

Langley Vale
February 25th 1913

Dear Peach Blossom

Yours to hand on Tuesday. I was really wondering what had happened to you, as I got no word from you since before Christmas. Did you get the cards of Gloucester that I sent for New Year? I am still with Steer concreting. He is a(n) inspector. We are not on the bridge now at Kendall, another bloke is doing it. We are doing some concrete culverts and a couple of weigh bridges. Langley Vale is about 25 miles from Kendall and about 10 from Taree. We will only be here about another fortnight, if we get good weather. You can keep on addressing your letters to Kendall as I will get them just the same. It is raining here now, in fact all day. I am just back from work about an hour, got pretty well wet today. It is not too nice in a tent in wet weather, if you go outside you get wet and you can't stop in all the time. It has been showery here now for about a week. Rain is badly needed, as water was getting scarce but this will freshen things up a bit. It was pretty dry at Copeland at Christmas and there has been no rain there since but it looks to be all over the place. On wet days the principal business is to eat sleep and read. Excuse mistake but I will write better and spell better on this line. There are a lot of men camped here including a few married ones. It must be miserable for women to live in tents this weather. You people that way must be doing things fine. I haven't had a game of cricket to speak of since I came away. Pine Creek must have gone stale if they can't win a match. Remember me to Dick Bⁱ when he calls again also to the other boys when you see them if you happen to think of it. Where is Billy Welshⁱⁱ got to?

Hoping to have a letter from you some of these days.

I conclude wishing you all well at Adair (sic)

I Remain ----- Yours Affectionately
Jack

Langley Vale Wed 7pm

I am writing soon as you wished.

Additional information:

North Coast Railway: Opening to Taree
Dungog Chronicle: Durham and Gloucester Advertiser Feb 7 1913 p2
<http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/136133846>

Kendall

Dec 13th 1913

Dear Nell

Your letter to hand last week. I have been going to write ever since but didn't seem to get time. I suppose you are having good times about Adare by what your last letter says. We will be finishing up tomorrow week till after New Year. We get paid for 3 days, Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. The ballastⁱⁱⁱ train runs as far as Kendall now, but won't be able to go any further till we get the bridge over the river, and that won't be for perhaps 3 or 4 months. They are running a special train from here to Taree the Monday after we knock off to let the men get away.

It has been hot here lately, one day last week it was 110 in the shade but hasn't been extra bad since. It has been trying to rain here this evening, but nothing serious has fallen, there has been no rain here for some time and it is very dry.

You must be able to play tennis pretty well by this. How do you like it. I expect to do a bit of work about Christmas, there won't be much spelling for a long time, I have plenty of work to do.

If you answer this send your letter to Copeland. Hoping you all have a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

I must remain
Yours Affectionately
Jack.

I couldn't get any nice Christmas cards here to send so you must overlook the matter.

Postcard of Gladesville Bridge on Parramatta River, NSW

Kendall

Ap 5th 1914

Dear Nell

Your letter to hand last week. I am back in Kendall again. Still working in the concrete gang. The Public Works Department are running a passenger train from Taree to Kendall from tomorrow on if they can get carriages.

Hoping to hear from you soon.

Write soon
Jack

Postcard with picture of a train

no date but probably April – May 1914

To Nell

This is a picture of the first passenger train to come to Gloucester. The Commissioners came up in it in November to have a look at the line. The next Station up the line from Gloucester is Bulliac 10 miles away. We were fencing between Gloucester and Bulliac all the way. There is a tunnel about 350 yards long between. The train travels the 10 miles in about 10 or 12 minutes.

Your Lov. Cousin
Jack

Kendall

May 5th 1914

Dear Nell

Received your letter and was glad to hear you all are doing well rabbiting. You ought to do pretty good if rabbits rise to 8d and 4d.

It is getting cold here in the mornings. We are back again working in Kendall Station Yard today, and for this week, but may be shifting away next week towards Taree. I have been laying earthenware pipes today, got 150 feet of them, laid, set and cemented, and have just come back from pinching pumpkins and grammas. I have taken to making Gramma Pies. My mate left today for Copeland where he has a selection, so I am on my own, it is lonely for me for a while in the camp with no one to talk to, the closest camp is nearly 100 yards away. There are only 4 men in our gang now. I don't know when I will be going back to Copeland, next month perhaps, all being well. I had a few days off last week I burnt my arm and got a boil on it at the same time about as big as a turkey egg, but it is alright again. I hope you get the rise in the prices of rabbits, you will want to get it to make up the Union Ticket. A Yearly Ticket in our Union is 14/- and a Levy of £1 was struck for the Daily Labour paper, or at least to get a paper started under that name. They want £120.000 for it. Anyway, I have paid my Levy so they can do what they like.

I hope you haven't had any civil war your way yet, it is no good.

I have a bonzer little greyhound pup. I think he will turn out a ringer, if he gets a show.

You can start at your flower garden right away. I got some seeds at the store, nearly all the varieties they had and am sending them with this letter.

I feel tired and sleepy. So be good the present. Hoping to hear from you again.

Jack

I sent a card to Bess^{iv} last week in answer to her letter.

Remember me to Dick^v.

Kendall
June 24th 1914

Dear Nell

Just a line in answer to yours received a week ago, on the 18th exactly 2 years since I left Adare. Looking back it don't seem that time. The years seem to fly past very quick. It only seems a month or two since Christmas.

