much especially for your letter of the 3rd regarding the appointment of Imperial and Australian officers respectively in positions with us. As you know, I am fully determined to carry out your policy in this respect, and never lose an opportunity of appointing an Australian officer when it is feasible. As a matter of fact I have hopes that in practically all future vacancies it may be possible to appoint Australian officers. I had hoped that this would have been the case some little time ago, but early in the winter we certainly had a most unexpected and I think, quite abnormal epidemic of vacancies among senior officers, when LEGGE, M'CAY, COX, PATON, GLASFURD, ANTILL, MACLAGAN, CHRISTIAN^x, FORSYTH, RANKIN, and POPE all had to be replaced for one reason or another. Several commanding officers, too, happened to be temporarily laid up at the same time, and were not therefore available just when one wanted them;

^x You will have seen he has since been returned to Australia, the medical authorities having reported him unfit for further service.

The last three in the Imperial Service, whom I have been able to have sent to us are, as a matter of fact, all Australians, viz; SALIER, OSBORNE, and WYLLY.

but, even then, the only senior Imperial officers appointed were SMYTH and LESSLIE. Both of these had been with us through the whole of our fighting at Anzac and elsewhere. Both have I think the complete confidence of our officers and men, and are much liked by them - in fact, I think I can say without exaggeration that both appointments have been extremely welcome, and they are giving confidence where they are.

As a matter of fact, though, realising as I do that Australian officers must be given preference, I have only recently asked the Military Secretary at G.H.Q. to note the names of Brigadier-Generals LESSLIE and HOBKIRK (the latter, you will remember, was sent to us without my having any say in the matter, when the 5th Division were with 2nd Anzac) for transfer, when an opportunity occurs, to the command of English brigades, and I have said I should like to replace them ~~with~~ by Australian officers, who are now available. HOBKIRK, as a matter of fact, has done excellently in command of our 14th Brigade, ~~xxx~~ where I know they will be extremely sorry to lose him.

I have also asked that my Chief Engineer, who came with me from India, may be considered for employment elsewhere, with a view to promoting ~~my~~ Colonel FOOTT to succeed him. Also, it is just possible that my Chief Artillery Officer, General NAPIER, may be invalided, in which case I propose that General COXON should succeed him. HOBBS would naturally have been the first for consideration, but having got command of a division, he has gone beyond that. There are of course others, such as JOHNSTONE and ROSENTHAL, who are seniors to COXON, but neither of them have the great, technical artillery knowledge, which is essential for the chief artillery officer of a corps, who is responsible for really highly technical work in connection with the co-ordination of fire of the heavy batteries, very often in conjunction with the field artillery of divisions.

As I wired to you in my last letter, when the question comes up for the command of the 6th Division, the names I shall recommend to you are :-

- (1) MACLAGAN.
- (2) GELLIBRAND.
- (3) BRAND.

The first named is the senior, and I think undoubtedly the best qualified, and his long association with the A.I.F. both in Australia and in action would I think make his appointment most popular among the troops. GELLIBRAND I think would also do well, as he has the necessary knowledge, and is much respected by all ranks, but I am doubtful only regarding his health, which I am afraid is not good. Then comes BRAND, who has proved himself an excellent Brigadier, but whose appointment might possibly cause a certain amount of heart-burning among other brigadiers, whom he would supersede. That, however, we cannot of course allow to carry any weight, when the efficiency of the A.I.F. alone is to be considered.

So many thanks for writing to me so fully, as you have done, regarding the appointments of McCAY and MOORE to the command of our depots at Tidworth. I quite understand your point of view, and I need hardly say most loyally accept the decision given. It is a difficult thing to say, but, as a matter of fact, ~~xxx~~ little soldiering as MOORE has done, both WHITE and I feel that he is really better qualified to hold the appointment at Tidworth than McCAY will be. The former has gone into subjects there fully, and has got a real grasp of the many details, though LEGGE will probably tell you that this is not the case! He is, too, exceedingly shrewd, knowing what he can handle, and what he had best leave to purely military officers, and he has established the greatest confidence with the G.O.C.-in-Chief down there in his manner of dealing with the men.

McCAY will I am sure do well, but I am doubtful if he has the exact temperament required to deal with some of the, perhaps, rather finicky work, which has to be settled at Tidworth, connected

with all the numerous depots and hundred and one odd details. When it was a case of McCAY either going there or returning to civil life, then I was glad for his sake of the decision. When, however, ANDERSON'S return to Australia seemed to give an opportunity of allowing MOORE to remain at Tidworth, and McCAY to take over in London, I felt it rather a pity that MOORE should be disturbed in the undoubtedly good work which he has been doing. I may perhaps mention, too, that though McCAY is of course glad to have the Tidworth appointment to keep him at soldiering, yet I believe I am right in saying that he is really not a bit anxious to go down and take over simply at Tidworth, while he could have been very happy in general charge of our troops in England.

MOORE has apparently taken the greatest interest in all the details of sending off troops, receiving them, qualifying them, etc., etc., while the actual training is now more under MACLAGAN, who is assisted by special training officers, both on the staff and in the command of the fifteen training battalions which we have established. I may, however, be doing McCAY a wrong in thinking he will not carry out all these duties equally well, and I sincerely trust he will do so. In any case, you may be sure that I accept the decision in absolute loyalty, and will see that McCAY has all he wants.

I am of course sorry for MOORE, who I know will not appreciate returning to civil life - but there it is. He asked me if I could not get him out here to command our base depots, which are shortly to be transferred from Etaples to Havre. I had, however, to tell him that I did not think such an appointment was justified, unless the War Office especially asked for a senior officer to be in charge of all our depots, which up to the present they ^{have} ~~had~~ not done. Indeed, when we first arrived in France a year ago, I suggested that Colonel CAMERON might be appointed to the combined depots of the 1st and 2nd Divisions which were all that we then had in this country, but I was then told that no senior officer was required beyond those commanding the depots of each division.

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Extract from private letter from General Sir W.R. Birdwood to
Senator G.F. Pearce, dated 7th May, 1917.

As regards the derivation of the word "ANZAC" I think, if you will turn to the introduction in the "Anzac Book" which I sent you about this time last year, you will find the only proper explanation. When we were first forming our corps in Egypt, I was asked to suggest a code telegraphic address, and then chose "ANZAC" as being the initial letters of the title of the corps. During the three months we were in Egypt, the word "ANZAC" was very little used, and we were almost invariably referred to as the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. The idea, therefore, of there being any Arabic derivation in the word is quite ridiculous.

Later on, when we landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula, the various beaches were each at first designated by a letter of the alphabet, and, if I remember right, ours was given the letter "K" or "Z". I was however asked if I had any wishes on the subject, when I proposed that our landing place might be called "ANZAC COVE." As time went on, the territory we occupied became known locally as ANZAC, and we were referred to throughout the force as "The ANZACS." There is no doubt whatever that this is the complete and only explanation of the word. Sir Ian HAMILTON, who did not know the code word "ANZAC" had been adopted in Egypt, was doubtful later on as to when it was started, but on reading my introduction to the "Anzac Book", wrote to me agreeing that what I there wrote was correct.

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Extract from private letter from Senator G.F.Pearce to
General Sir W.R.Birdwood, dated 3rd July, 1917, in
reply to one dated 7th May, 1917.

It is the desire of the Government, if at all possible, to grant leave before Christmas to the remaining Officers and men of General BRIDGES' Division sufficient to enable them to return to Australia on furlough. Do you think it is practicable to do this? My idea is that with the winter commencing it would be possible to relieve them and to bring them back to Australia and, should the war continue, they could be back in time for the next Spring. We are continually receiving letters from the relatives of these men pointing out that they have been fighting for two and a half years, and contending that they are entitled to furlough, and their attitude seems reasonable. The Government is very anxious to do this if it possibly can be done.

Extract from private letter from General Sir W.R. Birdwood to
Senator G.F. Pearce, dated 22nd May, 1917.

I think you may care to see the enclosed letters from HOLMES which I happen to have received this morning. It is a subject, which, as I am sure you know, has been constantly before me, and about which I have made representations. In reply to HOLMES I have been able to tell him only that this matter has not been overlooked, but that after full consideration your Government have been unable to agree to altering the existing law. The whole question is a most difficult one, and though I personally should be extremely sorry to see the death sentence inflicted on any of our men, yet I cannot help feeling that the power of inflicting this, and possibly ~~of~~ the carrying of it out in one or two cases, would at once put a stop to desertion, which is, as you see, becoming prevalent.

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Copy of letter from Major-General W. HOLMES to General Birdwood,
dated 19th May 1917, and enclosed in above letter to Senator Pearce.

Cases of deliberate desertion with the object of avoiding a specific duty in the front line are, I am sorry to say, very much on the increase lately in the Australian Forces serving in France. So frequent have these become, and the consequent courts-martial so many that I fear the fair name of Australia is likely to be seriously besmirched, unless some serious steps are taken to check the crime.

In the British and Canadian Forces, proved cases of this kind are met with the extreme penalty of death, but I understand that though Australian soldiers serving alongside and under exactly the same conditions are found guilty of exactly similar offences, and are sentenced to death, in no case has the extreme penalty been put into execution. This differentiation of treatment is having a detrimental effect upon discipline, as the men all know now they will not be shot, and believe that, though they may be sentenced to death, such sentence will be commuted to a term of imprisonment, and that the possibilities are that immediately upon a proclamation of peace, the sentence will be quashed, and they will be released. They will thus have gained their object of avoiding the risks of duty in the front line.

This avoidance of duty in the front line has the effect of throwing additional duty on the good men, moreover, when the shirkers are made prisoners, it means extra duty for the same good men in guarding them.

With men of this kind, I fear moral suasion is of no avail, and as imprisonment possesses no terrors, I am very apprehensive of the future.

I believe that the proportion of really bad men in our ranks is small, but there is a fairly large proportion of men of weak will, who are unfortunately detrimentally influenced by those of stronger character, and to whom the fear of death is the only deterrent. I am satisfied that if in one or two of the worst cases the penalty of death were actually inflicted, the effect throughout the whole of the Australian Imperial Force would be immediately all that could be desired.

This matter has caused me a good deal of concern for some time past, and I have consulted my brigade commanders who are necessarily in closer touch with the men ^{in the ranks} than I am, and they agree with ~~me~~ the views expressed by me herein. Brigadier-General GLASGOW, commanding 13th Australian Infantry Brigade, has addressed me in writing on the subject, and I attach hereto copy of this memorandum, which contains some very pertinent remarks well worthy of serious consideration.

Yours very sincerely,
(Sgd) William Holmes.

Copy of letter from Brigadier-General GLASGOW to Major-General HOLMES; enclosed in private letter from General Sir W.R. BIRDWOOD to Senator G.F.PEARCE, dated 22nd May, 1917.

Confidential.

Headquarters, 13th Australian
Infantry Brigade,

10th May, 1917.

General Officer Commanding,
4th Australian Division.

Since the tour in the line at Noreuil, fifteen men have been tried for constructive desertion, and in twelve of these cases the Court has sentenced the accused to death. Although the Brigade was at full fighting strength before going into action, the tour was of a severe character, and the keenest effort is made to bring every offender to book, yet I feel very strongly that this matter is deserving of the most serious consideration.

Only a small percentage of the men are of the worthless type, but some of those who have served for a long time are becoming war-weary, and amongst the younger men in the reinforcements there are some who it may be presumed would not have been arriving at this time had they been keen to do their duty. Under these circumstances punishment from its preventative aspect should be severe and certain.

At present this is not the case. In the first place death sentences are not carried into execution; the men do not think it ever will be; and to the worthless type it is doubtful if any other punishment is a deterrent. In the second place the commutation to a long period of penal servitude loses its preventative sting ~~when~~ in the common impression that a free pardon or at least a greatly reduced sentence will follow quickly upon peace. I am certain that this impression is widespread, and until eradicated one of the most important ends of punishment is lacking - and from the point of view of discipline the importance of this end cannot be over-estimated.

When it is remembered that no conditions of imprisonment can be worse than the experiences of the front line, penal servitude is seen to be no deterrent to the men whose moral sense of honour is weak. A longer period would be more beneficial, but its present uncertainty eliminates its effect. In the B.E.F. the extreme penalty is inflicted. Can it not, after due warning to the men, be carried out in the A.I.F.? I venture to think that if once put into execution, 90% of these cases of desertion would immediately cease. Not only would a serious defect in the maintenance of discipline be removed, but the stiffening of the moral fibre of these men from a fear of punishment would result not only in their retention in a fighting unit of the A.I.F., but would permit of their ultimate absorption in the community as decent citizens without that brand which otherwise must taint them through life. The present system is neither satisfactory to commanding officers nor fair to the men themselves.

(Sgd) T.W.GLASGOW,
Brig.-General,
Commanding 13th Australian Infantry
Brigade.

Extract from private letter from Senator G.F.Pearce to General Sir W.R.Birdwood, dated 7th June, 1917.

General LEGGE has arrived back in Australia and, though keenly disappointed at not being retained at the front till the end of the war, takes his position very philosophically. Since his return I have employed him as Inspector General of the A.I.F. troops here, so as to get the benefit of his experience and knowledge of latest requirements in regard to training.

. . . .

I am proposing to the Government to grant leave before next Christmas to the men who went away with General BRIDGES' 1st Division. Of course if that is agreed to it will mean that their places will have to be filled up, but I am quite confident that a special appeal to take their places will be sufficiently well responded to to enable such leave to be given.

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Extract from private letter from General Sir W.R. Birdwood to Senator G.F. Pearce, dated 22nd June, 1917.

When I was in London last week a letter which General ANDERSON addressed to you on the 19th April last, was brought to my notice. In this I see that he recommended that the question of all honours should be submitted to your Government so as to have the right of veto. I need hardly say that the matter is not one in which I have any personal feelings, but when the awards are for purely military service, I cannot help being apprehensive that any such procedure would probably result in our Australian officers suffering in this respect in comparison with English, Canadian, New Zealand and other officers - which I am sure is the last thing any of us would desire.

I am very sorry that General ANDERSON should have written the letter he did without consulting me, and General WHITE, who has only now seen it, is most indignant - or more than indignant, that he should have done so. As a matter of fact, it hardly seems to be a subject which came within his office, while the views he puts forward evidently show that it is a matter which he really did not ^{fully} understand.

His own personal position was perhaps rather different from that of other Australian officers, though, as I have said, it was in his military capacity in charge of our administrative office the recommendation regarding him was made. Recommendations regarding practically all other officers are made solely on account of their work in the field in the presence of the enemy. Of this, naturally, the General Officer Commanding in the field can alone be in the proper position to judge, and I am sure you or the Australian Government would be the last to wish to reserve to yourself the right (as ANDERSON suggests) of "deciding all rewards of any nature whatever."

I have to rely very much upon the recommendations made to me by divisional-generals, and these I go through with the greatest care, trying to hold the balance between all as justly as I possibly can, and I am sure you will realise what an extremely difficult matter this always is.

I notice that in writing ANDERSON evidently wished to be quite nice about me personally, but he is wrong in saying that I have in any way to look to the War Office for my future. Even if this were the case, I hope that I am big enough in my feelings to be whole-heartedly for Australia while I have the honour to be G.O.C. of her troops here, and, as such, quite irrespective of any personal considerations, am prepared to, and I hope do, stand up to the War Office over anything that effects the well-being of our troops. That I would "lean to the War Office in a matter of crisis even if Australian interests would suffer" is I think a very gross misrepresentation on ANDERSON'S part.

As a matter of fact, being, as I am, an officer of the Indian Army, I am entirely under the India Office except for the present war, and am therefore quite independent of the War Office. The War Office, I think, fully realise this, and perhaps in consequence of it, are not always so cordial to me as they might be. That I do not for a moment mind, as long as the interests of the A.I.F. do not suffer.

Please do not think that in writing like this I am in any way upset or bothering about the matter in the least; but General WHITE is so annoyed at what he considers the aspersion made regarding me - for as such he takes ANDERSON'S letter to be, though I personally do not put this construction on it - that I have thought it just as well to give you my opinion on the subject, and, having done so, I am harbouring no unhappy thoughts in the matter.

When in England, I went to see the War Office about the formation of our 6th Division, and you will have received the telegram which I sent you on the subject. I pointed out how impossible it was for us to contemplate being able to keep our six divisions, and possibly even our five, up to strength in the field, if we continue to have heavy casualties. I had, however, met Mr HOLMAN the day before, and from him gathered, as we have also done from the papers, that the whole question of ensuring adequate supplies of reinforcements

is likely to be taken up again, which I presume means a second referendum, regarding which Mr HOLMAN seemed to have great confidence.

This may, or may not, come to anything, but with the possibility of it in view, the War Office thought it hardly advisable to at once break up the 16th and 17th Brigades, which, after all, were formed only at their urgent request. I pointed out that it was almost out of the question to attempt to raise an 18th Brigade at present, and urged that, if they wanted a division, it should be completed by the 4th New Zealand Infantry Brigade. While having no great objection to this, they said they would rather leave that Brigade with the New Zealand Division, as it might be necessary to call upon it for reinforcements for the rest of the Division. They agreed, however, not to attempt to go on with the formation of the 18th Brigade, but they hope to be able to send the 16th and 17th (which are now practically completed) out here shortly, when they will be attached as a fourth brigade to two of our respective divisions. They would be available to supply reinforcements to the rest of the division, even to the extent of ^{entirely} breaking them up, if necessary, while conscription be brought in, and large numbers of reinforcements be in view, the completion of the 6th Division might be gone on with by the raising of the 18th Brigade.

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You will I am sure have been ~~very~~ sorry to ~~have~~ see that POPE was wounded near Messines. I saw him in hospital, and am glad to say found him wonderfully cheery, though he has his thigh broken by a bit of ~~skrap~~ a shell. I fear it must be a very long time before he is fit again to take the field - if, indeed, he will ever be able to do so. Sorry as one is for him at thus being bowled over, I cannot help thinking that perhaps nothing could give greater help to rehabilitate his character than being wounded at the front.