You will see by the heading of this letter that I am still in the same old place. It is 10 months since I came here, and have been here nearly all the time, but may leave any time now, so you can send your letters to Copeland. Granny^{vi} sent yours to me, I got it the evening after the storm. There was a hurricane, or cyclone, or blizzard or something else visited us, it was rather an unwelcome visit too^{vii}. Anyway it rained and blew like _____. It started about 4pm and kept up all night till 6am. Half the tents about the station were blown to atoms. I am camped about half a mile from the station, and a bit sheltered and I thought every minute the tent was going to glory, but somehow it stood the shock but the iron roof blew off a galley I have, but I have put it up again with about 3lbs of nails in it. Several trees blew down about the camp, and limbs were plentiful, but the aim for the tent was bad. The river came down a banker in the morning, and surrounded Carson's^{viii} camp. He is the boss over the bridge and camped on the bend in the river on a piece of high ground, but the water surrounded him and came into the camp and he had to be rescued with a raft. He and wife and 2 kids were on a table, and he had his head through the roof singing out for all he was worth. Well old girl, I feel dog tired and sleepy tonight so will close. Hoping to hear from you soon, also that the garden is flourishing, and the rabbits plentiful etc. I think I must be as tired as you after you did that long ride. I have been pipe laying, put in 125 earthenware pipes today. My dog is annoying me too. He is a kangaroo, only a pup, and I have learnt him to shake hands and I can't sit down near him but he is putting up first one paw and then the other till he would give a stone image the pip and he won't keep out of my bunk at night. One good thing, he has no fleas. Well the candle is going out and I feel likewise.

Don't forget to write to – Jack (Copeland out)

Jack enlisted on the 23rd August 1914 at Randwick NSW

Kensington Racecourse^x

8 September 1914

Dear Nell

Just a line in answer to yours. I was very glad to hear from you. I didn't get the letter you sent to Copeland. Grannie^x expected me home in a few days and kept it at home, but as I didn't come, she sent it after keeping it about a fortnight. I left Kendall the day she sent it to me, so you see how matters stood. I haven't had much time to do anything but better late than never. I am writing this on parade now. We have just been issued coats and while the first lot are waiting all the others are supplied I am taking the opportunity to write. I don't know when we leave, but very soon I think. We have got nearly everything we want, only a few other little things to come. Everything is supplied to us. The outfit costs about £12 without the rifle and bayonet and that runs into a good bit. We are not having it too bad. The officers in the Company I am in are very good fellows, in fact most of them are, and we get on well. We get 6/- a day abroad, and 1/- a day is deferred. I suppose we will get it at the end of the service if we are lucky enough to see it through. I hope so anyway. Well, old girl, this is the finish, I will drop a line at every opportunity I get to let up know how I am getting on. I won't forget you. If you write take particular notice of the address.

Pte J Curran
No4 Sect
D Company
2nd Battalion
A.I.E.F.

The letters A.I.E.F. mean Australian Imperial Expeditionary Force.

Hoping to hear from you again.

I Remain
Yours Affectionately
Jack

Kensington
Sat Oct 9 1914

Dear Nell

Just a line to let you know that the letter I wrote last was a false alarm. We were all ready to shift to the boat and were having breakfast before we marched off, when we were called out in a hurry and the Colonel said that we weren't going as word had come that it wasn't safe. Everyone was disappointed, you could have knocked most of the men down with a feather, but everyone got over it. We may go at any time now. We have orders to be ready in half an hour's notice, at any time. We were supposed to go to Liverpool to go into another camp, but may embark at any time. A detachment has gone on board on picket duty today so there must be something doing. It is getting monotonous here and hot into the bargain. Every blade of grass is nearly worn off the racecourse, and it is dirty and sandy. Everything gets dirty in no time, and it takes a great deal of time to keep the rifles and tents in order. We have been doing some solid work lately, this week especially. Been doing musketry, long marches, and skirmishing and battle practice besides other drill. We went on a march through the principal streets of the City. We had full equipment on, all but cartridges and blankets, but quite enough. We had it on from about seven in the morning till 2 in the evening and did about 10 miles without a spell. The route was crowded. All the troops took part in the march and got a great reception everywhere. It was a pretty hot day and most of us weren't sorry when it was finished and we were back in camp again. Every night there is a bit of a concert on, singing, boxing music etc. Also we have a tent, where there is all sorts of games such as cards, draughts, chess etc and books and one thing and another.

There is not much of any interest here. There hasn't been any rain for about a fortnight. I suppose the rabbiting is getting slack by this on account of the weather. Remember me to Dick^{xi} when he comes again. How is he getting on? Well old girl, I must finish up and I am running out of news. Hoping all (is) well in that locality and hoping to hear from you soon.

I Remain Yours Affectionately Jack

Don't forget to write
Pte J Curran
No 4 Sect
"D" Company
2nd Battn Kensington
A.I.F.

If we go to Liverpool the letters will be forwarded on so long as the Battalion and Company is mentioned.

A company is 119 men including Officer (3)
A Battalion is 8 companies and a machine gun section, signallers, Army Medical Corps, and such like about 1050 men all told. There is 2 battalions camped here at Kensington.

Write soon. Jack
Kensington

Sat 17 Oct 1914

My Dear Nell

Your kind and welcome letter to hand yesterday. I was very glad to hear from you again before going away.

All the uncertainty is gone now. We embark tomorrow morning, without any unforeseen circumstances crop up but it is very unlikely. It will take a good while to get to England. The Canadians were 16 days coming over and it only takes the big lines about 4 or 5 days to do it. So we will be 2 months at least.

I think we sail on Tuesday. I believe there are 3 Japanese warships in the harbour to help to convoy us across. It was getting monotonous here week after week. We were doing some solid work lately, route marching, field training, musketry etc. I suppose I will be well away from here by the time you get this letter. Gone but not forgotten I hope. I expect to be a bit sea sick for a while but not for long. We won't have much to do on the way over, only physical drill principally, to keep us in a bit of condition. We will have to do a bit of training in England for a while to get into form again, so we won't be doing any fighting this year.

The cold weather will be the worst thing on the other side for us Australians for we are going from a hot climate into a very cold one. We will all be able to speak French and German by the time the war is over. Everyone is more or less satisfied now the date of our embarkation is known for certain.

Bess^{xii} and Mrs Coleman^{xiii} were out today week, Bess looked very well but I don't think she has grown much, do you?

I am sorry that I couldn't get out to visit them again but I couldn't get any leave to get out, it is too late now, there is no leave today.

It was raining pretty heavy here today. It will be miserable going out in the rain, marching to the boat and cleaning up lines and tents.

Well, Nell, time is short and there is a lot of work to do so I must conclude.

Remaining as ever, Yours Affectionately, Jack

In addressing letter use this:

NO 387 Pte J Curran

"D" Company

2nd Battalion, 1st Inf Brigade

A.I.F

Excuse the pencil and bad writing, but I am in a hurry and having nothing else better. I will drop a line again if I get an opportunity to do so. Well, Nell old girl, this is the end hoping to hear once again from you. Wishing you a last fond farewell and good luck.

Yours, Jack.

Postcard with photo of T.S.S. "Suffolk"

Pte J Curran
"D" Company
2nd Battalion
1st Inf. Brigade
A.I.F.

T.S.S. Suffolk
Great Australian Bight
23 Oct 1914

Received 9th November 1914 (different hand)

23rd Oct 1914 (dated)

Dear Nell

Just a line to let you know that everything is going well on board. We left Sydney last Sunday (14th) at 4pm for Albany, West Australia. We will get to Albany tonight or tomorrow. All the troop ships start off together from Albany, there is about [40 ?] altogether. The New Zealanders are going with us. I have put my address on the top of this I will always look forward to your letters with pleasure. It will be good to get news from Australia when we get over there. We have had a good passage this far [.....] every time on board. We can't do much. [.....] drop you a line at every opportunity. I only hope you get my letters [.....] always. Don't forget to drop a line. We won't do any fighting this year [.....] do some training in England [.....] there.

God bless yours affectionately Jack.

Comments: ink is very faded and writing is very small making it impossible to read in some areas.
Postcard view of King River, Albany WA

H.M.T.S. "Suffolk"
Albany W Australia ^{xiv}
Tues Oct 27 1914

Wrote Oct 27th 1914
Received 26 Nov 1914

No stamps available

From No 387 Pte J Curran
"D" Company
2nd Battalion
1st Brigade

Dear Nell

Just a line to let you know that part of the journey is over. We got here on Sunday morning. All the troop ships assemble here. There is about 40 altogether, including New Zealanders. We leave when they are all here. There are a good few warships going with us for protection. We had a splendid trip over from Sydney. I only hope it is as good all the way. It is not known which route we are going but the Red Sea, I think, is the next calling port will very likely be Colombo or Aden. I will drop another line from there.

Trusting this finds you all well at Adare and doing famously.

I remain Yours Affectionately
Jack

There is no stamps to begot.

Written over 2 postcards (Nell seems to have included the date she received it on the top of the first card) *"It is no crime to kiss in Narrabri. To Err is human, to kiss divide"*. Couple dancing.

387 Pte Curran
"D" Company 2nd Battalion etc

HMTS "Suffolk"
18 Nov 1914 (Received 8th Jan 1915)

Dear Nell

Just a few lines while I have the opportunity to reply to your letter which I received at Albany. I was very glad to hear from you. I don't suppose I will get much news from Australia after this, but I will always be glad to hear from you. I sent off a card from here yesterday but am sending this other one in case you don't happen to get it. It might easily go astray. I like this job alright. It is better than being at home in a time like this especially with nothing much doing, and reading all about the great things on the other side. However, I suppose we will see it all soon enough. I suppose it is getting hot your way by this, I often wonder how all the old friends are getting on and what you are all doing. There is plenty of time for reading and thinking about old times etc between meals and parades. My birthday will be in about a week to come, 23rd Nov^{xv}. It is really wonderful how the time flies round. It only seems a few weeks ago, as it were since I was at Kendall last summer and now I am thousands of miles away from all. I used to get plenty of letters from you at Kendall, anyway don't forget to drop a line but take care and get correct address if you do. Hoping all well and yourself.

I remain your affectionately, Jack.

2nde Battn 1st Inf Brigade, 1st Aust Division

Mena Camp
The Pyramids Egypt

Sun 20th December 1914

Dear Nell

Just a few lines to let you know that all's well and that I haven't forgotten you. We got turned off here to Egypt owing to Turkey siding with Germany and declaring war. It was thought that the Turks had designs on Egypt and also the Suez Canal, but they are not doing anything yet and I don't think they will. There are about 200,000 troops in Egypt including 60,000 Indians stationed along the canal. In this camp, which is situated near the Pyramids, and about 10 miles from Cairo there are about 20,000 all Australia's contingent. In Cairo and close about the City are the New Zealanders and Territorials. Cairo is a big place. It seems to be bigger than Sydney. There are a great many French people here, and the principal language among the better class and the business people is French. A few men out of each Company get leave of a night from 4pm until 11pm. A tram line runs out here, and it takes about an hour in the tram into the City and costs 1 piastre – 2½d. They Egyptian money is quite different to ours in Australia. The lowest coin is a millium which is equal to a farthing. Then a half piaster which is 5 milliums = 1¼d, a piastre is 2½d and so on. I will get some good post cards of this country and send you shortly if I can. There is some very pretty places here, old ruins and such like. The Pyramids are only about 500 yards from here. There are 2 very big ones and a smaller one, also about 9 small ones about 9 miles to the south, the Pyramids of Karnak. The big ones close to the camp are almost 500 feet out of the level of the ground, and as much as that is buried beneath the sand. The Sphinx is close to the Pyramids being only about 300 yards away. There is also several buried temples only partly excavated by these treasure hunters and such like and scattered about are great heaps of stone, cut into blocks about 8 feet square the same as the pyramids are built of. About the Pyramids and in Cairo and all the places of importance one is continually pestered (sic) with the natives who want to guide you or sell cigarettes, oranges, post cards, walking sticks and a hundred and one other things. They always about 10 times the value of the article they want to sell, and often get it from those who are fool enough to buy. Some things are slightly dearer here than in Sydney and others are a little cheaper. We are having fairly good times taking everything into consideration. Reveille is about 6.15, breakfast 7.15, parade 8.15, then we march out to our parade ground where we drill a distance of about 4 miles. We get back about 1.30 and have dinner at 2pm. There are no parades in the afternoon. We are camped on the edge of the Great Sahara Desert on the raw brown sand which is all about us. It is hard work to keep the rifles and things clean on account of the sand, but it is clean sand. It is hot in the middle of the day but in the nights towards morning it gets very cold and a fog hangs on till 8 o'clock. It is very bad walking in the desert but we are getting quite settled down to our new conditions. If Turkey hadn't interfered, we should not be here now. Turkey gave England 10 days to withdraw from Egypt but the time is up and the Home Government has proclaimed Egypt a British Protectorate and the Suzerainty of Turkey over Egypt which lasted for four centuries is at an end. All the Egyptians with very few exceptions are in favour of British Rule. When Turkey first declared war the Khedive^{xvi} fled to Constantinople but the British Government has appointed Kamel Pasha^{xvii} as Sultan in his place. Whether there will be any trouble or not remains to be seen. Anyway, if there is we are well prepared for it, and will give a good account of ourselves if needed. In fact, we would welcome a diversion of that kind, it would kill the monotony of camp life and provide a bit of excitement, but I don't think