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When recently in England, I of course saw both McCAY and GRIFFITHS. The former is better, though he is not yet able to ride, and I doubt if he will be up to any really physical, hard work for a very long time to come. He is full of keen-ness and energy, but, as you probably know, has a tendency very often to rub people up the wrong way, and I found poor GRIFFITHS had been ^{real} having a rather difficult time of it. The latter is such a loyal, hard-working man; he is doing excellently where he is, and has I believe the confidence of the War Office.

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Extract from private letter from Senator G.F.Pearce to General
Sir W.R.Birdwood, dated 27th August, 1917.

There is one particular matter I wish to mention to you in regard to Colonel T. GRIFFITHS, C.M.G., D.S.O., who is now acting as Commandant, A.I.F. Headquarters, London. It is my earnest wish that he be given every opportunity of carrying out the duties of this position. I am rather afraid that General J. W. McCAY will adopt an unfriendly attitude towards Colonel GRIFFITHS which can only hamper the effective administration of the A.I.F. in England. I am not suggesting any particular action on your part, as I feel confident that it is only necessary to mention the matter for you to take such action as will prevent any difficulties arising.

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Extract from private letter from General Sir W.R.Birdwood to Senator G.F.Pearce, dated 2nd July, 1917.

It is with the very greatest regret that I have had to send you a telegram announcing the death of General HOLMES. He really was one of our very best officers, and I cannot tell you how very much I personally feel his loss. As I mentioned in my letter of the 22nd May, he was then leaving us with his division to go to 2nd Anzac, where they did so well in the fighting at Messines, in which he was killed. His bravery was almost reckless and he was always well up in front - perhaps too much so. Curiously enough, when I said good-bye to him here on his leaving, I turned to his staff officer and said: "Mind you look after your General well, and don't let him go forward rashly and too much to the front." HOLMES laughed and replied; "How about yourself, Sir? You must set me the example of not going about too much" - and that was the last I saw of him.

I think he was without exception one of the bravest men it was possible to have in this or any other force, and this I am sure was recognised by everyone. His loss is really very great - not only in such fighting as we may still have before us, but I know the value he would have been on his return to Australia. He was so absolutely straight and loyal, that I cannot help thinking that his presence would have been of inestimable value later on - but there it is, and we can only grieve for the loss of another real brave soldier, who has laid down his life for his country, as so many another has done.

I enclose a letter which I have just received from ROSENTHAL, which gives you all details. Mr HOLMAN had been down here staying with me for two or three days. I took him round this 1st Corps, and he saw practically all the New South Wales units - 1st, 5th and 14th Brigades, having a talk to a good many officers and men. He then left me to go up and see the 3rd and 4th Divisions with 2nd Anzac, being very keen to see something of actual fighting dispositions, of which, down here, I was able to show him nothing, owing to our being at present in rest.

I cannot help thinking that this chance shell is a piece of the greatest possible bad luck. The spot mentioned is one which I have frequently visited, and that, too, when the Germans held the Messines Ridge, when they were consequently far nearer, and the place was under observation. I cannot understand how it is that it is still under fire from light artillery, and I think it can have been only a stray shot fired at long range. I am indeed surprised to hear that it should have knocked Mr HOLMAN down, and I trust that he is none the worse for it.

I am just starting off to attend poor HOLMES'S funeral, which means a four or five hours drive.

Note : I have since heard it was the only shot fired near there all day.

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Extract from private letter from General Birdwood to Senator Pearce,
dated 20th August, 1917.

GELLIBRAND, as you probably know, is a rather delicate man. He has, I know, the greatest affection for and from all his men, and their confidence. In a fight he is an absolute lion, as long as his health enables him to be so, but if a great ~~strain~~^{stress} continues for over 48 hours or so, his health is liable to give way. He was several times rather knocked up during the winter, and just about as ~~x~~ this division became vacant, he wrote in asking to be allowed to resign his brigade command.

This action was I fancy prompted by his health, and also partly ~~xxxxxxx~~ by the fact that he was not getting on very well with, I believe, the staff of the division. I was constrained to agree to his request, as I felt that he would break down unless he got a rest. But you will see that this makes it impossible to put his name forward for a division, and he will have to make good before he can again be considered for it.

PATON, who you will remember was wounded early in the winter, was temporarily appointed to the command of the 17th Brigade, when it was raised. Being now quite well, I at once got him out to take over GELLIBRAND'S vacancy, while GELLIBRAND was available to go over to England and take MACLAGAN'S place. This is exactly what McCAY wanted. He is now certainly very well done with two brigadiers, viz., GELLIBRAND and FOOTT as head of his general staff and administration respectively. It is too very necessary, and I anticipate, in consequence, a much improved efficiency. MACLAGAN'S appointment there made the greater difference, and I am glad to say that all our divisional-generals, who have in turn been over to inspect their divisional depots, have come back full of praise for the training which is now being carried out at Tidworth.

You were ~~probably~~^{possibly} a little surprised at my recently wiring to you about ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ ~~xxx~~ promotion for Burgess to a divisional artillery command vice ROSENTHAL. The latter has proved himself quite excellent, and is always full of energy, keen-ness and knowledge - it is only a pity that he is such a wonderful talker!

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Of JOBSON I have seen nothing, as he has been the whole of his time with the 3rd Division, which has not served under me in the field. MONASH, however, was not satisfied with him, and reported to me that his work was gradually going downhill. He therefore told JOBSON that he would be compelled to report this officially to me, unless he himself was prepared to ask to be relieved of his command. JOBSON, whose health I believe is not too good, I am glad to say accepted this view, and I am sure ROSENTHAL will do well in his place.

HOBBS, I am pleased to say, continues well, for I am always anxious about his health. As a matter of fact, he tells me he has not been sleeping well for the last week, and I am therefore sending him at once to England on short leave, so as to ensure his being fit when our next effort comes. I propose putting his name forward for reward in the next honours gazette. I had every hope of bracketting HOLMES' name with his, had the former only lived.

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I wonder if you will have been able to make the necessary arrangements for our original men to be granted leave? I cannot say with any accuracy at present how many of these are left. A number I feel sure would naturally gladly welcome an opportunity of seeing their homes again, but I fancy there are some who would refuse to go until we have seen this thing through.

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Extract from private letter from General Sir W.R.Birdwood to Senator G.F.Pearce, dated 3rd September, 1917.

I think you may perhaps care to see the enclosed copy of a letter, which I recently wrote to General PLUMER, commanding 2nd Army, and which explains itself.

In explanation, I may mention that at the time I wrote, I had with me 1st, 2nd and 5th Australian Divisions, while 3rd and 4th were with GODLEY in 2nd Anzac. I was, however, to be given a fourth division in my corps, and I was informed that this would be an English division. To this, as you will see, I entered a protest, and attached to it a copy of your telegram regarding the wish of the Commonwealth Government that all Australian troops should be under the one command.

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Copy of letter from General Birdwood to General Plumer, enclosed in above letter to Senator Pearce.

1st Anzac Corps,
29/8/1917.

General Sir H.PLUMER, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.,

My dear General,

In reference to our conversation regarding the possibility of the 4th Australian Division being transferred to this Corps, I send you, as I promised to do, a copy of the telegram, which I recently received from the Commonwealth Government, and which explains their views on the subject.

I of course realise, as I am sure you know, that nothing can possibly interfere with the tactical and strategical considerations in the disposal of all troops in the field, but when it is possible to do so, I know well that both you and the Commander-in-Chief will be anxious to do anything you possibly can to meet the wishes of the Commonwealth Government and people regarding the Australian troops, ~~whom~~ whom they have so willingly and whole-heartedly sent over here to fight.

As their representative I feel it is incumbent upon me to represent their views in this respect as strongly as I can. I know how very anxious indeed all Australian officers have been from the first to have their units kept together, and for their different divisions to be serving alongside each other, whenever this could be managed. One divisional general told me that he considered the efficiency of his division was increased by at least 30% by the fact that it was serving alongside other Australian divisions.

In the present case, the intention is that we are to attack with two divisions in front, each supported by another division. If an English division is given to 1st Anzac and another to 2nd, it means that each of us would have one English division only. Should, however, the 4th Australian Division come to this Corps, it would mean that we should have two pairs of Australian divisions, while 2nd Anzac would have a pair of English divisions, and the New Zealand and 3rd Australian (who have been alongside each other for a considerable time now) as their second pair.

Personally, I should naturally be glad to have the 4th Australian Division back with me, but I feel I can say that I have eliminated the personal factor as much as one possibly can. But I really do know how very strong the Australian feeling is in the matter, and I feel convinced that, later on, strong complaints will come from Australia, unless it can be clearly pointed out ~~that~~ to the Commonwealth Government that the separation of their divisions was essential to the success of the operations.

Yours very sincerely,
(Sgd) W.R.BIRDWOOD.

Extract from private letter from General Birdwood to Senator Pearce,
dated 14th September, 1917.

You ask me in your letter regarding leave for our original 1st Division. I need hardly say how delighted I personally should be to see these good fellows who have so fully deserved it, being granted such leave, but the difficulties in the way seem to me to make this almost impossible - if only from the transport point of view. You of course know of the large numbers of wounded and sick men we have to keep on sending home. Even to get these away absorbs a great deal of our transport, while it would naturally be out of the question that men should be sent on leave at the expense of the sick and wounded.

Then, too, would it be possible to send these men away without running the risk of breaking up one of our existing divisions, as the strain of replacing them as well as supplying the ordinary reinforcements would almost seem to be beyond our means at present? A considerable number of men would, I believe, rather forego their leave than run this risk, while I know that there are some of them who will, in any case, say that having fought all this time, they would like to stay and see it through.

The only possibility of carrying out this leave question would seem to be to fit in leave men to fill up any vacancies that ~~might~~ ~~ix~~ might exist in the returning transports to Australia, and, ~~for~~ of course, give preference to those who have been out longest. I do not suppose that many such could be accommodated in each transport, and it would therefore take a very long time to get through them all. Suppose we made a rule that after three years' absence from Australia, men should have a right to return on leave, which would seem to be fair to all; we should then begin with the original force, but I am afraid that long before we have worked through them, we should have men of the 2nd Division, and others coming on, demanding with almost equal right that they, too, should be granted leave in their turn, and this would naturally go on throughout the whole force, all of whom would seem to have equal moral rights in ~~the~~ the matter.

I am afraid it is quite impossible for me to say at present how many of the original men are now with us, but I will quietly ascertain this. When I know the numbers, I will go into the questions of the transport accommodation and the reinforcement situation. With this information, it may be possible to advise you better regarding your wish, but, honestly, for the reasons I have stated, viz., chiefly transport difficulties, and confining this privilege to the 1st Division, the matter appears to me almost impossible.

It has struck me, however, there is something else which we can do to specially mark the 1st Division, and which would, I believe, be enormously appreciated by them. A notice has just appeared in the English papers to the effect that a special medal is to be granted to the troops who came out to France with the original expeditionary force from England. I do not know that the terms of this are yet definitely fixed, but I understand it is to apply to all troops who landed in France before the middle of November. Naturally, no one could ^{possibly} begrudge such a reward to the magnificent fellows who came out then, and who went through some of the very hardest fighting around Ypres and in the Mons retreat. Equally, however, I think no one should begrudge a like reward being given to our boys who went through that magnificent landing on the Peninsula. If the terms of this medal could be expanded to include our men, I honestly believe that the appreciation felt by all would be so great that they would forego the special leave. I imagine that there may be some opposition in England to extending the terms in any way, but perhaps the Commonwealth Government and the Government of New Zealand between them could so represent the matter as to have our original contingents included, i.e., 1st Division, 4th Brigade, 1st Light Horse Brigade and New Zealand Contingent.

I am afraid it is doubtful if the terms of the medal would be extended to include definitely the landing on the Peninsula, but I think they could be made to include the first contingents from Australia and New Zealand, in the same way as the terms ~~of~~ now include the

first contingent from England, and, as far as we are concerned, this would meet our wishes, for they are the men who carried out the original landing. Hardships would of course arise, as they do whenever any medal is granted, for the conditions always hit a certain number of individuals hard. I am afraid that the Light Horse brigades who came after the first would all be very indignant, for though they did not come out with the original contingent, yet their men landed on the Peninsula with those of the 1st Light Horse Brigade in May, 1915. not

Unfortunately, the whole of these men did/land in Egypt by the 31st December, 1914, as the 4th Brigade arrived in January, 1915. Therefore to lay down an arbitrary date (I should like to suggest 31st December, 1914) would not quite suit, but I think that a date should be fixed to include all troops who were fighting in France, Egypt, East Africa and Mesopotamia. It will of course be for Mr HUGHES and his Government to decide as to whether they wish to take the matter up, as I write in this respect to you only more or less privately. If you do take the question up, perhaps you might think it suitable to recommend that the medal be extended to all men who had actually embarked from Australia by 31st December, 1914. (1914)

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Extract from private letter from Senator G.F. Pearce to General Sir W.R. Birdwood, dated 20th September, 1917.

In a previous letter I mentioned the desire of the Government to grant a furlough in Australia, during the European winter, to those members of the 1st Division and 4th Brigade who have not had less than two years active service. A cable has recently been sent to the War Office, and a copy to you, definitely seeking concurrence in our proposal, and we hope arrangements can be made. I recognise of course that the withdrawal temporarily of these men will accentuate the need for reinforcements, but on the other hand we consider that these men who have been under such severe trials should not be penalised by the unwillingness of their countrymen to provide the necessary reinforcements. We feel also that if action were taken promptly it should be possible to bring these men to Australia, give them a clear month's furlough here, and have them back with you again before the Spring, the period of their absence covering the winter months. Their presence here should also stimulate recruiting.

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In regard to the question of the Death penalty for desertion, this has given the Government considerable concern. We are convinced of the wisdom of the recommendation but, as Mr HUGHES has explained, to the British Government, it could not have come at a more inopportune ~~moment~~^{time} than the present. You, I feel sure, can understand this on reflection of the severe political and industrial turmoil that the Commonwealth has passed through and is still passing through. A decision to agree to this penalty if given now would give to our political enemies just that political catch cry that they are looking for, and would have a disastrous effect on recruiting. It is singular to notice that this very question has been seized on by the extremists in Russia to raise difficulties with the Government there, and it is a sad reflection on us ~~xxxx~~ to notice this similarity between our conditions and theirs, though I am grateful to know that ours are not nearly as hopeless. I have shown your letter of the 22nd June to Mr HUGHES, as requested, and he asked me to explain our attitude to you.

Parliament has been sitting for the last three months, adding considerably to the work Ministers are called upon to do.

In conversation with Mr HUGHES I mentioned the question of your visiting Australia and he took it up enthusiastically. Would it be possible for you to visit us during the war (winter months, e.g.,) ~~or~~ at any rate at its conclusion. Will you please think this over and let me have your views on it. If you can see your way ~~at~~ all to come here I can assure you of an enthusiastic welcome in official and public circles alike, inasmuch as your name is now a household word. If you can come and ~~wikxxxxxxxx~~ let me know I will inform Mr HUGHES who will then send an official invitation.

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Copy of private letter from General Birdwood to Senator G.F.Pearce,
dated 6/10/1917.

Anzac Corps, B. E. F.,

FRANCE, 6th Oct., 1917.

My dear Mr Pearce,

I hear there is a question of pensions being granted to officers of the permanent military service in Australia, and personally, if I may say so, I so very much hope that this may be approved in due course. In the event of it not boring you, I venture to make a suggestion regarding this in the light of my Indian experience.

In the Indian Army we are all poor men, dependent *entirely* upon our pay and pensions, as I fancy is the case with the officers of the Australian Army. In view of the fact that we agree to serve the whole of our lives in India, we undoubtedly do get good pay and good pensions, every officer in the Indian Army looking forward to a pension of £700 per year after 32 years' service in India - with a graduated scale for those retiring with between 20 and 32 years' service.

Though the pensions are good, yet the widow's pensions are in comparison very small, and this is a factor which much exercises the minds of Indian officers, many of whom agree that they would be quite prepared to receive smaller pensions if they felt that on their death their widows would be more adequately provided for. We all have to subscribe during our service towards our widow's pensions, but if a wife predeceases her husband, the subscriber gets back nothing, while he gets nothing of what he has paid towards children if the girls marry during his lifetime or the boys grow up.

In some of the Indian State Railways they have another system, which I have heard very much extolled, and it is this I suggest for your consideration. Roughly it is that an officer pays, we will say sixpence in the pound for all pay he draws. Government covers this with 1/- - the whole being given to him as a lump sum when he retires, or handed to his widow in the event of his death. The great argument I have heard adduced against this is that army officers are not fit people to look after their own financial affairs, and that the chances are that on receipt of a large sum on retirement the average officer would at once waste the whole of it and would then come to Government, in forma pauperis, for a compassionate allowance. Government could of course guard against this by insisting on the money being invested only in accordance with their sanction. It would of course mean that there would not be such a large pension available, but officers would have the satisfaction of realising that there was a lump sum for the widow and children which would remain in the family.

As I have said, I put this forward to you only as a suggestion, but it is possible one which with your financial advisers may agree to consider and exploit. I need hardly say that I do this owing to the regard I have formed for the permanent Australian ~~xxxxxx~~ officers who have been with me as comrades during the last three years.

Yours very sincerely,

(Sgd) W.R.Birdwood.

Extract from private letter from General Sir W.R.Birdwood to
Senator G.F.Pearce, dated 16th October, 1917.

During such a period a good many men, who are destined for the final objective, have to take what cover they can in shell holes etc., awaiting the ~~final advance~~ further advance. I thought it a most excellent idea of one of our C.O.s (Wilder NELIGAN) to take with him several sandbags full of the very latest morning papers (Daily Mail, etc.) which were handed around to the men to enable them to pass the time without strain on their nerves and as comfortably as possible, when shells from both sides were tearing ^{in hole} over their heads! It really is rather comical to think of a line of men lying in shell holes, and each reading his daily paper, in the middle of an attack of this description!

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Extract from private letter from General Sir W.R. Birdwood to
Senator G.F. Pearce, dated 5th November, 1917.