there is any fear of any trouble breaking out. The soldiers on leave in town behave fairly well considering, and the Press has favourable commented on their behaviour. Of course, a few are a bit over the odds but there is good and bad everywhere. It seems hard to realise that I am writing this almost in the shade of the Pyramids, with Australia such a long way away. I am getting along alright, in the best of health and spirits and thoroughly enjoying myself and taking care of myself too. I suppose it will be about two months [...] before I get a letter in answer to this. I have got no letter since we left Albany.

Hoping this finds you all well at Adare and everything as it should be and flourishing.

I remain yours affectionately

Jack

PS Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year although a bit belated but better late than never you know. I conclude yours Jack. Remember me to the old friends about Adare.

Address:

387 Pte J Curran

“D” Company

2nd Battalion

1st Inf Brigade

1st Australian Division

Mena Camp Egypt

(squiggles) Egyptian writing

Don't forget to write soon and put plenty of information in the letter. I like to get news from Australia. I will look forward to getting a letter from you. Take care of yourself. I suppose it will be getting very hot in Australia. It doesn't seem like Christmas 3 years ago, that I was at Adare but it is quite true all the same. I like up there very much and was sorry to leave. Of course, this letter is to Aunt Sarah^{xviii} as well you know, to let you know how I am getting on and you can answer for yourself and the rest.

Postcard of the Pyramids

3 Jan 1915

To Nell

This is a picture of the Pyramids of Cheops, the Sphinx and the top of some old buried temples. Our camp is situated about 400 yards to the other side of the Pyramids over a hill. They are enormous things when you are close to them. It would take a long time to describe them and the old ruins about them but I hope to be able to tell you about them some day.

From Yours Jack

387 Pte J Curran
No 6 Platoon
"B" Company
1st Inf Brigade
Australian Division
Mena Camp
Egypt.

Mena Camp Pyramids Egypt

2nd Battn

1st Inf. Bgde.

1st Australian Division

3rd January 1915

Dear Nell

I hope you are all getting on well and have had a very Happy New Year. I sent a little card before New Year. I hope you got it alright, it was not much but there is practically no cards here now because there has been such a rush on them by the troops. There is about 40,000 troops in and about Cairo. The Second Australian Contingent is coming here. They ought to arrive here in a week or two. I see by the papers here that Australia is going to try and raise 100,000 more men for the Front if possible. It will take a long time to get that many men away, but if they keep on sending a few thousand every month they will be doing well. I think we shall have Australian papers here in a few days. There will be a great demand for them among the troops. I haven't seen any Australian paper at all since we left Albany and have heard very little news either. I have got no letters since we left Albany but am looking forward to getting some shortly.

We put in Christmas and New Year quietly. There was a little extra spread on both occasions, but in the Army Christmas and New Year are not recognised the same as by other people. The bands woke us that were asleep playing as the New Year came in also tin canning, cheering and noises of all descriptions. Most of the boys got up especially the Scotchmen, who always keep New Year in great style. I soon went back to sleep again as I had been on duty in Cairo up till about 8 o'clock and it takes an hour to come out here on the tram, so I hadn't long been asleep when the row started.

We are working harder than ever now, getting ourselves fit and becoming efficient. Sir George Reid^{xix} was here the other day with about 20 officers – Generals and Colonels – quite a variety of them. He gave us a stirring address, and inspected us and was very pleased. He said that Kitchener had promised to send us to the Front as soon as we were properly fit for it so it was up to us to get fit and keep fit he said. I suppose we will leave here when the weather gets warm at home, that will be about March. It is too cold there altogether for us at present we should freeze to death if we went there now, it would be a bit worse than Adare. [.....] very hot days and cold nights. We seem to catch the heat here worse than it really is. This is on account of the sand for we are camped at the edge of the Libyan Desert, which is really only a part of the Sahara. One seems to get used to the sand. Sand everywhere, there is no grass whatever here where we are camped or where we do our drill, only sand.

In Cairo itself there is more Frenchmen than English, and of course French is mostly spoken in the business places and amongst the better class. All these troops here is doing it a world

of good for they spend a great amount of money in it. The natives who sell things generally ask about 20 times the value of anything they wish to sell and sometimes they get it.

This is the strangest New Year I have ever put in. There is a big difference between now and this time last year. I was going back to work this time last year on the road in fact, now I am writing this letter almost under the shadow of the famous pyramids. I am not in very good writing form and haven't written much of a letter but will write again in a week or two hoping to have one from you in the meantime and trusting you all are enjoying the best of health and that everything is going well with you all.

I Remain Yours Affectionately Jack.

Take particular note of the address, slightly different from the other because we have been reorganised under a new system of drill there has been no change into fresh companies, but two companies have been placed into one, as under the new drill the battalion is composed of 4 instead of 8 companies, but of double strength.

387 Pte J Curran
No 6 Platoon
"B" Company
2nd Battalion
1st Inf Brigade
1st Australian Division
Mena Camp Egypt.

Postcard with man on camel on it

Writing very cramped towards the end of the card

387 Pte J Curran
No 6 Platoon
"B" Company
2nd Battalion
1st Inf Brigade
1st Australian Division

Mena Camp

Tues 12 Jan 1914 (should read 1915)

Dear Nell and Adare Household

Everything is still the same here. Sir George Reid was here a fortnight ago and gave us a very nice address and complimented us on our work and appearance and said that he had had an interview with Kitchener and Kitchener had promised that we should go to the Front as soon as we were fit for it. We won't go for at least 2 months yet, I don't think, as we still have more brigade and divisional field training to do. Our chaps (Allies) are doing well at the Front and seem to be holding their own everywhere. The Germans must lose in the end but they are putting up a great fight for it. You will see a camel in this picture. They are very plentiful here and also very rough to ride. You can get a camel for about 1/- and go about a mile. The Arabs and Egyptians' that own them are making great money. So are those that have donkeys. They hire them for very little but since the soldiers have come here the price has gone up considerably not only in donkeys but in everything else. One thing about [.....] we are never troubled with rain and when it is windy the sand that is blown about is far worse than the rain. It gets into everything and nearly [.....] and it takes about an hour to clean the rifle after being out in a sand storm. I am sending a photo of myself and a chum of mine. Trusting you get it safely and hoping to hear from you soon. Jack

Postcard with Sphinx on it

15/1/15

To Miss Nellie Driscoll

Dear Nell

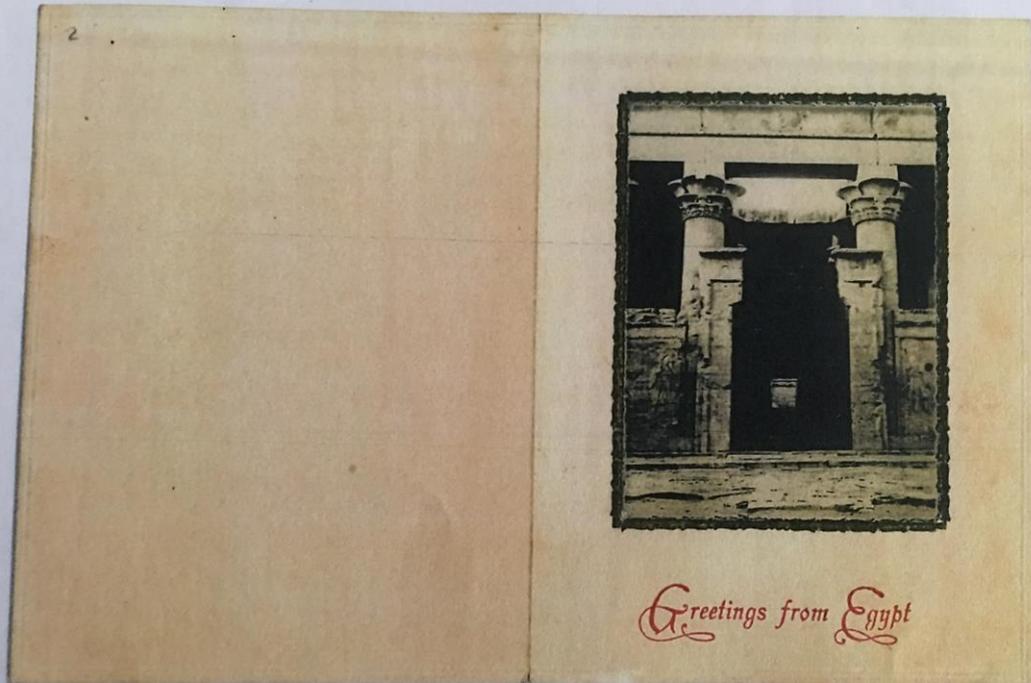
Yours to hand of the 15 Nov today. The back mail is coming slowly to hand now. Everything is alright here at present but Turkey is expected to make an effort to invade Egypt shortly. They can come as soon as they like we will give them a warm reception. We may go to a place called Ismailia^{xx} on the Suez Canal to do some more training but it is not known for certain what we will do in the future yet. Keep on addressing letters to "Mena Camp Egypt". On Monday we march out of camp in full mobilisation order. That means that everything we have goes. The transports take all our head/hand?sets and clothes etc. I think we come back again the same day though. We may stay out a night or two but from what I can hear we will be here for a couple more weeks perhaps months yet. One thing is certain Kitchener promised that we should go to the Front when we were fit. I hope if we do go that we will land there in summer time. It will be a bit too cold for us Australians in Europe in winter. I think that the war ought to be over or at least drawing to a close by this time next year. I see that Australia is going to send men as regularly as possible to help at the Front. I would like to have a go at the Turks and invade Palestine. It would be better and easier than in France and the weather would be far better. I sent a photo to you people in a letter. I trust that you have received it safely. Well Nell old girl, I am tired and sleepy and it is getting towards "lights out" I suppose we will have another big day. Hoping you are ok as I am myself. I remain yours Jack [.....]