Today I have sent you a further telegram informing you that it has at last been decided that all our five divisions shall be brought into one corps under my command, the corps being renamed "The Australian Corps." This is, of course, very satisfactory, and I know will be extremely welcome to all divisions. The 3rd has much disliked being away from us, while the other divisions have all lived in dread of being taken away at any time from what they very naturally regard as their home.

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I am afraid that we must realise that this placing of one division in reserve is only a stepping stone to the total abolition of a division, unless reinforcements come forward much better.

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I have also just sent you a telegram regarding desertions. I am sorry to say that these still continue prevalent, in a way ~~ix~~ none of us can regard except with dismay. During the last month there have been 53 cases in the 2nd Division alone. The Division was then in the line, and these men, when their battalions were ordered to go up into the trenches, quietly slipped away at night back to the rear, where they were either apprehended or gave themselves up some days later. I have suggested that in every ^{such} case in future, if and when a man is convicted, I should wire to you his name and sentence, and that these should be published in all the Australian papers. I would of course publish the same in my orders here, and let all the men know what they must expect. The shame of it may I hope act as a deterrent in a way in which other things do not.

I am very sorry to say we anticipate trouble as regards the sanctioning of the special 1914 Medal for our first contingent men, but I do most sincerely hope that this may yet be got over. I have written to Mr LONG privately about it, and I may tell you that he is most sympathetic on the subject, and will I know do what he can in the matter.

I understand, however, that the War Office are strongly opposing it, and I cannot help thinking that in doing so they do not realise the Imperial point of view. These men all came forward at the moment war was declared to fight for the Empire, sacrificing, as we know they did in a great many cases, a very great deal to do so, and surely the least that the country can do for them in return is to give them the very small recompense of this special medal.

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It is indeed ~~very~~ kind of you to write as you have done about my visiting Australia. Mr Hughes, as a matter of fact, in a letter I received a short time ago, mentioned the subject of my coming out when the war was concluded. In reply, I told him that I most certainly hope to go out there at the conclusion of the war, but that at present, with the end still possibly so far off, I felt it was hopeless really to look forward ~~to~~ with any certainty regarding the doings of any of us later on. You very kindly suggest the possibility of my paying you a visit while the war is still on. Truly as I should like to do so, I honestly feel that I could not possibly contemplate it, for while the war lasts, I feel that my place is so very much alongside the boys, whom I could not leave for anything. It is not that I consider myself for a moment to be indispensable, but knowing them as I now do, I hated the idea of being away from them. Even in the winter, though no big operations are on, there is always so much that one can do for them, and to help them generally in a hundred and one different ways. Perhaps reading the memorandum which I enclose regarding the winter work will give you some idea of this. Going round some unit or other as I do every day, I so frequently find that there is just some little thing that one can do to help to put matters right, or to arrange some little extra comfort to make the men happier in their sometimes rather dreary surroundings.

You will know that in saying this I do not disparage the work of other officers one iota, for I so fully recognise all they do for their men, and I am sure it is a real pleasure and a privilege to have such comrades. Brigadiers and commanding officers, one after another, have told me that during this recent fighting the feature that stands out most conspicuously is that of the magnificent behaviour of the young officer. Time after time they have gone forward, showing the most conspicuous example and courage, good leading and initiative, while, as soon as their men got back, they immediately turned their hands to do everything that was possible in looking after their food, clothing, housing, etc., and this is I think fully recognised and appreciated by ~~the~~ our boys. In such a huge force as we now are, there are, as you know, bound to be exceptions, but I am thankful to say they ~~are~~ are ^{very} few and far between. You will I am sure therefore fully recognise my reasons for saying I feel I must defer my visit to you at present, much as I fully appreciate your kind thoughts in asking me.

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I so fully enter into all you say regarding the difficulties of carrying out the death penalty, and I have indeed realised this from the first. It was for this reason I sent you the proposals I did on the subject, which were not so drastic as those suggested by the Army Council, while I think I pointed out at the time that I realised that the passing of the necessary legislation would probably be the death-blow to such voluntary enlistment as still existed. The whole subject of course gives one the greatest anxiety, simply because one cannot help fearing at times that unless strict action is taken, it may spread. For some of the men I honestly feel sympathy, if I think it is a case of ~~some~~ a good man whose nerves have gone. But one can feel none for the man who not only deliberately deserts himself, but induces others to do so, and thereby throws considerable additional hardship and danger upon his brave and loyal comrades. There are such men I know who deliberately say they would be better off in prison than in the trenches, for they know that in the former they are, at all events, safe, and sure of proper cover and food, as against the danger and discomfort of the trenches. As a matter of fact, I believe in the military prisons ~~and~~ the men do have a really hard time of it, and, this being the case, I almost invariably recommend that a man who has been sentenced to hard labour shall be allowed out on suspended sentence after three months, provided that his behaviour in prison has been good. I do this deliberately in order that men so released may come back and relate to their comrades their experiences of the real bad time they have had in prison, and this I think is more likely to be a deterrent than simply when a man disappears in prison, and is not heard of again. In the latter circumstances, those left behind may feel that the man in prison is having a much more comfortable time than they are with the regiment.

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Now you are again in the midst of another turmoil over the referendum, the result of which is I imagine impossible to foresee, and you will realise how anxiously we are awaiting it. What the result of the soldiers' vote will be, it is also, I am sorry to say, impossible to forecast. Again, as was the case last year, I was first led to suppose by all hands that the soldiers were likely to return an almost unanimous vote of "yes". Now things seem to be veering round the other way, and though some are most sanguine of a large majority, other regimental officers are equally despondent, saying they anticipate a large "no" vote in their battalions. The reasons the men adduce are very difficult to fathom. Some say that they do not want conscripts alongside of them, and, in any case, having realised what a bad time any soldiers here must have in their daily life, they do not wish to vote that their pals should be compelled to come out and go through all that we have experienced. Others (but of course these could only be the chicken-hearted) say that if more of our men come forward, and our divisions are kept up to strength we shall all be called upon to do more fighting, whereas if we are really weak, it would not be possible to take part in many attacks. This is of course a hopeless argument, and, if carried out, would mean that we should never finish the war at all - except by defeat, which none of us can contemplate. Others say that the clause to the effect that conscription is only for the period of the war has not been definitely shown in Mr Hughes' proclamation as being part of that Bill, but is merely a Government promise which may be broken at any time! This can of course only be an excuse made by men who deliberately want to find a reason for voting "no."

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McCAY has now had a lot to do with training, and I cannot help thinking that it would be a great advantage to you to get his views at first hand. I therefore suggest that you should get him across to Australia to discuss this matter with you, as if you can arrange the individual training on these lines, it may mean a large saving of money. Should you agree to the advisability of seeing McCAY, you may perhaps send a wire for him on receipt of this.

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In your letter you ask me as a particular matter to see that GRIFFITHS is given every opportunity of carrying out his duties as regards our administration, as you were afraid that McCAY might hamper and interfere with him. I agree entirely with what you write about this, and, as a matter of fact, it is a subject which had cropped up and which I am glad to say I have been able to put right. McCAY, as you probably know, was most anxious that he should be appointed as the one and only head of all A.I.F. matters in England, and has more than once urged this on me. As a matter of fact, it would not work for a moment, and would I feel lead to constant friction, while, as things are, both GRIFFITHS and McCAY working direct with me, matters are going quite satisfactorily, though I think that McCAY perhaps would not say he entirely agrees regarding this. A short time after GRIFFITHS had taken over, he came to me imploring that he might be relieved of his appointment and return to me as A.A.G., even though this would mean reduction in rank and pay. With difficulty I got out of him what his reasons were, when he told me (I happened to be over in England at the time) that he found it so very disagreeable and difficult to work with McCAY. I at once got hold of McCAY, letting him see what I wanted, since when we have had no further difficulties, and I am glad to say that GRIFFITHS is working most happily, and I may add most excellently too. He is as good and loyal an officer as any man could wish to have with him, and I am indeed fortunate to have him there. He is completely loyal in every way both to the Commonwealth and to me, though, as a matter of fact, I hope our interests are entirely one and the same. I was afraid at one time about his health, as he is a man who will overwork himself, but he is now looking very much better than I have ever known him before to be, and I sincerely trust may keep so. In view of his good work, I wired to you recently suggesting that he be granted the rank of Brigadier General, which I should like to gazette on 1st January, when others will be receiving well-deserved honours.

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Extract from private letter from Senator G.F.Pearce to General Sir W.R.Birdwood, dated 6th March, 1918.

I have carefully considered your suggestion that Major-General the Hon. J.W.McCAY, C.B., V.D., be returned to Australia to advise in connection with training but do not think that the conditions at present existing here would justify his recall.

The number of troops in A.I.F. camps in Australia is steadily decreasing and their training will only be elementary. Of course your suggestion was made before it was decided to do away with complete training and send only G.S. reinforcements.

Furthermore the camp training of the Militia is also elementary.

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Decipher of Cablegram received from General Sir W.R.BIRDWOOD
Australian Corps, London, by DEFENCE Melbourne - despatched
on April 17th, 1918; received 18th April, 1918.

DEFENCE

MELBOURNE.

"T.2720 17th PLEASE TAKE NO ACTION REGARDING MY LETTER
JANUARY 28th WITH REFERENCE TO EGYPT TILL YOU HEAR FROM ME
AGAIN AM NOW WRITING."

BIRDWOOD

AUSTRALIAN CORPS.

COPY.

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.

Headquarters,

Australian Corps,

Confidential.

28th January, 1918.

For your personal consideration.

Memorandum :

If, as I assume is probable, troops will be retained in Egypt for a considerable time, I think it is well worthy of consideration as to whether it would not be sound to transfer the whole of the Australian troops now in France to that country, and to replace them in France by a like number of English troops now in Egypt and Palestine. I am not aware of the exact numbers of troops in the Egyptian command, but I believe that they exceed in number the Australian troops in France.

My main reasons for making this proposal are :-

(1) Faced, as we are, with enormous transport difficulties, we should at once alleviate these considerably by obviating the crossing of all English reinforcements from England to Egypt, and of Australian reinforcements from Egypt to England, if this transfer were effected. The amount of transport to be kept up in the Mediterranean would be reduced to a minimum - sufficient only to keep the forces there supplied with material of all sorts, while practically no actual troops would be crossing.

(2) In view of demobilisation after the war, a very big step towards this would be effected during hostilities, English troops being brought to France, while Australian troops in Egypt would be well on their way home. Realising, as we do, the very long time it must take to get these troops back to Australia, this point is one deserving of serious consideration.

I would not for a moment suggest that this question should be taken up immediately, with the ~~possibility~~ ^{probability} of a big German offensive on the Western front in the course, perhaps, of the next few months, but I think it might well be considered now with a view of being given effect to in the autumn, should it be deemed advisable and proper.

Further points which are I think worthy of consideration in this connection are:-

(a) The Australian troops have been accustomed to a warm and dry climate, and have undoubtedly felt very considerably the last two winters in France, with the result that, I believe, the Australian medical authorities are of the opinion that they have lost considerably in the way of powers of endurance against climate, with the resultant weakening of their recuperative forces, and that they would undoubtedly be much better suited for the conditions and the climate of Egypt and Palestine.

(b) Such improved conditions would mean a decided diminution in the number of men who now have to be returned to Australia as "unfit." In view of the recent failure of the referendum in that country, this is undoubtedly an important point, as there seems little probability of the necessary reinforcements coming forward to keep units up to strength with present wastage, and a smaller number of reinforcements would be required for a force in Egypt.

(c) In addition to men, Australia sends a considerable quantity of supplies for her troops. These now have naturally to be brought to England. There would be a very large saving of transport and time as well as very much reduced submarine risk, if these were consigned only to Egypt.

(d) Australia, like England, is daily building up a very heavy burden of debt. Every day saved in releasing a large number of men from her forces on demobilisation, and re-establishing them in civil employment in Australia, is of national importance. Further, by co-ordinating the Australian forces now in England, France and Egypt, large savings of personnel and in administrative cost would be effected.

(e) The congestion at ports and wharves both in England and in France is bound to be very great at the close of the war. It is therefore advisable to give effect, as early as possible, to such proposals as can clearly be accepted without interfering with military efficiency, with a view to alleviating this congestion.

From the sentimental view, which often counts for much, I think it is probable that the people of Australia would appreciate their troops being nearer to and in closer touch with them, as they would be in Egypt.

In the above, I have referred only to the Australian troops, but what I have said would seem to apply with equal force to the New Zealand Division in France.

(sgd) W.R.BIRDWOOD.

Extract from private letter from General Birdwood to Senator Pearce, dated 1st February, 1918.

I am now trying to make arrangements to send home on every returning ship some fifty of our most deserving cases of originally enlisted men. I am not calling this leave, or making any general pronouncement on the subject, for I know well, if I did so, that we would be liable to be overwhelmed with applications and possibly grievances. Also, I know that, if it was in any way given out that leave was being opened, we should have a "howl" from the War Office, as I fear it would involve them with all sorts of difficulties by demands being made for the grant of leave to Canadians, New Zealanders, troops from India, etc. I therefore propose to employ something like 50 men per ship on submarine guard duty, etc., and to ask you to arrange for them to be given two months clear in Australia before being sent back to us. If, later on, I find it possible to increase this number, I shall do so, but as a start, I hope you will agree that this is on satisfactory lines. I hope you will of course not publish anything in Australia regarding the possibility of such leave being opened, otherwise I am sure that neither your life nor mine would be worth living, while it would naturally be ~~misrepresented~~ *misinterpreted* by some people in Australia.

. . . .

In connection with the breaking up of one battalion per brigade, regarding which I wrote to you in my last letter, I have now decided to see if I can manage to convert the battalion to be so disbanded ~~into~~ into a depot battalion in England. The officers and men would of course be utilised in keeping up to strength the remaining three battalions of the brigade, but the battalion staff and the name of the battalion would be transferred to the depot, and so would be preserved as a living entity with all its battalion traditions, to return I hope as such to Australia at the end of the war. This seems to be the best way of dealing with the whole question.

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Extract from private letter from General Sir W.R. Birdwood to
Senator G.F. Pearce, dated 15th April, 1918.

Curiously enough, when commanding the 4th Army in the Northern sector about a month before this attack started, I told the Commander-in-Chief that my apprehension then was that the German might make a big attack on Hazebruck with the idea of cutting off the Northern ~~XXXXXX~~ (i.e., the 4th) Army from the rest of the force, and driving us back on to the Channel ports. I think he quite agreed that this was a possibility to be considered, but in view of the very big concentration in the vicinity of Cambrai - St. Quentin, it did not look as if this could be contemplated at present. I sincerely trust that the thrust is not of sufficient strength to reach as far as Hazebruck, which is an important junction.

I forget if I mentioned to you that when this big attack began, I was on leave in England. Being a Sunday, and no trains available, I returned by aeroplane, actually reaching my headquarters within an hour and a half of leaving England - a very convenient mode of travel, but not a very pleasant one, on such a very stormy and gusty day as I had, for in addition to being bumped up and down, we had constantly to keep diving to avoid cloud banks. However, the saving of time was well worth it, and I was, as I always am, delighted to be back again with my men.

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I have just sent you a telegram in connection with the suggestion which I made to you on the 28th January about taking up the question of the transfer of the Australian troops to Egypt in the autumn. I have only just heard that nearly all the English infantry divisions in Egypt are being transferred to France, leaving only a comparatively ^{very} small force of white infantry in that country, the remainder of the force consisting of mounted troops, infantry from India, etc. This being the case, there could of course be no question of our divisions exchanging with English divisions now there, which puts quite a new aspect on the whole question, and which I think will probably decide you not to make any representations on the subject, though doubtless Mr HUGHES, while in England, may care personally to discuss it.

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Extract from letter dated 16th April 1918, from the Commander-in-Chief to General Sir W.R. Birdwood, and enclosed in a private letter dated 15th April, 1918, to Senator Pearce.

as a P.S.

The right of our line in close connection with the French is so vital to me, that I must keep reliable troops there, and I cannot tell you with what confidence I contemplate the situation in that part of my front as long as the Australian Corps are holding it.

Your 1st Division in front of Hazebruck has done splendidly and defeated all hostile attacks.

Thanking you for all you and your gallant troops are doing for me.

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Extract from private letter from General Sir W.R. Birdwood to
Senator G.F. Pearce, dated 12th March, 1918.

I am forwarding to you by this mail correspondence in which McCAY has raised the question of our administration in England, and which I hope explains itself. You will doubtless give a decision on this, if, indeed, you feel disposed to answer it at all, of which I am doubtful.

As I think you know, McCAY has for a long time not considered our system of administration satisfactory, in that he dislikes the idea of there being a General Officer in charge of Administration in London, and another in command of our depots on Salisbury Plain, without there being one General Officer in charge of all Australian affairs and troops in England. What he dislikes, I gather, is the fact that the administration under GRIFFITHS is not directly under him, and he wants to be the Australian officer in England, responsible for everything there, and alone having the powers of referring to me as G.O.C., A.I.F., when necessary. You will see from my reply to McCAY'S letter on the subject that I do not agree with him. As a matter of fact, I think that an administration, such as he recommends, could be worked, but I am most decidedly of opinion that it could not be so with any smoothness or satisfaction under McCAY. The whole of his intention of course leads up to the fact that he should be appointed to this position with possibly the rank of Lt.-General.

I am sure that I need not inform you that I have no feelings whatever personally against McCAY. I have consistently recommended him for awards such as C.B., K.C.M.G. and Legion of Honour, for I have recognised his good fighting qualities, and realised his very great ability and keenness to do all he possibly can for our troops according to his lights. I cannot, however, be blind to the fact that by his unfortunate manner, he does not seem to be in sympathy with anyone, and I can hear of no senior officers in the force who have a good word for him. I am perfectly convinced that GRIFFITHS could no more work under him in the capacity suggested by McCAY than he could fly, and I should have his resignation in the course of a week. When over in England on leave some six months ago, I happened to mention McCAY'S idea on this subject to the High Commissioner, when Mr FISHER told me that nothing could go better than the smooth working between his office and our Administrative Headquarters under GRIFFITHS; while he felt, if McCAY were in charge, he himself could hardly hope to carry on as High Commissioner, though he said he was fully aware of McCAY'S great ability, and knew his qualifications well.