Small card written January 1915

Greetings from Egypt

To Greet You
With all Kind Thoughts
And Best Wishes
For a Joyful and Happy Christmas
From Egypt

Jack to Nell
Although a bit late
"better late than never" you know



Dear Nell

I am sending some other cards with this one to Adare hoping they will arrive safely, and hoping you had a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Hoping this finds you all well as it leaves me. I remain

Yours Affectionately Jack

Postcard – Australian Expeditionary Forces
Cairo
1914 - 1915

Mena Hospital^{xxi}

5 March 1915

(Received April 14th 1915)

Dear Nell

Your two letters Jan 12 and 21 to hand last mail day. We only get mail every fortnight now. I was very pleased to hear from you. I have been in the Military Hospital here now for about a month. I came in with measles and pneumonia and got about right again, and then got measles worse than ever. I have been in bed about a fortnight now with the second attack, but will be up again in a day or two. I hope that I can get out before the Division goes away. If I am left behind I will be put into the reinforcements and follow on to fill up the gaps, and may get put into any battalion. There are a good many patients here about 400 (could also be 300 – hard to read) in Mena House I think. This is a big hotel close to the Pyramids that is used by tourists in the season. There are about 4 stories on it and about 250 rooms all told. I am on the third floor. We get well treated and well fed here. It is a good holiday from camp. It was a great change getting into a good bed again. There are 3 nurses and 2 orderlies in this ward in the day and 1 nurse 1 orderly at night. There are 30 patients as a rule. I am getting a bit tired of it now after being here a month. I suppose I will be well enough to go out in a little over a week. Hoping to hear from you soon. Write to the same address.

I remain

Yours Jack

387 Pte J Curran
No 6 Platoon
"B" Coy 2nd Battn
1st Inf. Brigade
1st Australian Division
Mena Camp Egypt

Mena Camp
March 14 1915

Dear Nell

Your nice long letter to hand to hand today, also one from Bess I will write to Bess next week. I am pretty fit again and have started work again after being off nearly 2 months. It was a long spell and I am a bit soft yet. One of the things I felt most on coming out of the hospital was sleeping on the ground. It was so hard. It seemed as hard as iron. The sand would not be so bad, but we have rush mats on the floor and they are as hard as can be. For two or three nights I could scarcely sleep at all, but I am broken in to it again. It is a bit change to come out of a good bed on to the ground.

I am glad you got the photo alright. I might get taken again if I can. Hammond^{xxii} is not a bad sort of a mate. I was out with him to his home when we were in Kensington. His parents live at Gladesville. They are very nice people, and there is quite a family of girls and boys. They always inquire after me. He sent a photo to his grandmother in England, and she sent him a few little things back including a little book for me *The Happy Warrior* by the Hon Mrs Gill^{xxiii}, with a forward by the late Lord Roberts written on the eve of his departure to France and within 5 days of his death. It is a very nice little book full of martial tracts taken from the Scriptures and covering all the different phases of war and preparation for war and I was very pleased with it.

I hope things are improved your way by this time, but I'm sure you must have got some of that rain that fell about 2 weeks ago. Things must have been pretty bad looking. It is either too much or not enough. It will be too much if those big floods come in June.

We are never troubled by rain here. There has been a couple of showers since we came here but nothing to speak of. The annual rainfall is only about 2 inches. All the cultivation is carried on by irrigation and the Nile flood once a year covers the Valley of the Nile with a good quantity of [watching?] and gives the ground a good soaking. The annual flood was only drying up when we came here, a lot of the low-lying ground was still covered with water. All the land here is fairly flat, otherwise it couldn't be irrigated. The cultivated land has been made up by the Nile flood brings deposits of silt and rubbish down from the Mountains of Nubia, Abyssinia and Libya. This land is very rich, some of the most fertile land in the world is situated in the valley of the Nile, but there is not much of it. The natives are always sure of three crops a years off their farms since the land has been irrigated by Britain. Before this was done they had to rely on the flood and if the flood failed or came a little too early or late their crops would be spoiled, as the rainfall is not sufficient to grow anything.

We get some bad sandstorm at times. A bit of a stiff wind springs up and the air is quite thick with sand. Sometimes it is impossible to see the Pyramids from the camp when one is on. The sand is very severe on the eyes. The Egyptians are noted for having defective eyes. Ophthalmic is very

common among the poorer classes, and the superstition of 2000 years ago concerning the eyes still clings to the natives of today and prevents the extermination of the disease, which has been very prevalent since before the time of King Feka. Besides being severe on the eyes the sand seems to always find an entrance into your mouth whether you open it or not. If you grind your teeth together you can feel yourself crunching fine sand but you get accustomed to it.

I am sending you two Egyptian nickel coins, half piastre's worth in English money $1\frac{1}{4}d$. 1 piastre is worth $2\frac{1}{2}d$. Hope you get this letter alright. I will send some more in the future, they will be interesting.

There is no further word of going away very soon. I don't care if we stop another couple of months. Trusting that this finds you quite well old girl as I am and all the rest also, and everything flourishing in your locality. Hoping to get another nice long letter from you soon. It is very nice to get letters from Australia here in Egypt, we don't hear much.

From Your Jack xxx

Postcard – Expeditionary Force 8th Battalion

14/6/1915

Dear Nell

Your letter of 28/4/15 to hand yesterday. I was very pleased to hear from you. I am quite well and trust that this finds you all the same at Adare. Tom Hammond^{xxiv} got wounded the other day in 3 places in the thigh with shrapnel. I get a Turk occasionally. It is wonderful how bloodthirsty one becomes after a bit of fighting. Men are shot just the same as if they were rabbits or dingoes. I think that we will do a lot of hard fighting yet before the Turks give in. Of course we are bound to win in time. I won't mind when peace is declared although I would not be out of this whatever way it goes. War is alright from a distance. It is the time that absence makes the heart grow fonder as does active service.

Au revoir for the present old girl from Jack

PS at top of postcard – very small writing and written through the words “Post Card”

Impossible under present circumstances to get photo [....] you want it, sorry but can't be helped active service has its draw back as well as [....] J.

(Gallipoli)

13 July 1915

Dear Nell

Just a line from the firing line in answer to yours of the 1st June. I was very pleased to hear from you. Letters or papers of any kind are very welcome to us soldiers in the trenches. It is a sort of diversion from the regular round of duties. I am still fairly well and moving along on 3 meals a day, and have been exceedingly lucky to date. There is practically nothing new since I last wrote. I don't think the Turks will try and shift us from here again. They won't have much of a chance if they do try. I don't mind how soon the Turks decide to throw in the towel. This is getting terribly monotonous, this waiting and waiting here, and continually working. The heat and the flies are very bad. I wouldn't mind if we were to get a little of the present Adare weather now, it would be a welcome change.

I am not in any humour for writing at present, in fact there is nothing to write about excepting what may be objected to and scratched out by the Censor. I was very sorry to hear about you being so bad old girl, but there is always one consolation, it might have been worse, so cheer up and be happy. I know what pneumonia is from my experience in Mena. The artillery has started firing. The Turks are sending over high explosive shells, trying to hit our guns in the rear. The shells are just going a few feet over our trench with a venomous kind of swish and bursting 150 yards in the rear. Our guns are replying and with all the noise I can hardly collect my scattered wits, so I will ring off. Trusting that this finds all you sick people quite well and everything flourishing.

Good bye for the present and good luck

Jack xxxxx

Gallipoli Peninsula

26 July 1915

Dear Nell

Just a line to let you know I am still on the scene and doing a little. Things are much the same here from one week's end to another, once one gets used to this kind of life. Sometimes a little variation occurs when the Turks bombard our position with big guns from the forts of the Narrows. The big shells weigh anything from 200 pounds upwards and when they start flying about knocking things out of shape they always create an uneasy feeling especially if they hit within 30 or 40 yards of anyone. They can be seen coming for a long way off and heard too. They make a noise like a very big tree falling when they are coming through the air and when they hit the ground it is like as if a volcano burst out. The shell bursts up into pieces half as big as a good-sized plate and it is 2 or 3 times as thick, so if a piece hits anyone there is not much hope of recovering from it.

What is looked forward to most here is letters from Australia when the mail comes everyone waits in hopes for it to bring word from there. There is no keener disappointment for a soldier here than to get nothing on mail day. It cheers everyone up wonderfully to get a few letters occasionally. It is alright to get letters but very laborious work answering them from here where the days go by with monotonous sameness. I think this excuse is good enough to finish with. I hope that all you sick people have quite recovered by this time. The weather will be cold there now as it is very hot here at present and water is scarce. Hoping that this finds you all well as I am at present. Remember me to the old familiar folks around about there.

Good bye and good luck

Jack

Lemnos

12th September 1915

Dear Nell

Just a line in answer to yours of the 30th July which I received today. I was glad to hear from you. I am at Lemnos at present with the battalion for a rest. We left the Peninsula some days ago and are now snugly encamped in fine big brand new marquee tents on the shore of Mudros Bay^{xxv}. We were here for 3 weeks before landing at Gallipoli but there is a great difference now and when we here before. Camps have sprung up all around the shores, hospital camps, prisoners' camps, base camps, rest camps, transports, working Egyptian camps etc etc. There are a lot of Egyptians working here at present, making roads, piers and all that sort of thing. There is a lot of shipping in the harbour, including battleships, cruisers, destroyers and the "Aquatania"^{xxvi} (sic). When we came here the other day her sister ship the Mauritania^{xxvii} was in port, but she has left since. The Mauritania was painted black all over, funnels and all, she has guns fore and aft. Both ships are exactly the same as the Lusitania, the one the Germans sank. The Aquatania (sic) is done up as an hospital ship and she looks a grand sight, hull and deck fittings painted white, yellow funnels, and a broad green band running around the body of the boat with a big red cross on the middle of each side and a small cross at each end. Of a dark night the hospital ships look well when lighted up, the green band and the red crosses showing up well. We are fixed up fairly comfortably here. We are here to be built up and made up into the battalion we were before we got into Turkey and made our name. We will be fitted up with winter clothing and worked into the battalion we were 5 months ago. We are being fed up in great style, and have done nothing yet. We will start parading and route marching very soon to work us back into form. I was not sorry to get off the Peninsula for a spell, and I was getting a bit off colour, and the wound in my leg is not better yet and is a bit troublesome at times and both my arms are pretty crook. I will soon pick up again. This is a very breezy place here and will be a very cold place in winter. It is getting cool already. It looks very much like rain today and probably will rain before long.

I don't feel like writing much today as I have just been drawing some stuff sent by the Queen Alexandria Field Fund and Lady Hamilton Fund, shirts, sox, writing cases, towels, soap, shaving gear, shoes and different other odds and ends. We get new clothes and new uniforms and burn all our old clothes, which we have been wearing continually for in some cases for nearly 5 months.

I have to announce a slight change in my address viz, a promotion to full corporal (two stripes) from August 6th.

It is getting dark so I will finish. Hoping to hear from you soon.

I Remain yours lovingly
Jack xxx

Hoping you are all well at Adare and that everything is flourishing about there.

387 Corpl J Curran

B Company
2nd Battalion
1st Inf Brigade
1st Australian Division

Queen Alexandria Field Force Fund

<http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/22884>

<http://digital.library.temple.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p16002coll9/id/2933>

The Dardanelles Fund for Comforts

From the Glasgow Herald, 19th October 1915.

THE DARDANELLES FUND.

LADY HAMILTON'S APPEAL.

An appeal to the public for further contributions and gifts to enable the supply of comforts to our troops in Gallipoli to be continued is made by Lady Ian Hamilton and the committee of Lady Hamilton's Dardanelles Fund. Of the value of the work done by the fund there are many thousands of testimonials from all grades of the Army –fighting and non-combatant. No weightier tribute could have been forthcoming than that of the Commander-in-Chief himself. In a cablegram just received by Lady Hamilton Sir Ian Hamilton says:-- “It would have done the hearts of your subscribers good to see the delight of the troops at receiving their generous gifts.”