I feel bound to write to you perfectly openly, confidentially and without prejudice regarding this, and it only stands to reason that I, not having been to Australia, cannot have any prejudice one way or another ~~regarding~~ concerning any of our officers. I am only too glad to do anything I can to help one and all of them, but I naturally feel that the interests of Australia and of the A.I.F. have to come first.

As a matter of fact, McCAY would, I think, be quite delighted to see me receive promotion which would take me away from the A.I.F. - probably not for the sake of getting rid of me, but that he might himself succeed to my position, which I know he feels confident he could better fill than anyone else. Personally, as I think you know, I have no other wish than to remain in my present position until the end of the war, provided always that I can do so to the advantage of our troops. It may be that promotion or anything else may take me away, but I have always let it be definitely known that I should not go willingly, and that I am prepared to forego advancement rather than leave the A.I.F. - as long as I can be of the least help to the brave comrades who have been with me for nearly the last 3½ years now.

Should anything remove me, I cannot think that McCAY would be the most suitable successor - indeed, I could not possibly recommend him, for I feel that such an appointment would at once result in the force being an unhappy one, and I should contemplate its future command with misgiving. Nor, indeed, would I be prepared now to recommend McCAY for the command of a division. He is anxious to obtain this, but, realising as I do how tremendously his late division has improved in efficiency since HOBBS took it over, and knowing that we have other brigadiers who are in every way more suitable than he, I feel that if a division were fell vacant, I could not conscientiously recommend him for it, though I fear he will be very much upset, should such a contingency arise, as I know he is anxious to get back to a division in the field, if only to establish a claim to succeed to the command of the force later on, in the event of a vacancy occurring.

Had I to give up the command of the corps, but remained in France, I should I think recommend for your approval that General MONASH might command the corps, while I retained the position of G.O.C., A.I.F., for I honestly think that this would be in the best interests of all. The A.I.F. Office, under Colonel DODDS, would of course remain with me, while I should keep in the closest touch with all our units, and I hope bring together, as I now do, our different formations in France and England. However, this is a contingency which I hope will not arise, and I do not know why I wander away into it.

I am extremely sorry to bother you at all with the subject - and regret that McCAY should have worried me, for, as far as I can gather, the existing organisation goes on very smoothly and satisfactorily. I hear very few complaints, and those only on trivial matters, such as are bound to come up in any large force like ours.

The matter which has caused McCAY to bring up the subject is, as you will see, of a comparatively trivial nature, connected with the arrest of some of our men who were on leave in Edinburgh, and the question arose as to whether this should be effected under McCAY or GRIFFITH'S orders. You will see that this is such a trifling matter, for GRIFFITHS was quite prepared to settle it quietly and off-hand, as should have been done.

I notice that McCAY quotes Canadian Administration, but from the very adverse comments that one hears on all sides in connection with that, it certainly is not one that any of us would be glad to see followed by others.

I have recently received two telegrams from you about the possible re-employment of George JOHNSTON. You will probably remember that I have once or twice written to you about him, and always in full approval of the work he did with our artillery. I thought it was extremely foolish of him to take exception to COXEN'S appointment as G.O.C., R.A., of the corps, for he fully acknowledged that he himself was not capable of undertaking this work. It is, as you probably know, work which only highly trained and scientific gunners can carry out, and COXEN is, indeed, the only one so qualified in this corps. JOHNSTON told me, however, that he did not like to serve under COXEN; and, between ourselves, I cannot help thinking that he was really glad of an opportunity to return to Australia. For this, one cannot blame him, for I well realised the very long service he had done, and I understand ~~matter~~ how much his business matters have suffered in consequence.

JOHNSTON having gone, however, I feel that to bring him back at the expense of others, who have continued to bear the heat and burden of the day, and ^{have} done well, would hardly be fair, while, as a matter of fact, I do not at present foresee the possibility of any artillery vacancies. Then, when your telegram came suggesting that he might be employed in an infantry brigade, I had to wire that I felt he was not suitable for this - and, indeed, he is not. At one time, when we were on the Peninsula, I did, as a matter of fact, put him in command of such a brigade, because I recognised the value of his

keenness and activity. I think though, that he himself felt he was not really suited for this, and, if I remember right, asked to be allowed to return to the artillery. I may be wrong about this, but certainly the fact remains that he did return, and I know willingly.

Since then the whole command of an infantry brigade has increased in strenuousness and detailed knowledge of a nature of which JOHNSTON, I feel, has never cared to acquire. ROSENTHAL, on the other hand, has very much gone in for such work, and by his command of the brigade recently, has fully justified his selection - indeed, I think I shall almost certainly recommend him ~~for~~ to you for the next divisional vacancy that may occur.

I may mention that I am expecting the removal of Generals SMYTH, LESSLIE and HOBKIRK almost immediately to Imperial commands, and possibly, ~~that~~ ^{too}, General WALKER. I have for some time represented ~~that~~ these officers are now available for transfer, and I know that G.H.Q. have only been waiting for vacancies elsewhere in which to absorb them. These four are, as you know, the last of the Imperial officers now serving with our divisions - except, perhaps, one or two juniors, whom divisions have made strenuous efforts to keep up to now.

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I am sure that you will be glad to hear that we have lately been making arrangements for the provision of gravestones for all those who have fallen here during the war. It has been decided that a stone shall be erected to the memory of every individual, and all - for both officers and men - of precisely the same pattern. I asked all divisional-generals to have competitions for designs, and the one we have selected is I think an excellent design, by General HOBBS. This comprises the "Rising Sun" which we wear as a badge, and a cross in which the five stars of the Southern Cross are inserted. Our proposal is that the monument shall be of concrete, which experts like MONASH and HOBBS say is more durable than stone, and will be considerably less expensive. Let into each will be the designs I have mentioned in brass, with the necessary inscription about each individual. In addition to individual stones, there will be general memorials erected on the various battle-fields to commemorate ~~the~~ special hard fighting, and to the memory of those whose bodies may not have been found.

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In my last letter to the Governor-General, I mentioned my reasons for recommending that the Australian Star should be more to commemorate those who joined up in 1914, than all who had fought at Gallipoli. My chief reason was, as I told Sir Ronald, that it should, as nearly as possible, follow the lines of the Star granted to men who fought in France in 1914 - in fact, what all here would certainly prefer, even now, is that the 1914 Star, as worn by the English troops, be extended to those who were serving anywhere at the same time. However, I presume and hope that the War Office will accept your recommendation, and we shall doubtless hear of a decision ere long.

I am sure you will have realised how very much I should like to have been able to pay you a visit now, but I know you will also appreciate my reasons for thinking it so impossible. Indeed, nothing would have persuaded me to desert our men during the winter, when I feel there is so very much to be done for them. In fact, it would seem almost impossible at any time to be away at any great distance, for one cannot say when the really crucial test may be on us, with the final fighting on which the result of the war will depend. Personally, I cannot think that this will be very long delayed now, as the military autocrats in Germany realise that their one and only chance is for a big war victory, ~~unless they can~~ and their chances of obtaining this must decrease, unless they can bring off something during this spring or summer.

Extract from private letter from General Sir W.R.Birdwood to
Senator G.F.Pearce, dated 7th May, 1918.

I only trust that Mr HUGHES' health will improve during the journey, as I fear he has had a real bad time in this respect, lately, and we can ill afford to think of his being laid up. I am sure that his presence at the Imperial Conference will be of inestimable value both to the Empire and Australia, for the results of the next conference must be so very far-reaching.

One small question which I hear is now to be submitted to the conference, is the Star for our Gallipoli men. I am, as a matter of fact, urging that this shall not wait for the conference, as I am sorry to say there is a good deal of ill-feeling here on the subject owing to the fact that our Gallipoli men now see large numbers of the British Army going about wearing the 1914 Star, while, as far as they can hear, no action has been taken regarding anything of the sort for them. When I say "no action", I mean no tangible result, for they are aware that the King has approved of some special recognition, but this has not matured. In the meantime, I have heard that there are people in England who are saying they do not see how anything at all can be done - hence the idea of shelving it for the conference. I have taken the liberty of saying that I can answer for Australia in the matter straight away, in that they have been informed of the King's wish, and are definitely of opinion that a Star for all those who were at Gallipoli should be immediately sanctioned - in fact, that the present 1914 Star should be specially extended to all Gallipoli men, and so at once put an end to any heart-burning.

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Extract from private letter from General Sir W.R.Birdwood to
Senator G.F.Pearce, dated 13th May, 1918.

I was sent for yesterday to go to G.H.Q., when the C.G.S. informed me that the Commander-in-Chief wished me to take over at once the command of the 5th Army out here. I and I believe a great many others here, had always realised that this might happen, simply owing to my seniority, but I personally had trusted that it would not come my way, and, as I think I told you, I had let it be generally known that I did not wish to leave the command of this corps for anything else. When, therefore, the C.G.S. announced the Commander-in-Chief's wishes, I at once asked him if this was an order, or if it was open to me to refuse. I pointed out that I had now been with the corps for 3½ years, and that, rather than leave it, I was prepared to give up all prospects of advancement as I wished to serve to the end with the men who had been with me all this time. He told me that my name had already been submitted to the Cabinet, and that in time of war like the present, it was not a case of being offered an appointment, but of orders being issued to take it up; if however, I was absolutely and definitely to decline to take over the command, that the Commander-in-Chief would of course consider it. He urged me, however, before I took such action, to consider the following fact, viz., that my refusal to move on would mean that I should block promotion, and that no Australian officer could hope to command the corps, while he considered that it was most probable that Australia would be most gratified at the fact of her corps commander being selected to command an army, and being succeeded by an Australian officer. To this argument there was of course no reply, and to my own personal reluctance and with feelings of real grief, I had to acquiesce.

I told the C.G.S. how anxious Australia had always been to see an "Australian "Army", and how Mr HUGHES had mentioned this to the Commander-in-Chief when he was here in 1916, when the Chief said that our numbers, viz., six divisions (including the New Zealand Division) were too small to justify the formation of an Anzac Army. The C.G.S. said, however, he realised that the Australian troops appreciated being with me, and that it was therefore the Chief's intention, whenever it could be done compatible with the tactical situation, that these troops were to form part of my Army. As a matter of fact, the 1st Division, which has been away from the rest of the corps for some little time, will immediately form part of the 5th Army, and it is the Chief's present intention to remove the four other divisions up to it, when opportunity occurs for doing this, but, as he pointed out, it is naturally quite impossible to make anything like a promise that these divisions shall always remain with me, though it will, I know, mean much to them to be able to realise that they can look to my Army as their more or less permanent home, to which they will be able to return on the completion of any necessary periods of service elsewhere, while I hope that casualty clearing stations and other troops which do not belong to the corps, will be concentrated in my Army.

The question then came up regarding my successor in the corps, I said there were three officers here, any one of whom I think could succeed me, viz., Generals MONASH, HOBBS and WHITE, who, as you know, stand in that seniority. Of HOBBS, I am perhaps just a little doubtful as a corps commander, though I have the highest opinion of him as a divisional-general - indeed, my opinion in that respect could not be higher, for he is so absolutely thorough, able, loyal and courageous. I am, however, a little uncertain as to his strength to command a corps, for though I say it in no means deprecatory to him; I know it is a comfort to him to realise that he can always unburden his troubles on me with reliance on my support, without which he might perhaps at times be a little lost.

There remain MONASH and WHITE, in both of whom I should have absolute confidence as corps commanders. WHITE having been so intimately with me during the last 3½ years, I naturally have not only the greatest respect and admiration for his ability, but the deepest affection for him in his fine character and lovable nature. I regard him as one of the ablest officers with whom it has been my privilege to serve, and it is perhaps on account of this intimate personal knowledge that I should almost be inclined to put him first in my opinion. I feel, however, it has been quite impossible to contemplate superseding MONASH in the recommendation I have made to you. He has commanded first a brigade and then a division in this force without I think a day's intermission since our training days in Egypt in January, 1915, to the present time. Of his ability, there can be no possible doubt, nor of his keenness and knowledge. Also, he has had almost unvarying success in all the operations undertaken by his division, which has I know the greatest confidence in him. I am aware, of course, of the feeling there was against him in Australia, when he was first appointed to the brigade command, owing to, I understand, his German origin, but this has, I think, been entirely lived down, as far as the A.I.F. is concerned, by his good work. Therefore, as I said in my recommendation, I do not think we could in justice overlook in any way his undoubted claims and equally undoubted ability to ~~fill~~ fill the appointment.

That is as far as the actual corps is concerned.

As I told you in my letter of 12th March, McCAY was then anxious for me to appoint him to the command of a division out here in order that he might come into the running for the command of the corps in the event of my going. I, however, told him so distinctly that I could not see my way to this, that I understand he at once gave up all hope in this respect, though he still retained the strong wish to succeed me in my capacity as G.O.C., A.I.F., and I gathered from GRIFFITHS that it was on this account he was anxious to be recognised as the sole head of both depots and administration in England; but, as you know, he later on acquiesced in my refusal to recommend such an appointment.

When what I look upon as this bomb-shell as regards my leaving the corps came, I let out three senior officers here - MONASH, HOBBS and WHITE, know about it, but I have not yet allowed it to be made public pending a reply to my telegram to you on the subject. All three were nice enough to say that they very much regretted the fact that I was to go, though it means promotion, and I feel I can say, without appearing to flatter myself, that they were particularly exercised as regards the carrying on of the administration of the A.I.F. When I informed them that I hoped it might be possible for me still to retain this, they each separately said that in their opinion it was, as far as they could see, the only satisfactory way of carrying on. MONASH, as G.O.C. the corps would, I think, have a very difficult time with McCAY, who would almost certainly wish to be G.O.C., A.I.F., but I honestly feel that such an appointment would really be impossible, for none of our senior generals seem to have real confidence in him, and look upon the possibility of his appointment as such with the greatest apprehension; HOBBS going so far as to say that he felt he would not be able to carry on ~~an~~ command of his division, were McCAY so appointed. It is certainly most unfortunate that this should be the case, as I so fully recognise not only McCAY'S great ability, but his whole-hearted keenness on the A.I.F. and its efficiency, but he seems to have such a very unfortunate manner of rubbing ~~people~~ everybody up the wrong way, and of being out of sympathy with all.

CHAUVEL, as I have previously mentioned, is our senior officer, but the fact that he is in Egypt makes it impossible to consider him for here, and, indeed, I know that the Commander-in-Chief would absolutely refuse to accept him as a corps commander with his entire lack of experience of conditions of fighting in France.

In this connection, I trust you will not have thought that I have anything but the good of this force in view, in suggesting that I should retain the appointment of G.O.C., A.I.F., but it has struck me that in addition to being able to co-ordinate the work between the different branches, now that I have had this in my hands during the last 3½ years, I may I hope be able to be of some service when the days of demobilisation arrive. I well realise how difficult those times will be, and if I am still with the force, I shall hope to be able to do what I can to help.

I trust that you will not think that I have unduly laboured the whole of this matter, and that you will realise I write to you as openly as I do confidentially, and for your personal information, but I have thought it only right to let you know every detail as it strikes me - as I say, for your own information.

There remains the question of General WHITE, whom I have told you the Commander-in-Chief has nominated for Major-General, General Staff, of my Army. It is, as you will realise, an extremely important appointment, second only to that of C.G.S. at G.H.Q. I can think of no one more admirably fitted to fill it than WHITE, while his experience in it will be of the greatest value to Australia in time to come.

I, of course, realise what his removal from the corps will mean, but on my going I think he would in any case have wished to go to a division rather than to remain on the Staff, while we have three or four brigadiers, all of whom are suited for divisional command, and who should be gaining experience as such. Only a short time ago, General WALKER, in whose division BLAMEY is G.S.O.I., recommended him for the appointment of B.G.G.S., and I was on the point of sending in his name for such to an English corps. Now, however, that this vacancy has occurred, it provides an excellent opportunity for BLAMEY (whose appointment I have discussed with MONASH) and, of course, with WHITE) and I trust that he will do well in it. MONASH has himself naturally all the ability to judge of this.

I shortly expect to have two further divisional vacancies, as well as that of MONASH, as I have for some time been urging G.H.Q. to transfer Generals SMYTH and WALKER to English divisions, in order that we may be able to advance Australian officers. It had been my intention to put up the names of ROSENTHAL and GLASGOW to you in that order for these vacancies, as they stand in that order on the list of brigadiers whom I consider suitable. Now, however, that MONASH'S vacancy has come first, I have made an alteration in this, and recommended GELLIBRAND to you to succeed him in the 3rd Division, though I still propose to recommend ROSENTHAL and GLASGOW when the other two divisions fall vacant.

My reason for this is that in the 3rd Division we have ~~McNICOLL~~ McNICOLL as our senior brigadier. He is an excellent, hard-working, honest, keen and loyal brigadier, of whom MONASH has a high opinion, and who has always done his best in the most self-sacrificing manner. MONASH has been inclined to consider him for divisional command, but on discussing it thoroughly, he agrees with me that, good as McNICOLL is as a brigadier, he hardly at present possesses the necessary qualifications for the far more important divisional command. He would, however, feel it a good deal if ROSENTHAL, who is in the same division, were to go over his head, while we hope he will not have the same feelings when GELLIBRAND, who is a Staff College officer with many years' experience ~~xxxx~~ of regular soldiering and who has also been continuously with us since October, 1914, is given the command of the division, and I trust that this will be the case. As the appointments to all three divisions are likely to occur within a short period, it will not matter much as to the order in which they go. Should GELLIBRAND'S health fail, (which is the one point I am ever in doubt about him) BRAND would I think be the next to move up in his place, for he continues to prove himself such an excellent officer.

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Extract from private letter from General Sir W.R.Birdwood to
Senator G.F.Pearce, dated 15th June, 1918.

I am so sorry to have just had to send you a telegram about a successor to Brigadier-General R. SMITH, as I much regret I have had to replace him. He has proved himself a real sterling hard fighting soldier, for whom I have had the greatest respect and admiration, after seeing a very great deal of him ever since he took over his brigade command, and even before when he commanded a battalion. He has looked the picture of health and a real strong man, but rather suddenly has developed what I understand is ulceration of the stomach, for which he was sent to England. I had every hope that he would be back with us shortly, but apparently the trouble has proved worse than was anticipated, and I have received a report from our medical board there that he must be invalided to Australia. I hope you may perhaps see him on arrival, and let him know how highly we thought of him; I am indeed sorry to have lost his services. Colonel MARTIN, who takes his place, is however a real good solid and reliable man, and will I am sure do well.

. . . .

An alteration in establishment has just been made by G.H.Q., and this, though small on the surface, will yet help us considerably as regards numbers. The establishment of an infantry battalion has been reduced from 966 to 900, which, you will see, means a reduction from our ~~karrakione~~ 60 battalions of some 4,000 men, and this will be of considerable help to us.

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Copy of private letter from General Talbot HOEBS to Senator G.F.Pearce, dated 27th June, 1918.

Headquarters, 5th Australian
Division,
27th June, 1918.

My dear Senator Pearce,

Years ago you were good enough to tell me that I might, if I wished, write you direct on any subject of importance connected with the Military Forces of the Commonwealth. I have never done so hitherto, but lately events of the most vital importance affecting the future welfare of the Australian Imperial Force have occurred, which induce me now to take advantage of the privilege you extended to me.

The matters I refer to are fully set forth and explained in a letter to you from General MONASH, dated the 21st instant. This letter, which I have carefully read, I entirely agree with and feel I am perfectly justified in expressing the opinion that the letter represents the views of the great majority of all ranks of the A.I.F. General MONASH has so clearly stated out views that it is quite un-necessary for me to traverse and endorse his letter in detail. I desire however, while emphasising the importance of the subjects mentioned in the letter, specially to refer to other changes which I understand are likely to follow the proposed displacement of General BIRDWOOD from the position he now holds as G.O.C., A.I.F.

It is, I believe, proposed by the gentlemen in London referred to by General MONASH in his letter to remove General MONASH from the command of the Australian Corps and to appoint him Administrative Head in London of the Australian Imperial Force, replacing him by General C.B.B.WHITE in command of the Australian Corps. Why this is considered necessary I am quite at a loss to know. What I do know, however, is that it would mean the loss to the A.I.F. of a commander of very great ability and exceptional energy and experience, who enjoys absolutely the complete confidence and respect of the A.I.F. as a fighting leader, to be relegated to a position where he would practically become a nonentity, owing to the causes stated and the reasons given on page 3, para. 3 and following paras. of General MONASH'S letter of the 21st instant. As already stated, General WHITE is to be taken from his position as M.G.G.S. 5th Army to command the Australian Corps - taken from a position where his great ability, initiative, knowledge and experience are certainly going to be of the greatest value to the Army, the Empire, and the cause for which we are fighting; a position for which he is peculiarly suited and which many of us fully believe to be but a step to another Staff appointment of much greater importance in the future, and one which we feel certain he has the ability and qualifications to fill with very great credit to himself, invaluable advantage to the Empire's Armies, and distinguished honour and ultimate immense advantage to Australia.

Moreover, I have good reason to believe that both General MONASH and General WHITE are entirely adverse to the changes proposed for them and to which it is quite possible they may (and justly so) object to. Supposing that they should feel so strongly in this matter that they should resign rather than agree to the changes, it would probably mean that the A.I.F. would lose in addition to General BIRDWOOD both Generals MONASH and WHITE. The consequences of such a possibility can only be regarded as disastrous to the A.I.F., for we have not the men who could replace them. General MONASH undoubtedly, for many reasons, is the best man to command the Corps, and I am sure that General WHITE agrees with me. General MONASH'S appointment has been most popular with all ranks of the A.I.F. in France and his removal would be looked upon with wonder, and possibly with suspicion, and would be sure to give rise to all sorts of rumours which might be exceedingly unpleasant and painful to General MONASH.

I am sure I am voicing the opinion of the majority of all ranks of the A.I.F. and certainly of the Corps and Divisional Commanders (who ought to be, and are, the best judges of what is required in the best interests of the fighting men of the A.I.F. in France) in urging to the utmost that before any alterations in the

control of the A.I.F. are made, that Mr. Hughes should come to France and see the Corps and Divisional Commanders and obtain their views on the subject. Personally I am ~~Commander~~ General MONASH has not in the

present administration and slightest degree exaggerated the invaluable services rendered to Australia and the A.I.F. by General BIRDWOOD during the time he has been associated with us, and I am most emphatically of opinion that the severance of his present relationship with the A.I.F. would not only be most unpopular with the force, but would be entirely to the disadvantage of Australia. No man could have more devotedly studied the interests of Australia and her soldiers than General BIRDWOOD has done, and I am confident that nothing would induce him to sacrifice Australia's interests, either for his own or any other person's or persons' advantage.

Surely it is best to leave well alone. Everything at the present time to the best of my knowledge and belief is going on smoothly and well with the A.I.F. in France and the reputation of the Australian soldier has never been, and can hardly ever be expected to be higher than at the present moment. If there is trouble, it is in England and certainly not with the A.I.F. in France, where the only probable complaint or discontent which may exist is among a few senior officers who are perhaps disappointed with the selections and recent command appointments to divisions and brigades. It would be a thousand pities - in fact it would be, I fear, disastrous, at this critical time to make the drastic changes in the higher appointments of the A.I.F. which are suggested, and, I believe, seriously contemplated. It would certainly mean discord and distraction among men whose one and only thought at this crisis in our history should be centred on one thing and one alone - the defeat of our enemies and the triumph of our cause.

I am,

Yours very sincerely,

(Sgd) J. Talbot Hobbs.

entirely at a loss to know why it is desired to replace general Birdwood and alter the present higher administration and command.

Extract from private letter from General Sir W.R. Birdwood to
Senator G.F. Pearce, dated 6th August, 1918.

I am sure you will realise with what great regret I have wired to you regarding General GRIFFITHS' wish to return to Australia. I would have refused to think of this, had I consulted only my own wishes but, as he points out, he has done four years' good and loyal work for us, during which I think I may say he has hardly had five minutes' holiday or real rest. He points out that both he and his wife are getting on in years, and the long separation at their time of life means a great deal to them. He told me that you had been so extremely kind as to offer to send Mrs. Griffiths and his girls over to England, ~~xxx~~ which would have been a possible solution of the difficulty. I understand, however, that Mrs. Griffiths has a highly nervous temperament, and he fears that once she gets into the danger zone, it would be altogether too much for her. He has therefore had reluctantly to put aside all idea of this, and to apply that he may be released.

He had written out to me about this, but I told him I would decide nothing until I could have a talk with him, when the opportunity offered on my going over to London for the opening of Australia House. I can hardly exaggerate the loyal and good work which GRIFFITHS has done to, I think I may say, the complete satisfaction of every member of the A.I.F., and undoubtedly to the great advantage of it and of the country. He is, I know, in ways extremely sorry to be leaving, but he tells me he thinks he should go.

I am afraid that it is impossible to disguise the fact that at the present moment there is undoubtedly a certain feeling of unrest and being unsettled among a large number of our senior officers - a feeling which is naturally very undesirable, and, to some extent, I attribute GRIFFITHS' wish to go now to this feeling, which he has acknowledged he certainly had. This is of course due, as you will know, to the apparently unsettled question as to ~~xxxxxxx~~ what is to be the future of the command of the A.I.F. I may mention that personally I know nothing officially about this. You were kind enough to inform me of the decision of the Commonwealth Government that I should retain the command, and on this I am entirely acting. When Mr HUGHES came over here, I had, as I told you, an interview with him on the 17th June. He then asked me what my position was with our troops, which I fully explained to him. Since then, I have heard nothing more on the subject, beyond the fact that when Mr HUGHES visited France, he spoke to all the divisional-generals, who, I believe, one and all urged that no further changes should be made. Beyond that, I know nothing, except that from all sides we hear of continual discussions as to ~~xxxxxxx~~ changes in the future - which as I say are, as is only natural, upsetting to work. As a matter of fact, two or three of our senior officers told me they would wish to return to Australia, but I pointed out how their duty lies to retain their commands whatever happens, as our one and only idea must simply be to do our best for the A.I.F., and Australia generally - this I am sure all will do to the end.

In this connection I enclose a copy of a telegram which I recently received from CHAUVEL, and to which I was only able to reply that I knew little about the matter. I took a copy with me to London, as I thought it only right that Mr HUGHES should see it. As there was no opportunity for my having a talk with him (he was naturally fearfully busy) I gave this copy to General HOWSE, who was dining with him, and who I know showed it to him. I understand that Mr HUGHES was not prepared to take any notice whatever of it. It is, I think, however, only right that it should be considered, as there can be no question of the really good service which CHAUVEL has done since the beginning of the war, and being as he is our senior officer, he will naturally feel very hurt if he is superseded. I trust that this and other difficulties may be overcome by the present arrangements being continued. However, this has all come as a diversion, for I was really writing about GRIFFITHS, and my regret at the prospects of losing him.

I have thought very deeply over the question of a possible successor to him, and after going over every name have come to the

conclusion that the one man who seems suitable in all respects is General DODDS. He at first absolutely refused to be considered for the appointment. He told me that when he first came from Australia, he thought it was an appointment which he might like, but that now his one wish was to remain with me in the field. I have found him most admirable in his present appointment, and very much indeed regret the possibility of losing him from my side, for I feel I can always turn to him for good and sound advice. When I put the concrete question to him to succeed GRIFFITHS, he again told me he was not prepared to do so; but on placing the question of Australia's interests fully before him, he had to agree that he could not himself suggest the name of any other man who could carry out the work fairly satisfactorily. I pointed out to him that we had to realise that the position of G.O.C. in charge of Administration in London would probably increase in importance owing to the great work which will devolve upon it when demobilisation comes on, and for which it is essential to have a man of good practical knowledge, who could be relied on to work in with the War Office and the Admiralty on the many arrangements involving both departments. On seeing it in this light, DODDS had to realise that in Australian interests, he could no longer refuse. He, however, like GRIFFITHS, told me that he was feeling the very unsettled state owing to these rumours of contemplated changes.

In this connection, too, I gather from GRIFFITHS that he understood that General McCAY was again urging that he should be in charge of both ^{the} troops training in England and the Administration, and that in asking for his return to Australia, he had this fact also in mind, as he felt he could not work satisfactorily under General McCAY. DODDS tells me that he has exactly the same feelings, and that he would only accept the appointment provided he is not placed in that position, and he adds if he can feel he has the complete confidence in your Government. I have told him that he could rely on both these proviso, and I trust that things will be satisfactorily settled.

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I understand that the much debated question of the Gallipoli Star will shortly be settled.- I sincerely hope so, as the real brave fellows who went through all the fighting there have, as it is, already been kept far too long from wearing a little bit of ribbon, upon which they rightly lay so much value and stress. What the actual details will eventually be, I do not know, not that they really very much matter, for all we want is to give what we can as a very small recognition of the gallant service done by our men there. From what I hear, however, I am much afraid that there is no prospect of the 29th Division or the two magnificent Indian Mountain Batteries who fought alongside us at Anzac, being made eligible for the decoration. I think that every single Australian will regret this most deeply, and I cannot help thinking that it is a stupid and narrow-minded view which has been taken by the War Office, and has prevented their inclusion. I feel, however, that I am only out to fight the battle for the Australians, and I hope that the action which I originally took in the matter will, at all events, have ensured justice for them.

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There has been some talk lately of the formation of an A. and N.Z. Army, to consist of our five divisions and the N.Z. Division - forming two corps of three divisions each. As far as I can gather, all our people and the New Zealanders are most enthusiastic about the idea, and, looking ahead, it would seem to me to be extremely desirable from the national point of view of both Australia and New Zealand. There can be no doubt about it that both Dominions must be as one in matters of defence in the Pacific, and I cannot help thinking that, as years go on, they must work absolutely whole-heartedly together in every possible way. All agree that the time, during which we formed one force, and fought literally shoulder to shoulder at Gallipoli, did an enormous amount to bring our men together in the best possible

way. Since the New Zealanders left the Australian Corps, the tendency has been for them to drift apart again, and this I know all the best officers of both forces regret. If they can again be brought together now in one army, and remain so until the end of the war, I am sure that a really great stroke from the Imperial point of view will have been made.

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When I began this letter to you, it was with the idea that GRIFFITHS would return permanently to Australia - which was his own definite petition. I gather, however, that as a result of conversation with General HOWSE, he has been persuaded to modify this, and to ask for five months' leave only - to be allowed to proceed to and return from Australia with General HOWSE. As this would seem to be all in the best general interests of Australia, I have welcomed it, as I realise that there will be so much to do when demobilisation comes, that his services will probably be of very great value then - while there will also be lots for DODDS to do here.

GRIFFITHS brought with him the terms of the Gallipoli Star. By restricting this to those who actually landed on the Peninsula I am afraid it will cut out our nurses and medical officers, who did such extremely good work under very trying circumstances in hospitals at Mudros. I feel that this would result in real heart-burning, and as they there were subjected to the same dangers from disease as we were on the Peninsula, I am hoping that the terms will be modified, so as to make those actually on the Islands, and on the hospital ships plying between them and the Peninsula, eligible for the decoration. This I am sure would be the absolute wishes of everyone who served at Gallipoli.

I have not wired to you about it owing to the delay which would result in the issue of the Star at all, but I am writing urging for reconsideration, to which I hope you will agree.

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Extract from private letter from General Sir W.R.Birdwood to
Senator G.F.Pearce, dated 23rd August, 1918.

I can so well understand your feelings as regards General WHITE, for I really do regard him as just about the best of our magnificent Australian officers. At the same time, I am sure that you will realise that it was impossible for me to advise you that he should succeed me in the corps, without fully considering the claims of General MONASH, whose work, since he took over from me, has more than justified my recommendation to you and your decision on the subject. Also, from the first I have felt that it would be all to the advantage of Australia that General WHITE'S great ability should be given the opportunity of the further and considerably wider experience which he must gain as Chief Staff Officer of an Army. Each Army in turn is called upon to undertake large and independent operations and as the Chief Staff Officer of such a force, he gains experience which is absolutely invaluable. Also, my own personal opinion is that General WHITE is probably the best and ablest of the staff officers in the Armies in France, and should by any chance the present Chief of the General Staff vacate his appointment, I should personally have no hesitation in recommending that General WHITE should succeed him.

Whether such a contingency will ever occur, it is impossible to say, but I am quite convinced that Australia would be really glad to know that one of her officers could occupy such a position. If he did so, the experience gained would be such as neither he nor Australia could possibly have contemplated when he came out here as G.S.O.1. of our 1st Division.

General WHITE has, himself, fully deserved every honour and advancement that has come to him, for I know no more able, loyal and whole-hearted worker than he is. Also, he is one of those men who never spare themselves in any way. I very often try to induce him not to work so much, and allow others to relieve him, but he is so extremely thorough that he will, I am afraid, never consent to do this. I am only a little afraid that he is becoming somewhat worn out, and I should much like to think that he could have a few months' rest. This may, or may not, be possible as a result of the decision which may be arrived at during the next few days.

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Extract from private letter from General Sir W.R.Birdwood to Senator G.F.Pearce, dated 18th September, 1918.

I have just sent you a telegram announcing the departure from here of the first eight hundred men of our 1914 contingents, and, as I am sure you realise, Mr HUGHES' efforts in arranging the return of all these men have given me personally very great pleasure, while I know how much they are appreciated by all. In my wire to you, you will have seen that I referred to the hustle in which they have been sent off, and which I am afraid has been somewhat disconcerting to all of us, though I fancy it was impossible to avoid this.

The only information I had that matters were proceeding was a letter some ten days ago from General GRIFFITHS, telling me that Mr HUGHES was busy personally with the whole matter at the War Office, and that he hoped to let me know shortly if anything had been arranged. I was looking forward to receiving this information, so as to be able to make our arrangements very quietly over here, when to my surprise I received an urgent telegram about midday on the 12th, telling me that the first eight hundred men were to entrain at dawn on the 15th. We, of course, at once took the matter up here with General MONASH, and out-lying units concerned.

General MONASH was, I am afraid, much perturbed in the matter owing to the way in which the men had necessarily to be selected, and the fact that arrangements for their kit, etc., were also made in great haste, and, in consequence, probably badly. There was, however, an only alternative to say that we were unable to avail ourselves of the eight hundred berths available, and this I am sure would have been entirely contrary to the wishes of all. In the case of further detachments, we shall, of course, receive proper notice, when I trust these troubles will not recur.

I am glad to say that as regards these eight hundred men, we were able to provide two changes of uniform and underclothing for I think every man, but we had practically no soft hats available, I fear, therefore, that the men may present a rather disreputable appearance on arrival in Australia, as I much doubt if Egypt will be able to supply the deficiencies. I know what adverse comment this is likely to cause, and I therefore thought it advisable to wire the facts to you, so that criticism might be met and I hope assuaged.

I am glad to say I was able to see all the lads just before they started - to give them my heartiest thanks for all their good work, and to wish them Godspeed with messages to their people in Australia. I am afraid that practically all of them must have small personal effects, souvenirs and trophies of all sorts at the Base and at depots which they would naturally have wished to take with them to Australia. It was, of course, impossible for them to collect these, and I am indeed sorry that this should have been the case. I don't suppose that Mr HUGHES knew for a moment how expeditiously matters would be arranged as regards shipping at the last moment, as if he could have realised this, he would doubtless have given us the necessary warning.

We hope to get off 4,000 men during October, which will probably not leave a very large number for later on. Our records show a total of 7,700 1914 men still remain in France, England and Egypt. A certain number of these will ^{have} already been sent off in various ways, while there will be a few, especially among senior officers, who will I think refuse to take advantage of this leave until the war is over.

Having granted this leave to the 1914 men, however, I do not see how we are to avoid going on with the 1915 men. When I was down with the corps on the day the eight hundred left, I was besieged by scores of 1915 men, who swarmed around me, and asked me when their turn would come! I thought the wisest thing to tell them was that the 1914 men had cleared out so as to give them their chance of killing many more Germans, and that when they had succeeded in doing this in really large numbers, we might well hope that the Germans would deem

it advisable to "hands up" and let all go home! Honestly, though, I do think the case of the 1915 men will want consideration immediately. Those who left, we will say, in January and February 1915 are really just as much deserving of consideration as the 1914 men, for they joined us in Egypt, and a good many must have been present at the original landing. I quite realise that it is a very difficult matter, as it is so difficult to know where exactly to draw the line. With things going so excellently as they are here, I could almost hope that it would not be necessary for those now returning to come back to us. As I told them, however, I dared not hold out this hope to them, for though the Bosche is beaten, and I honestly think has lost all powers of initiative forever, I fear he may yet hold out for a *very* considerable time. His ruling military caste so fully realise that with defeat comes their extinction, and, the brutes that they are, they will not hesitate to see tens of thousands of more men slaughtered rather than they should be deprived of their miserable privileged positions - such a tremendous contrast I always think to the point of view in every way of the British military officer, who rightly regards himself as a servant and not a master of the State.

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Extract from private letter from General Sir W.R. Birdwood to
Senator G.F. Pearce, dated 12th December, 1918.

As you know, we are now getting off considerable numbers and I hope that 12,000 will be sailing during the last six weeks of the year. This will naturally include the whole of our sick and wounded (who will come to at least 7000) and all men in a lower category than Class "A". I am, however, most anxious that not a single berth should go empty - allowing of course for any shortage in accommodation which the medical authorities think desirable on account of the present influenza epidemic. To fill up and get as good a flying start as possible, and of course not in any way as a demobilisation measure, I am filling up existing vacancies by any remaining 1914 men, and then going on with those who left Australia early in 1915. By the time we have got off any considerable number of these it may be possible to put into operation the ordinary demobilisation plans.

As you may have heard, Mr HUGHES asked me to go over to see him on the 21st November, when he told me he wished me to retain the appointment of G.O.C., A.I.F., and that he had selected MONASH to be in charge of Repatriation and Demobilisation. He asked me if I felt I could ensure harmonious working with MONASH and the Board, when I assured him I certainly could do this. Personally, I should have liked General WHITE to have looked after Demobilisation, and MONASH Repatriation, but I of course realise that the two must work absolutely hand in hand, and that there was therefore a certain advantage in the same officer being in charge of both. WHITE proved himself such an admirable Chief Staff Officer in the big organisation which was required when we raised the 4th and 5th Divisions in Egypt in January, 1916, that I felt there was no one who could equal him, for Staff work of a big nature. I therefore thought that, with MONASH at the Board, it was best for WHITE to be appointed Chief Staff Officer of the A.I.F., and, as such, an ex-officio member of the Board. Believe me, I am most grateful to you for your kindness in so promptly agreeing to this, and granting him the rank of Lieut.-General which he has indeed so fully deserved.

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In the Gazette which will be published on 1st January, I am hoping to see WHITE with a K.C.B. and MONASH and HOBBS with K.C.M.G's, so you will see that the fighting units are not overlooked. Also, I am sure all must realise how very well we have been able to look after our Divisional-Generals, Brigadiers, etc., in the way of honours which they have indeed so fully deserved. As a matter of fact, I was looking through the list of the Armies in France recently, when I noticed that, among the Brigadier-Generals of the 60 Divisions (including Canadian and New Zealanders) out here, 16 only had C.B's, and of this number 11 were in the A.I.F.!

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Extract from private letter from Senator G.F.Pearce. to General Sir W.R.Birdwood, dated 8th October 1918. in reply to letters despatched on 15th June and 8th July 1918.

In regard to your telegrams recommending further honours to HOWSE and MAUDSLEY, it appeared to me that there might be some complaints that these officers were getting an undue amount of recognition, whilst others had not received the same. It appears, further, that HOWSE in particular has received a fair amount of recognition for his admittedly valuable services. It would be well, I think, that we should keep something in hand for consideration at the termination of the war, when he of course would have strong claims for further recognition. It was these considerations which prompted my further telegram to you on these subjects.

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DEFENCE OF SUEZ CANAL.NARRATIVE OF EVENTS, 25th JANUARY to 8th FEBRUARY, 1915.

"SWIFTSURE", in Suez Canal,
8th February, 1915.

I have the honour to submit a narrative of events which have occurred since the advance of the Turkish Forces became a menace to the Suez Canal.

2. On the 25th January intelligence having been received that the enemy were within 12 miles of Suez, I ordered "OCEAN" into the Canal to cover SHATT.

3. Next morning, 26th January, "SWIFTSURE" and "ODIN" proceeded to KANTARA and "HIMALAYA" took up a position near SHALLUF.

4. On 27th January, "D'ENTRECASTEAUX" entered LAKE TIMSAH where "REQUIN" was already stationed and "MINERVA" arrived at Southern End of LITTLE BITTER LAKE.

5. Minor attacks had been made on KANTARA outposts on 25th and 26th January which were easily beaten off.

6. On the 28th January, at 3.45 a.m. a further attack on KANTARA was made by a few hundred of the enemy and was again repulsed. "SWIFTSURE" fired a few lyddite shell at daylight and dispersed a body of the enemy at long range.

7. On the 27th January a French seaplane whose engines had been running badly was forced to descend to the Eastward of PORT SAID and the Pilot and Observing Officer (Second Lieutenant PARTRIDGE attached to the Indian Army) returning at night were, I regret to say, killed by our Picket outside PORT SAID, who mistook them for the enemy. The seaplane was subsequently recovered.

8. "HARDINGE" entered the Canal on 2nd February and proceeded to a position at Kilo 84 just to the South of LAKE TIMSAH.

9. On 30th and 31st January a number of Australian Transports passed to Northward, Canal Traffic proceeding as usual by day but is now stopped at night on account of the risks from possible snipers.

10. All remained quiet till the early morning of 3rd February when simultaneous attacks were delivered at several points on the Canal which were in every case repulsed with considerable loss to the enemy.

11. At Kantara, "SWIFTSURE" fired a few shells at retreating bodies of the Turks from daylight at intervals until 1.0 p.m. causing numerous casualties and largely accelerating their movements.

12. The main attack was centred on Toussoum where a determined and plucky attempt was made to cross the Canal in boats which had been dragged on wheels across the desert. These boats made in Constantinople are of galvanised steel -- Length 24 feet, beam 5 feet, depth 2 feet 9 inches, capable of holding about 30 men. (Sketch Appendix No. 1.)

13. A number of pontoons which were to have been subsequently brought up for bridging purposes, but were abandoned about a mile to the Eastward were found to be constructed of kerosene tins cased in wood. (Sketch Appendix No. 2.).

14. This attack commenced at 3.20 a.m. and was repulsed by our forces stationed on both ~~banks~~ banks, the crossing being attempted immediately South of our post at Toussoum.

15. Torpedo Boat No. 043, Lieutenant Commander George B. Palmes, then lying at Devesoir, and the armed tug "MANSOURA" Lieutenant W.B. Livesay, R.I.M. patrolling the ~~Canal~~ Canal South of Ismailia, were ordered to proceed and destroy the enemy boats. This was satisfactorily accomplished by gunfire and explosives both vessels coming under a brisk fire from the enemy on the East Bank while doing so.

16. "HARDINGE", "REQUIN" and "CLIO" were the only ships which came under the enemy's artillery fire.

17. About 8.30 a.m. after her range had been found by light guns, "HARDINGE", stationed three miles North of Toussoum, was hit, on both funnels by two heavy H.E. shell, (about 8-inch), another heavy shell bursting over the fore part of the ship causing ~~some~~ casualties among the foremost gun's crews. The ~~xxx~~ foremost funnel was wrecked and fore stokehold rendered untenable. She sustained 11 casualties.

18. "HARDINGE" then very properly moved into Lake Timsah, her guns being ineffective at the long range from which she was being attacked.

19. This heavy gun, or guns, was subsequently silenced by the "REQUIN" from Southern end of Lake Timsah, at a range of 9'200 metres after its fire had been turned on to her.

20. A battery of light guns, which had been firing over the Lake was also silenced by "REQUIN" later in the afternoon.

21. "D'ENTRECASTEAUX" at Deversoir scattered some large bodies of infantry advancing towards Serapeum at ranges from 10,000 to 12,000 metres. I am indebted to this ship for Medical attention kindly given to the two wounded Officers of T.B. 043.

22. "CLIO" did good work at El Ferdan in silencing two 11 pdr. guns which had opened an accurate fire on this station and on the ship, which was hit twice - no casualties.

23. Later in the day "SWIFTSURE" and "HARDINGE" exchanged positions.

24. At daylight on ^{4th}~~3th~~/February "SWIFTSURE" proceeded to a position one mile south of Toussoum to make certain that all enemy boats had been destroyed, it being reported that the Turks were still holding trenches on the East Bank.

25. Ship was sniped on the way, the Chief Yeoman of Signals Samuel John Smith, c.n. 180636, in crow's nest at the masthead was killed.

(4)

+ The trenches were shelled by 14 pdrs. and a few hours later were cleared by our soldiers, assisted by the "MENSURA" with Lieutenant E. H. Daughish, R.I.M., in command, after being treacherously fired on by an abuse of the White Flag.

26. During the afternoon "OCEAN" proceeded to Kilometer 82, South end of LAKE TIMSAH.

27. The enemy have since evinced no desire to renew hostilities and are probably awaiting reinforcements, if not in retreat.

28. I would also take this opportunity of expressing my high appreciation of the invaluable services rendered by the French seaplane flight under the orders of Lieutenant de Vaisseau de L'Escaille.

These machines have been flying daily for the past two months making extended reconnaissances over the enemy's country both from Akaba and from the neighbourhood of Port Said.

In co-operation with the Military aeroplanes they have kept us fully informed of the Enemy's advance; they have been ready to fly in almost any weather; have risked forced landings in the desert, which in the absence of wheels would in all probability have meant destruction, and in short their skill and daring have filled me with the ~~greatest~~ highest admiration. Only one machine has been lost at Akaba, and though they have been repeatedly under fire, the only casualties sustained in this department have been those already mentioned in this despatch.

29. In conclusion it is scarcely necessary for me to add that the behaviour of all concerned has been excellent and that the accurate firing of the Allied Ships has in my opinion contributed in no small measure both morally as well as practically, to the success of these operations.

"D'ENTRECASTEAUX",

4th February, 1915.

I have the honour to report that T.B.043 was laying off Deversoir on February 3rd, when I received an order to proceed up the Canal and destroy the enemy's pontoon boats. I proceeded up and soon came under a fairly heavy rifle fire from the enemy on the East bank, to which I replied by maxim fire whilst the 3 pdr. put two shots into each pontoon boat as we passed. All these boats were rendered unfloatable, and three Turks hiding behind one were blown into the air. We then assisted the Military in clearing some enemy's trenches and subsequently came under shrapnel fire from the enemy's field guns. The T.B. was hit frequently, but no casualties occurred, although an *at the 3 pdr. had his hand grazed by a bullet, another A.B.* A.B. was bruised in the thigh by a shot which glanced off the torpedo tube, and a stoker was bruised by a shrapnel which came through the after conning tower. In the afternoon I communicated with the armed launch "MANSOURA", who was firing shrapnel over the East bank and Lieutenant Livesay, R.I.M., informed me that the Military Officers thought that only a few snipers remained on the East Bank. I accordingly proceeded down the Canal to complete the destruction of some pontoon boats which I had noticed lying behind the East bank. I blew up two boats with gun-cotton, and was walking up a gully 50 yards inshore towards another boat, when I fell into a trench full of Turkish soldiers. Our mutual surprise was so great, that I got out without being hit, and with Sub.-Lieut. Cardinall and the Torpedo Gunner's mate Francis, we regained our dingy and got back to the T.B. under a heavy fire. Our retreat was covered by the fire from the T.B. and the troops on the West bank, assisted by shrapnel fire from the armed launch. Sub.-Lieut. Cardinall

and myself were subsequently wounded whilst shelling this trench with the 3-pdr.

I should mention that it was necessary to go on shore to attempt the demolition of the third pontoon boat as only its bows were visible from the Canal and consequently the 3-pdr. could not get at it.

Both wounded officers are receiving every attention on board the French cruiser "D'ENTRECASTEAUX" and hope soon to be fit for duty again.

H.M. HOPPER No. 34.

Ismailia Ferry,

6th February, 1915.

To the Commander,

H.M.S. "SWIFTSURE".

Re the recent engagement with the enemy in which H.M. Armed Launch "MANSOURA" took part, I have the honour to report the following :-

2nd Feb. 6.0 p.m. Acting on orders received from Major General Sir G. Younghusband I left Ismailia Ferry in Armed Launch "MANSOURA" to patrol the Canal from the position of the French ship "REQUIN" on the north to Toussoum leading light on the south.

3 Feb. 1 a.m. Was called alongside H.M.S. "HARDINGE" whose Officer Commanding informed me that he had received orders for me from H.M.S. "SWIFTSURE" similar to the above and ordered me to patrol from "REQUIN" as far south as H.M.S. "HARDINGE."

The night passed without any incident.

3 Feb. 5 a.m. Hearing heavy firing to the southward and having informed the "HARDINGE" of my ~~intention~~ intended movement I proceeded south and ran alongside Toussoum Military Camp on the east bank to learn the situation from the Officer Commanding. He informed me that the enemy had made a determined attempt to cross the Canal South of his camp and had brought down boats to the water's edge but receiving a heavy fire from the west bank they, by this time, had abandoned their boats and taken cover in our unoccupied trenches and in the tailings immediately outside the southern limit of the camp. Owing to the fact that the enemy was entrenched so close to the camp I could not shell their trenches further south without

exposing the men to a heavy rifle fire but seeing from the camp observation post that bodies of the enemy were retiring in an easterly direction from the canal banks ~~so~~ I ordered Petty Officer Colgate to proceed with the launch and bank in on the west bank a short distance north of Toussoum, leading light and prepare to open fire. Meanwhile I walked out to the top of the banks north of the camp to observe and direct the fire.

6.30 a.m.

Opened fire at 3,000 yards ranging with percussion and got the enemy's range ~~sixxxx~~ and commenced firing with ^{time} the fuses at 3,500 yards.

I was unable to maintain my position on the bank for spotting as I was under rifle fire across the front of the camp from the enemy's position in the tailings E S E of it so withdrew into the camp and directed the fire from the observation post, communicating with the launch by semaphore.

After firing about a dozen rounds, some of which burst over bodies of the enemy doing considerable damage, they drew out of range and I ceased fire.

I then observed the "HARDINGE" to be shelling some trenches a little south of east from her position and thinking they might be within range I got under weigh intending to run ^{north} past H.M.S. "HARDINGE" and to bank in with Miriam Hill behind me and from thence to observe the fire.

Whilst proceeding north observed several objects in the water which might possible have been mines so fired at them with rifles, no explosion following, sent skif away to examine them, they proved to be water tanks and gear from the sunken pontoon boats.

When within a quarter of a mile of the "HARDINGE" I saw that she was being heavily shelled by the enemy's big guns two hitting her and the others falling in the channel just short of ~~her~~ so I immediately backed astern and banked in to the western bank opposite to the Mosque, where I was hidden from the enemy's battery by sand hills.

Was informed by the Military post here that there were no targets within my range, so got under weigh to proceed to Serapium, to learn the situation there from the Brigade Headquarters.

Whilst passing Toussoum camp the Officer Commanding warned me that the enemy held the east bank from his camp to a distance of 1,500 yards south of it. I placed the men below decks in the cabins fore and aft and from thence they fired through the scuttles on the port side whenever an opportunity offered. Petty Officer Colgate took the wheel, I being with him ~~xxxx~~^{inside} the steel plating. Working the engines up to their utmost speed, we reached Serapium without any casualties notwithstanding a continuous fire over a stretch of about 1,200 yards.

10 a.m.

Fast alongside Serapium, sent hands to breakfast. Met the Officer Commanding the Brigade and asked him if I could shell enemy's position from the South, he thought not as he was shortly sending out a counter attack but asked me to do all I could to destroy the pontoon-boats and so prevent a further attempt on the enemy's part to cross the canal in the event of their being reinforced. I replied that I would land where possible and destroy them, but could not waste my shrapnel in shelling them. An enemy's battery had now come into action firing four guns at a time with a slightly different range on each, and were shelling with shrapnel the precincts of the canal a half a mile north of Serapium where one of our batteries was concealed in the trees.

On going aboard the launch I saw T.B.043, Lieut. Commander Palmes approaching from the Bitter Lakes. I hailed her ~~xxxx~~ and informed him of the heavy burst of shrapnel ahead of him, he then stopped and we both banked in under the lee of the eastern bank, he lying alongside me.

Our intentions were to wait here until the counter attack had cleared the east bank of the enemy, when possibly her battery might also have been silenced, and then to

proceed with the destruction of the boats. We heard later though that the counter-attack was unable to advance further, the enemy being in too great a force.

Noon.

The enemy's shells were now bursting further south and very near to us, so we decided to proceed south and as T.B.043 was heading north I towed him alongside. Whilst getting under way two salvoes from their guns burst nearly over us, and a shower of bullets landed on the decks, in "MANSOURA" one man was hit on the arm, but it only caused a bruise, I believe they detected us from the T.B.'s smoke. We found that the reports of the guns being fired reached us a couple of seconds before the shells, and so had time to take cover.

On arrival at Deversoir Lieutenant Commander Palmes conversed with Headquarters Serapium on the telephone and we were again asked to destroy the boats.

He and I then decided that, as their battery appeared to concentrate their fire on our shore battery just north of Serapium, we might run through the zone of fire and get at those boats nearest to Toussoum Camp.

This we proceeded to do at as great speed as possible, my crew again being below and firing through the scuttles; the enemy's battery undoubtedly again detected the Torpedo Boat's smoke as we drew their fire from south of Serapium up to Toussoum.

I here lay the "MANSOURA" alongside and was informed by the Officer Commanding of the camp that he was driving the enemy out of the ground south of his camp and had taken many prisoners, this enabled me to have destroyed at once a boat which was lying about 200 yards in from the canal bank; this was done with axes and a heavy top maul.

3 p.m.

Shortly afterwards observed several of the enemy in a trench on top of the canal bank 1,000 yards south of us, and the Military having by now cleared the ground for a distance of about 500 yards south of the camp was able to open fire with the 12-pdr. with direct aim. Ex I took off the range by

counting the gearing up posts (30 to a mile) between the launch and the enemy's position, and the first shot which was remarkably well laid by B.O. Colgate fell right in their trench with excellent results. I then directed the fire over an area ranging from 900 to 1,400 yards and extending from the canal bank to about 400 yards east firing 30 rounds and was ably assisted by the Military who pointed out the positions of the enemy's trenches.

4 p.m.

Received a message from the Military asking me to cease fire as the enemy had showed signs of wishing to surrender. This I did. Prisoners were then pouring in to the camp about 300 being taken during the day.

4.40 p.m.

There being no more prisoners coming in and the enemy having recommenced firing across at the Egyptian Battery, I reopened fire in the same area and fired about another 20 rounds; after this the firing from the east bank was so much reduced that Lieutenant Commander Palmes and myself decided on another attempt to destroy the boats. I landed with a party and destroyed two more, but then observing that the Torpedo Boat's party were being fired on and that he had re-embarked his men I did the same and abandoned any further action.

5.15 p.m.

The launch having been now running continuously and the men having been up for 24 hours I got under way and proceeded back to Ismailia Ferry.

Throughout the whole action all ratings behaved in a splendid manner, their coolness under fire, obedience to orders and behaviour generally could not have been better.

.....

H.M.S. "HARDINGE",

4th February, 1915.

I have the honour to report that in accordance with Your Telegram 1410 of 2nd February, 1915, H.M.S. "HARDINGE" proceeded to Toussoum, gearing up at long siding, 84 Kilometres at 4.52 p.m.

2. At daybreak the Ship was prepared for action and at 6.30 a.m. hands went to General Quarters. Almost immediately afterwards, bodies of the enemy were observed and fire was opened on them.

3. At 7 a.m. the Enemy opened fire with what appeared to be two 4-inch Guns and two Field Guns and shortly afterwards were straddling Salvoes of 2 shots from each. Shots were falling about 50 yards short and over.

4. None of these guns could be located, but the Enemy's ~~fire~~ Infantry were exposing themselves from time to time and we were able to take the opportunity of shelling and dispersing them.

5. Later the enemy opened fire with shrapnel and heavy guns. The guns which had been firing previously were still straddling the ship, but the heavy guns were short, the shrapnel at this time bursting ineffectively just over the ship.

6. At about 8.15 a.m. the Field Guns were located and silenced, but the Heavy Guns commenced to straddle the ship, short ricochet carrying away the Wireless Aerial.

7. Immediately after this, firing was ceased, as nothing could be observed to fire at.

8. Between this and 8.30 a.m. a High Explosive Shell struck the Foremost Funnel, another one struck the base of the After Funnel and a shell from a heavy gun burst over the fore part of the ship, causing casualties among the Foremost Gun's Crews. The shell that struck the foremost funnel rendered the

fore stokehold untenable, and damaged the fore steering gear.

9. At 8.30 a.m. being unable to do anything further, and as the Heavy Guns had got our range and therefore there was the possibility of being sunk in the Channel, I considered it advisable to get clear of the Canal. At about 8.45 a.m. "HARDINGE" slipped and proceeded to ~~xxxxxxx~~ anchor outside the Channel in Lake Timsah.

10. The heavy guns, after firing two or three more rounds, ceased firing, but the 4-inch guns followed us up to the anchorage, but the shooting was wide.

11. On anchoring, steps were taken to repair as much damage as possible, and at 1.30 p.m. the ship was reported ready to proceed.

.....

"REQUIN" at Ismailia,

6th February, 1915.

I have the honour to forward the following report on "REQUIN'S" co-operation with the British forces in repelling the Turkish attack in the Ismailia Toussoum Section.

At about 6.15 a.m. on the morning of the 3rd February the "HARDINGE" opened fire at objects which were out of sight from the "REQUIN," we however went to General Quarters.

It was only at 6.50 a.m. that the camp established at the Ferry asked us if we were ready to open fire on the enemy's artillery. We replied that we were ready, but could not see this artillery. At 7 a.m. we sighted some troops in trenches but as we did not know the positions occupied by the British troops, to avoid all possibility of error, we asked the camp if we could open fire on the troops we saw on the plain. A reply in the affirmative having been received a few rounds of 100 mm. melinite scattered the troops in question.

We then continued firing till 3.45 p.m. either with the 100 mm. or 27 cm. guns at objects signalled to us by Ferry Post No. 6 or by Toussoum or which we ourselves saw from the ship.

At points signalled by the Ferry Post we fired :-

7.15 to 7.40 a.m.	-	In squares O.19 and H.18	with our	
				100 mm. guns
8.15 to 8.55 a.m.	-	-do-	N.17 and O.15	-do-
11.0 a.m.	-	In square	L.15	-do-
12.35 a.m.	-	-do-	J.15	-do-

At points signalled us by Toussoum :-

From 9.25 a.m. onwards we fired with the forward 27 cm. gun several rounds of melinite, ranges varying from 11500 to 9200 metres, on bearings S.66 E. and S. 40 E. but at objects which were invisible from the ship.

At objects seen directly from the ship :-

About 8.30 a.m. the big gun which had damaged the "HARDINGE"

(15)

directed its fire at the "REQUIN" and its shells fell close to the ship without our being able to locate its position. The situation began to get embarrassing for the "REQUIN" as she was being straddled. At about 8.45 a.m. we noticed some smoke towards H.15 coming from the enemy's guns and we fired two rounds from the 27 cm. at this point.

It was not until 9 a.m. that we had the good fortune to sight some smoke after a round was fired towards B.22 at a range of 9,200 metres from the ship and to notice that this smoke corresponded with the fall of a heavy projectile in our neighbourhood. We immediately directed the fire of our forward 27 cm. gun towards B.22 with varying ranges and after our third round the fire of the heavy gun ceased suddenly and completely.

At 2.15 p.m. we fired three rounds of 27 cm. at ranges of 10500 and 11800 metres at large bodies of the enemy heading E.S.E.

We also fired our 100 mm. guns at convoys and columns of the enemy whom we saw from the ship as well as the batteries firing at the Ferry Post and ships anchored in Lake Timsah.

At about 3.30 p.m. we silenced the battery placed on O.19 at a range of 5000 metres which was firing on the harbour. These were the first rounds fired.

I have great satisfaction in informing you that we suffered no material damage and that we had no wounded.

We picked up pieces of shell belonging to the big gun on which we had fired and we think that the gun must be of 21 cm. calibre.

.....

Gen. Monash's
Table of Achievements
of Aust. Corps
Mar - Oct 1918.

COPY.

AUSTRALIAN ARMY CORPS.

RECORD OF PART OF THE WORK DONE IN 1918.

DESCRIPTIONS OF TABULATIONS ATTACHED.

The performances of the Australian Army Corps, during the Spring, Summer and Autumn Campaign of 1918 cannot be described, with any pretence at doing them adequate justice, except at considerable length, and with the aid of many maps and diagrams.

It is possible, however, to enumerate in tabular form certain statistics, which are in themselves some index of the character and extent of this series of brilliant victories - whether considered relatively to the performances of other British Corps, or absolutely on their own merits.

These criteria may be classified thus :-

- (a) Prisoners and Guns captured.
- (b) Towns and Villages Recaptured.
- (c) Frontages, Depths and Areas of the successive advances.
- (d) Enemy Divisions engaged and defeated.

In order to aid perusal several of the above data have been subdivided over nine arbitrarily chosen periods or phases extending from March 26th, 1918 - when Australian troops first arrived opposite AMIENS - until October 5th, 1918 - when the Corps was withdrawn for rest.

Each of the above criteria has therefore been tabulated in nine successive stages, and the total is also given in each case for the period as a whole.

-----o.o.o-----

OFFENSIVE FIGHTING BETWEEN 27th MARCH & 4th OCTOBER, 1918.

PRISONERS AND GUNS CAPTURED.

Date.	Action.	Units Employed.	Nos. of Prisoners Total.	No. of Guns.	Remarks.
Period from March 27 till Aug. 8.	-	2, 3 & 5 Aust. Divs.	3,500	-	-
8th August.	Advance of 8th Aug.	1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 (5) Aust. Divs.	7,925	173	Including 2 Railway Guns, one 11.2", one 9".
Up to 22nd Aug.	Capture of PROYART, ETINHEM SPUR & fighting up to outskirts of BRAY.	1, 3 & 4 Aust. Divs.	1,127	6	-
23rd August.	Capture of CHUIGNES and CHUIGNOLLES.	1st Aust. Div.	3,092	21	Including 15" gun on Mounting.
Up till 29th Aug.	Fighting up to line of SOMME and Canal Bank South of PERONNE.	2, 3 & 5 Aust. Divs.	584	5	
Up till 4th Sept.	Capture of MONT ST. QUENTIN & PERONNE.	2, 5 Aust. Divs.	1,666	6	
Up till 17th Sept.	Advance towards HINDENBURG Line to Stage where 1st & 4th Divs. relieved 3rd & 5th Divs.	3, 5 Aust. Divs.	1,918		
18th Sept.	Advance up to HINDENBURG Line.	1, 4 Aust. Divs.	4,506	86	
Up till 4th Oct.	Break through to BEAUREVOIR Line.	2, 3, 5 Aust. Divs.	3,057	35	
5th October.	Capture of MONT BREHAIN.	2nd Div.	1,250		
TOTALS:			28,655	332x	Prisoners include a fair No. of Bn. Commanders and several Regimental Commanders.

x Total of Guns conservative estimate only.
 Also many thousands of machine guns, mortars, searchlights, vehicles, kitchens, &c., &c., and millions of rounds of artillery ammunition.

(B).

TOWNS and VILLAGES etc. captured by the Australian Army Corps,
during operations undertaken between 27th March and 4th Oct., 1918.

Operations up till 7th August.	Treux. Ville-sur-Ancre. Hamel. Recapture of Villers-Bretonneux.		
Advance of 8th August.	Warfusse-Abancourt. Lamotte-en-Santerre. Bayonvillers.	Harbonnieres. Morecourt. Gailly.	Cerisy-Gailly. Mericourt-sur- Somme.
Up to 22nd August.	Chipilly. Etineham. Proyart.	Rainecourt. Framerville. Vauvillers.	Lihons.
23rd August.	Chuignolles. Chuignes. Herleville. Lihu Farm.		
Up to 29th August.	Bray-sur-Somme. La Neuville-les-Bray. Suzanne. Cappy. Eclusier. Vaux. Frise. Curlu. Hem. Feuillers. Buscourt Dompierre. Bequincourt. Herbecourt. Flaucourt.	Biaches. la Chapelle. Fontaine-les-Cappy. Fay. Assevilliers. Barleux. Eterpigny. Foucaucourt. Estress. Belloy-en-Santerre. Villers-Carbonnel. Soyecourt. Vermandovillers. Deniecourt.	Berny-en-Santerre. Borgny. Bovent. Ablaincourt. Genermont. Commeccourt. Mazancourt. Fresnes-Mazancourt. Misery. Briost. Cizancourt. Cizancourt. Vermand.
Up to 4th Sept.	Mont St. Quentin. Peronne. Clery-sur-Somme.	Omniecourt-les-Clery. Halle. Sainte-Radegonde.	Feuillaucourt. Flamicourt.
Up to 17th Sept.	Brie. le Mesnil-Bruntel. Doingt. Bussu. Courcelles. Buire. Brusle. Cartigny. Catelet. St. Cren. Bias.	Mons-en-Chaussee. Tincourt-Boucly. Boucly. Hamel. Beaumetz. Hancourt. Bouvincourt. Vraignes. Marquaix. Hamelet. Roisel.	Hervilly. Hesbecourt. Jeancourt. Bernes. Vendelles. Flechin. Soyecourt. Poeuilly. Bihecourt. Vermand.
18th September.	Le Verguier. Nargicourt.	Villeret. Vadencourt.	
Up to 4th Oct.	Bellicourt. Naurey. Bony. Mt. St. Martin. Lormisset.	Estrees. Joncourt. Wiancourt. Ramicourt. Montbrehain.	

A total of 116 towns and villages : - not including
many fortified farms, mills, sugar refineries, woods
and conseq.

(c).

FRONTAGES , DEPTHS AND AREAS OF THE
SUCCESSIVE ADVANCES.

PERIOD.	FRONTAGE IN YARDS.	AVERAGE DEPTH OF ADVANCE. IN YARDS.	SQUARE MILES OF TERRITORY CAP- TURED.
March 27th till Aug. 7th.	14,000	2,500	12
August 8th.	8,000	11,000	29
Up till Aug. 22nd.	11,000 4,000	2,500) 5,000)	16
August 23rd.	10,000	3,000	10
Up till Aug. 29th.	16,000	15,000	80
Up till Sept. 4th.	7,000	4,500	10
Up till Sept. 17th.	10,000	17,000	57
Sept. 18th.	8,000	5,000	13
Up till Oct. 4th.	6,000	12,000	24.

TOTAL - - - 251 Sq.Miles.
=====

(D).

DIVISIONS ENGAGED BY AUSTRALIAN CORPSandNUMBER OF TIMES ENGAGED.From 27th March to 3rd October, 1918.

2nd Guard Division	.. ..	Engaged Twice.
Alpine Corps	.. ..	Engaged Once.
Jager Division	.. ..	Engaged Once.
1st Division	.. ..	Engaged Once.
2nd Division	.. ..	Engaged Once.
8th Division	.. ..	Engaged Once.
13th Division	.. ..	Three Times.
18th Division	.. ..	Engaged Once.
21st Division	.. ..	Engaged Twice.
25th Division	.. ..	Engaged Twice.
27th Division	.. ..	Engaged Once.
38th Division	.. ..	Engaged Twice.
41st Division	.. ..	Engaged Three Times.
54th Division	.. ..	Engaged Twice.
107th Division	.. ..	Engaged Three Times.
108th Division	.. ..	Engaged Twice.
109th Division	.. ..	Engaged Three Times Once (now disbanded).
119th Division	.. ..	Engaged Three Times.
117th Division	.. ..	Engaged Twice.
121st Division	.. ..	Engaged Once.
183rd Division	.. ..	Engaged Once.
185th Division	.. ..	Engaged Twice.
199th Division	.. ..	Engaged Once.
225th Division	.. ..	Engaged Once (now disbanded).
232nd Division	.. ..	Engaged Once.
233rd Division	.. ..	Engaged Twice (now disbanded).
243rd Division	.. ..	Engaged Once.
1st Reserve ^{Division} xxxxxxx	.. ..	Engaged Once.
24th Reserve Division	.. ..	Engaged Twice.
26th Reserve Division	.. ..	Engaged Once.
43rd Reserve Division	.. ..	Engaged Four Times (now disbanded).

(D) Continued.

50th Reserve Division	..	..	Engaged Three Times.
54th Reserve Division	..	..	Engaged Three Times (Now disbanded.)
75th Reserve Division	..	..	Engaged Once.
77th Reserve Division	..	..	Engaged Twice.
79th Reserve Division	..	..	Engaged Once.
5th Bavarian Division	..	..	Engaged Twice.
14th Bavarian Division	..	..	Engaged Once (Now disbanded.)
9th Bavarian Reserve Division	..	..	Engaged Once.

It is usual to reckon that when a division has been engaged more than once it is to be taken as two or three divisions. On the above basis the total number of divisions engaged and defeated amounts to 73 during the period under review, or more than one third of the total German Army on the Western Front. Of these divisions not less than six (6) are definitely known to have been disbanded as the result of the shattering losses suffered during these engagements. There is, however, very good reason to believe that a number of other ^{of the} divisions named have also been disbanded, but it is customary to sift the evidence very carefully and conservatively before drawing such a definite conclusion.

Reports from

No 2 Sqdn AFC for Jy & Aug 1918

No 4 " " Aug (2 reports)

No. 2 Squadron,
Australian Flying Corps,

D.A.A.G., A.F.C.,
R.A.F. Headquarters,

Herewith a brief résumé of the work carried out by this squadron for the month ending 31st July, 1918 :-

Total flying time for month	-	801 hours .20 min.
Most flying time in one day 2/7/18	-	53 hours 45 "
Average daily flying time	-	26 " 42 "
No. of machines on offensive patrol	-	526
Total E.A. destroyed	5)	
" E.A. out of control	4)	11
" E.A. driven down	2)	Observers killed or badly wounded.
Battle casualties	-	Nil
Rounds fired in aerial combat	-	4165
Rounds fired at ground targets	-	1330
No. of 25 lb. bombs dropped	-	84
No. of enemy aircraft seen	-	296
Machines returned for repair	5)	
Machines struck off	3)	8
New machines received from depot	-	8
Daily average of pilots available	-	19
Daily average of machines serviceable	-	16
Daily average of machines unserviceable	-	3

Noteworthy features of the work of the squadron during the month under review were :-

(a) A successful bombing raid carried with the view of interfering with railway communication at HARBOURDIN - (on the LA-BASSE - HARBOURDIN railway) which took place on the 7th. The results obtained were eminently satisfactory; direct hits being obtained on the following targets :-

1. Train at HARBOURDIN.
2. HARBOURDIN Railway Station.
3. Railway Goods Shed at HARBOURDIN.
4. On Railway Station WAVRIN, besides 2 dropped on the permanent way; result of latter unobserved.

Altogether 12 twentyfive lb. bombs were dropped on these objectives, besides several hundred rounds fired into ground targets.

The following is a detailed account of the operation, which, it will be noticed, was carried out in extremely bad weather :-

At 4 a.m., six machines, each carrying two twentyfive lb. bombs left the aerodrome accompanied by four more who were to act as escort. A thick mist prevailed, and one of the escorting machines, losing the formation, returned early. At 5.15 a.m., the leading machine of the bombers giving the signal, descended and dropped 1 bomb directly on to a Train and another on the Goods Shed at HARBOURDIN with good effect, and, immediately afterwards, attacked a hostile aircraft battery which was trying to interfere with the progress of the raid. Some 200 rounds were fired by this pilot. Two further direct hits were obtained on the Goods Shed by other machines, and six were dropped near the train at the railway station.

The first pilot responsible for the successful bombing of this train descended to below 100 feet before dropping his bomb.

After the bombs were dropped, some hundreds of rounds were fired by pilots into troops proceeding towards HARBOURDIN, also

also into troops in a R.E. dump, HERLIERS. One machine, whilst over WAVRIN, dropped 2 bombs on the RAILWAY STATION, both being "O.K.", and another machine dropped 2 more bombs on the LA BASSEE - HARBOURDIN Railway; the result of the latter, unfortunately, could not be seen owing to the mist which was getting thicker all the time.

After the raid, great difficulty was experienced in returning, several machines being forced to land on other aerodromes, from whence, when the mist lifted, they eventually arrived back. Of the two machines which came as far as the aerodrome, one crashed into a tree, the machine falling to pieces, and the pilot being thrown clear, sustaining only minor injuries. The other machine descended into the middle of a wheat crop which borders the aerodrome.

In view of the heavy mist that prevailed during the operation, which, at the termination of the patrol, was so bad, that it was impossible to see the aerodrome 50 feet from the ground, it is a matter for congratulation that such good results were obtained without any serious casualties.

(b) On the 19th. the unit was inspected by General BIRDWOOD who presented the following Officer and other ranks with ribbons :-

Captain R. C. PHILLIPPS, MC.	-	<u>DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS.</u>
Chief Mechanic LONSDALE, R.R.	-	<u>MILITARY MEDAL.</u>
Cpl. Mec. CAMPBELL, W.B.	-	- do -
1st A.M. RAPHAEL, H.S.	-	- do -

(Sgd.) A. M. Jones.
 MAJOR,
 Commanding No. 2 Squadron,
 Australian Flying Corps.

No.2 Squadron,
AUSTRALIAN FLYING CORPS.To: D.A.A.G.,
A. F. C.

Herewith a brief resumé of the work carried out by this Squadron during the month ending 31st August :-

Total flying time for month	-	1115.05 hours.
Total flying time in one day -13/8/18	-	82.35 hours.
Average daily flying time	-	35.50 hours
No. of machines on Offensive Patrol	-	546
Total E.A. destroyed (11)		
" E.A.out of control (10)		21
Battle casualties	-	Nil.
Rounds fired in aerial combat	-	10715
Rounds fired at ground targets		4900
No. of 25 lb. bombs dropped	-	122
No. of enemy aircraft seen	-	287
Machines returned to depot :		
(3-1500 gear, exchanged for Vipers,)		
(1 time expired, and 2 to be rebuilt)	6	
Machines crashed; written off	1	7
New machines received from depot		3
Daily average of pilots available		20
Daily average of machines serviceable		18.3
Daily average of machines unserviceable		.7

During the month the Squadron, as well as doing the usual Offensive Patrols, has carried out ^{two} successful daylight bombing raids on the following enemy ~~aerodromes~~ aerodromes :-

1. HARBOURDIN.
2. LOMME.

Sixty five machines took part in the first, and sixty in the second operation. The dispositions of the Squadrons protecting the Bombers, the co-operation of our Artillery in engaging enemy Anti-aircraft batteries all tended to make for the success that photographs taken before, and afterwards, so amply evidence.

AIR RAID ON HARBOURDIN AERODROME.

On August 16th at 12.30 p.m. the four Squadrons participating in the raid took up their positions at the correct height over Reclinghem Aerodrome, and proceeded towards the line, thus:-

At 13,000 ft. No. 88 Squadron - Bristol fighters,
At 11,000 ft. No. 92 Squadron - S.E.5's
9,000 ft. No. 2 Squadron.A.F.C. - S.E.5's
7,000 ft. No. 4 Squadron A.F.C. - Camels (Clerget)

Arriving over LA BASSEE the whole formation lost height correspondingly until the objective was reached, when No. 4 Squadron,A.F.C., immediately descended to bomb the sheds, workshops, Officers' and Mens' quarters. While No. 4 Squadron was engaging the Aerodrome, this Squadron waited above at about 2000 feet, flying in wide circuits, during which time smoke and flames were seen to be issuing from the hangars.

As soon as No. 4 Squadron had completed the bombing, this Squadron dived, one machine after another, on to the hangars, firing some hundreds of rounds and dropping 72 - 25 lb. bombs from a height averaging 300 feet. After each machine had dropped its bombs it climbed in wide circuits to the left, and thus enabled the Squadron to regain formation, on completion of which the machines flew

West to the lines, crossing at a height of about 5000 feet. Anti-aircraft fire on this occasion was not very heavy, the Aerodrome being well out in the open country, and thus having a better protection from machines flying low.

The most noticeable feature of this operation was the fact that all machines of the Squadron participated, and completed the work - not one having to return early for any cause whatever. This, I consider, reflects great credit on the mechanics of the Squadron.

AIR RAID ON LOMME AERODROME.

On the 17th at 0700 this Squadron with fourteen machines, each carrying four 25 lb. bombs, left the ground to Rendezvous at 0730 over the Aerodrome (Reclinghem) at the same height as the previous day. Using the same methods of attack, i.e., crossing the lines again at LA BASSEE, and losing height to the aerodrome at LOMME, No. 4 Squadron A.F.C. again carried out their part by bombing, and shooting up their particular objectives. On this occasion, however, No. 2 Squadron were allotted a certain line of hangars, to which to devote particular attention, with the result that direct hits were registered on these hangars, and many hundreds of rounds fired into buildings, workshops, and other targets.

From prisoners' statements, besides the photographic evidence, it is definitely known that 17 Fokker biplanes were totally destroyed in these hangars, great damage done to workshops and many casualties among the mechanics and personnel of the aerodrome.

Excellent work was also done by the Squadron during the month in co-operation with the British Offensive on the Somme. On the 12th and 13th twelve machines flew to an advanced landing ground at Allonville. These machines were used as reinforcements to the R.A.F. units on the battle front, and, on the 13th destroyed two enemy machines and drove three others down out of control.

The work of all pilots has been particularly good during the month and only one can be specially mentioned, namely :

In an offensive patrol on the 27th instant Lieut. G. COX was attacked by five Fokker biplanes, and eventually succeeded in bringing one down in flames, and sending two others down out of control, whereupon the remaining two flew East.

In the field,
1/9/18.

(Sgd) A.M. JONES,
Major,
Commanding No. 2 Squadron,
AUSTRALIAN FLYING CORPS.

From-
O.C.,
4th Squadron, A.F.C.,

To -
Officer i/c.,
War Records Section,
A.I.F. Headquarters,
LONDON.

The month has been marked particularly by unfavourable weather conditions. Strong West winds have ~~been~~ very much limited the scope of the "Camel", and this considerably hindered our operations.

The Squadron participated in two raids on HAUBOURDIN and LOMME Aerodromes on the 16th and 17th. Bombs were dropped and various ground targets engaged from under 200 feet.

In the raid on HAUBOURDIN 3 hangars were destroyed, and at LOMME 4 hangars destroyed by fire.

On the 13th, 14th and 15th the Squadron was working on the front BAPAUME-NESLE in conjunction with the Australian Divisions in front of AMIENS.

Aircraft were destroyed by the following officers:-

Capt. E.J. McClaughry, DFC.	1
Capt. A.H. Cobby, DSO, DFC,	3
Capt. H.G. Watson, DFC,	1½
Lieut. L.E. Taplin, DFC,	3
Lieut. R. King	4½
Lieut. A.T. Heller	1
Lieut. J.C.F. Wilkinson, RAF , MC,	1
Lieut. N.C. Trescowthick,	2
Lieut. R.T.C. Baker, MM,	3
Lieut. R.G. Smallwood	1
Lieut. L. Wharton	1
"A" Flight	2

The following decorations were awarded :-

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER.
Capt. A.H. Cobby, DFC.

BAR TO DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS.
Capt. E.J. McClaughry, DFC.

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS.
Major W.A. McClaughry, MC.
Lieut. G.S. Jones-Evans.

The following is a brief summary of work for the month :-

Total hours flown, 1150 hours 50 mins. Daily average 37 hrs. 6 mins
Times crossed lines, 684.
E.A. seen 249
E.A. destroyed 24
Weight of bombs dropped 7 tons, 3-3/4 cwt.
Rounds fired in combat 6970.
Rounds fired at ground targets, 42,000.
Daily average of machines serviceable, 24.34.
Battle casualties, 1.

In the field (R)
4/9/18.

(Sgd) W.A. McClaughry,
Major,
Commanding 4th Squadron, A.F.C.

COPY.

D.A.A.G., A.F.C.

Headquarters, 3rd Squadron,
Australian Flying Corps.

Reference your C.L.B. 985 of 13th June, 1918.

Herewith brief statement of the work done by this Squadron during the month of August, 1918 :-

Hours flying	-	967 hours 30 min.
Patrols	-	208
Successfully observed destructive shoots	-	14
Photographs taken	-	659
Photographic prints issued	-	36496
Bombs dropped	-	1419
Contact Patrols	-	47
Counter Attack Patrols	-	138
Combats (indecisive)	-	29
Combats (decisive)	-	6
Machine gun rounds fired in combat	-	5290
" " " " at		
" " " ground targets	-	62590
" " " fired in practice (air)	-	2000
" " " fired in practice (ground)	-	4000

The period covered saw the commencement and completion of the Battle of AMIENS, (as it has been called) starting on the 8th of August.

In preparation for this battle, the photographic section of the Squadron produced approximately 15,000 photographic prints in 4 days. These were issued right down to platoon commanders and sergeants. The total number of prints issued for the ^{whole} month, viz., 36,496, constitutes a record issue for the Squadron in one month. The battle saw the development of the oblique photo, which proved its usefulness over the vertical photo in moving warfare conditions. Its chief advantages appear to lie :

1. In the great extent of country shown forward towards the enemy positions.
2. In the greater ease with which it may be read - or interpreted by subordinate leaders and N.C.O's, no special training being necessary as in the case of vertical photos.

As it was to be expected, the nature of the work underwent a very great change from the day of the battle onwards, when moving warfare conditions superseded the stationary ones formerly existing.

During the first five days of the battle, the primary work of the Squadron consisted in ascertaining the positions our infantry had reached, and the disposition of the enemy. In accomplishing this, 47 Contact Patrols were carried out, and approximately 100 Counter Attack Patrols. The work of the pilots engaged on contact patrols was of a high order. Their reports were marked by great accuracy, as was disclosed by subsequent ground confirmation. The Corps Commander personally congratulated the Squadron Commander on the success which attended the efforts of the Contact Patrol pilots in this respect.

Some useful lessons were learnt in the conduct of contact patrol operations, in that it definitely established the fact that ground flares to indicate the position of infantry were not essential, especially during the moving stages of the battle. Once having broken through the enemy's main front line of resistance, and over-run his Anti-Aircraft defences, the pilots were enabled to go down much lower, even to the point of flying at 50 feet and recognising the distinctive uniforms worn by the troops engaged. Tin discs about 8" in diameter were also found to be very useful.

Artillery observation work also underwent a decided change. Pre-arranged destructive shoots (formerly forming the main part of the Artillery Programme) went by the board, and a great increase in "NF" (neutralising fire) and "ANF" (Impromptu destructive shoots) shoots took place.

The activity of enemy aircraft was not great during the month, considering that it was a battle front. 35 combats took place, of which 6 were decisive, Hun machines being brought down by the following :-

- Lts. H.S.Foale and F.A.Sewell, one on 8/8/18.
- " F.N.McKenna and R.W.Kirkwood, 1 on 9/8/18.
- " A.E.Grigson and H.B.James, 1 on 1/8/18 and 1 on 22nd.
- " C.C.Matheson and C.T.Brown, 1 on 22/8/18.
- " J. Gould-Taylor and B.G.Thomson, 1 on 27/8/18.

An interesting side issue not definitely connected with the battle was the adoption by the R.A.F. Authorities of the Ammunition dropping gear designed and developed in this Squadron. This has now been taken into general use, and ammunition dropping has become a recognised function of a Corps Squadron.

The following awards were made during the month :-

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS.

- Lieut. J. L. Smith.
- " T. L. Baillieu.
- " R. C. Armstrong.
- " F. A. Sewell.
- " E. F. Rowntree.

Attached is a copy of a report on "Lessons learnt during the battle" submitted to the O.C., 15th Wing, R.A.F.

(Sgd) David Blake,
MAJOR,
Commanding 3rd Squadron, A.F.C.

In the Field,
7. 9.18.

Headquarters, 3rd Squadron,
Australian Flying Corps.

The O.C.,
15th Wing, R.A.F.

Reference your GS.11 of the 17th instant :-

The following report is submitted, dealt with under the following headings :-

- (1) Infantry co-operation.
- (2) Artillery co-operation.
- (3) Counter attack patrols.
- (4) Wireless.
- (5) Photography.
- (6) General.

(1) Infantry co-operation.

As is normally the case during a battle, contact patrols formed the larger part of the work done by the Squadron. The outstanding feature of contact patrols carried out during the four days of the battle was the fact that flares were not always necessary for the successful recognition of our troops. This statement is qualified by the following observations :-

Contact Patrol at Zero plus 2.30 when the Infantry had reached the final objective would not have been successful, it is considered, if flares had not been available. The enemy defences at this period had not been deeply penetrated and some remnants of A.A. machine gun defences would probably have inflicted heavier casualties on contact planes if they were required to fly very low. As, however, flares would normally be expected to be available for the first objective, no further comment is made.

During the further progress of the battle, the enemy's resistance was completely broken and over-run and although flares apparently became exhausted or at any rate were lit in very small numbers only, planes by flying lower were able to identify tin discs, waved handkerchiefs, and even, at a later stage, the actual uniforms worn by troops. This involved flying as low as 50 feet in some cases. It is noteworthy that no serious losses resulted from this.

A further point seems to have been established in connection with the experiments recently tried with rifles laid in groups along the parapet of a trench. Though these were visible on trenches in back areas even from heights up to 1500 feet, no single instance is recorded of the contact observer seeing them during this battle nor in the previous battles of MORLANCOURT and HAMEL. Tin discs, however, proved to be very useful.

Summing up, it is considered that flares are necessary and useful where the advance made to the objective is a shallow one. They are not necessary when the enemy defence has been broken or sufficiently penetrated to prevent his using his A.A. machine gun defences.

(2) Artillery co-operation.

After the first few hours of "Z" Day the chief feature of the battle from the artillery point of view was the absence of enemy artillery activity. This is explainable on the Australian Corps front by the fact that his guns were practically all captured. Towards evening opposition from the North of the Somme in the "L" Squares N.E. of the CHIPILLY SPUR gave some trouble and a plane had to be sent up to neutralise these batteries which were enfilading the flank of the advance. On the second and third days, artillery activity was low but on the increase - confined chiefly to light field guns and long range high velocity guns. On the fourth and subsequent days a gradual return to more or less normal conditions was evident. At the moment of writing, hostile guns are comparatively active, but the activity appears to be confined to a small number of guns firing more often rather than to a large number of guns firing infrequently.

(3) Counter attack patrols.

Counter attack patrol machines watched the line throughout the hours of daylight. No serious counter attacks occurred.

(4) Wireless.

Two features connected with wireless are commented on :-

- (a) An advanced C.W.S. was established prior to "X" Day in the vicinity of AUBIGNY.
- (b) Six extra wireless stations were provided for 18 pdr. batteries.

Reference to (a) - This proved most useful. The existing C.W.S. got out of touch with the line as the advance proceeded when its duties were automatically taken up by the advanced C.W.S. At the end of the second day, the advanced C.W.S. became the Squadron C.W.S.

In connection with (b) it would appear that the failure to make full use of these wireless stations by the Field Artillery batteries was due more than anything to lack of education in the possibilities of wireless and to the fact that their visual and telephone signals were in good working order and kept them in touch with their brigades. It is also suggested that 18 pdr. batteries are not normally used to acting on their own initiative in respect to Zone Calls and S.O.S., but rather depend on orders from the Brigade-Commander concerned. As the attack depended almost entirely on field artillery support in the second and third phases, it seems desirable that more attention be paid by field artillery to the possibilities of wireless for indicating targets to them in a moving battle.

With regard to the normal wireless stations at each Field Artillery Brigade Headquarters, one brigade only, viz., 5th Brigade, A.F.A., put out its station with a 4.5" Howitzer Battery. The remaining eleven brigades kept the stations at Brigade Headquarters. This works all right while ground communications exist and batteries are in touch with their brigades but would result in NF's being entirely neglected if other conditions obtained.

(5) Photography.

It was found that, generally speaking, the system of sending up a camera with artillery patrols to photograph the line during their patrol did not work satisfactorily, nor was much interest displayed by Corps Intelligence in the photographs that were obtained. It is suggested that, if photographs are needed, a special formation be sent up to obtain them.

(6) General.

(A) Advanced landing ground. On the second day advanced landing grounds were looked for well forward in anticipation of the advance continuing. The general conclusion arrived at was that these cannot be established closer to the original front line prior to an advance than four to six thousand yards on account of the shelled area, and further that they are impracticable if closer to the existing front line than 8000 yards.

It is considered that no real benefit would accrue from the use of an advanced landing ground further back, other than perhaps closer touch with Corps and Divisions than could be maintained from the Squadron Aerodrome.

(B) Breakdown Gang. A useful institution was found in a breakdown gang previously told off with definite duties and instructions. It consisted of a rigger and fitter from each flight with three men from Headquarters under the Chief Master Mechanic.

Transport consisted of one light tender, one heavy tender, and one trailer. Spares and tools for the repair of minor breakages were kept in the light tender and the party was ready to move, either in part or whole, as circumstances demanded, to the scene of the forced landing. A further arrangement was made by instructing pilots where possible to signal by wireless in the event of a forced landing "RLF" with the map square location. This was necessary owing to the paucity of communications after the advance and the congested state of those in existence. Results proved that the scheme was workable. No machine was left out for longer than a few hours and all machines were collected with the

exception of one which was reported missing and is believed to have been shot down in the front line. Three machines were subsequently flown back to the Aerodrome.

In the Field,
19/8/18.

(Sgd) David BLAKE,
Major,
Commanding 3rd Squadron, A.F.C.