The work of despatching the gifts to the front is now discharged on behalf of Lady Hamilton's Fund by Queen Alexandra's Field Force Fund, whose premises at 24a, Hill Street, Knightsbridge, might easily be taken by the uninitiated to be the interior of a huge West-End stores-- except of course for the absence of shoppers. Quantities of everything needed by the man on active service are stacked in orderly array around the walls. Bands of voluntary workers line long tables, packing with deft, busy fingers the handkerchiefs, matches, pipes, soap, socks, stationery, chocolate, helmets, mittens, sweaters, mufflers, and condiments which compose the parcels in proportions that vary with the requisition of the officers commanding the units at the front. The enthusiastic worker and the generous donor of money are alike happy in the knowledge that goods sent through the agency of the fund reach the men at the front. Numerous complaints have been received of the non-arrival of packages despatched by the ordinary parcels post, but so far the good things forwarded by Lady Hamilton's workers have found their way with unerring accuracy into the hands of the men for whom they are intended. In many cases acknowledgments follow, if not from the men, then from the officers, and they are alike strong in their expressions of gratitude and appreciation.

THE GRATITUDE OF THE MEN.

One officer commanding writes as follows:-- “The excellence of choice has shown deep thought on your part, and nothing could have been more acceptable. My men last night with their parcels were like children at Christmas, and if you could have seen their faces and heard the exclamations you would have all felt well repaid for the arduous work which you have so cheerfully and willingly undertaken.” In a letter from a base depot an Army chaplain writes:— “Last week I had one of the greatest treats of my life, and I only wish I could write a full report to show you and your committee how grateful we are for your gifts and what a service you are performing to our dear lads. God bless you all for it -- that is not only my prayer but the prayer of hundreds of our men who are giving their best.” The urgency of the new appeal for funds will be apparent when it is realised that only 50 per cent. of the articles needed at the front can be forwarded owing to the present lack of funds.

12 October 1914 (should read 1915)

Lemnos Island

Dear Aunt and Nell

Just a line to let you know that I received your letter of August today. I was very pleased to hear from you and especially to hear that Uncle^{xxviii} was quite alright again. We get our mail very quickly here and regularly. I don't know when we are going away from here. There is no word of it yet. The boys are getting back into their own old condition again. We, the 1st Brigade, were inspected this morning by the Deputy Inspector General of Communications. He is a British General and is a fairly old man and has seen a lot of service in different wars. He said he was glad to see us looking so well, better than he had expected after our experiences in Gallipoli. We don't do much drill only a couple of hours in the morning and half hour after dark. We are having a fairly easy time. This is a very quiet place. There are a lot of small villages on the Island, but nothing of any consequence. There is nowhere in particular to go. Each battalion has cricket sets, footballs and other pastimes. There are good playing fields around here. The Navy officers and men are playing matches with our chaps almost every day. There are a lot of battleships in the harbour, English, French and one or two Italian boats. There are a lot of transports in the harbour. The Olympia came in the other day with about 8000 troops on board. She is a fine big vessel of about 30000 tons. A submarine fired a torpedo at her and it only missed by about 15 feet. It would have been a great haul for the Germans if they had torpedoed her.

The boys are coming forward fairly well in Australia but they are all wanted here to [finish?] the job. In Jim's^{xxix} last letter he said that up to then about 250 had enlisted from around Gloucester. That is not too bad but I think that a lot more could come forward if they wanted to.

I am pretty busy this week so I can't write much. I hope that this finds you all well at Adare and everything flourishing in your locality. I believe by all accounts that you are having a great season. I am very glad of this.

Hoping to hear from you at [regular]

I Remain Yours Jack

Lemnos Island

18.10.15

Dear Nell and Bess

Just a line in answer to your letter of 2/0/15 which I received yesterday, I was glad to hear from you and that you were all well. I am still here at Lemnos with the Battalion. I don't know how long we are going to stop here or where we are going to when we move, but it is no use thinking of these things. We have been here just 6 weeks. It has been a good spell and all the boys are feeling a lot the better for it. We are only about the same strength now as when we came here. The Battalion numbers about 250 instead of 1050 full strength. We may move from here shortly. I have heard that there is a big movement on in Gallipoli and that there is something doing. We may have to go away in a hurry to reinforce. I would like to go into some other place now instead of Anzac. The weather is getting cold here now. Bitter cold winds blow night and day at times. It will be pretty rough here in mid-winter. We have not had a winter for 3 seasons. It was summer almost on leaving Australia and on the voyage to Egypt. It was summer in Egypt and summer on coming here, so we will [cop?] in when it does come.

Today is the anniversary of our departure from Sydney for the Front. It is just such a day as the day we left, cold windy, raining slightly. Most of the boys who left so light hearted and jolly to their bit, have paid the extreme price, and long since gone to their Maker or are lying sick or wounded in different parts of the world. It makes me think of the cruelty of war when I think of the boys going ashore so full of life and health and vigour in the dawn of that fateful Sunday morning on which they were to win immortal fame, and when I think of the consequences.

Well anyway to celebrate the occasion the 2nd Battalion played the 1st a cricket match. As I said before the weather was bad. I am sorry to say that we were defeated. I was playing I don't know if that was the cause of the defeat.

The scores were:

2nd Battalion 1st Innings 46

2nd Battalion 2nd Innings 6-93

1st Battalion 1st Innings – 102

We didn't do very well at all but in the first innings got the worst of the wicket. My own humble contribution towards the defeat was 4 runs and I also got 4 wickets. There are some very good wickets here also some very had ones. We had a very good one today. However better luck next time.

It is getting late now and raining so I will conclude. I am glad to see that a few of the boys from about there have come to realise their responsibilities. Trusting that this find you all well at Adare as I am at present. Remember me to the old acquaintances about there.

From Yours

- Jack

(Comments: No date but leaving Lemnos after a spell and going back to Gallipoli, weather bad, seems to fit in with letters around this time i.e. between 18.10.1915 – 19.11.15)

The Troopship "Osmanick"
Lemnos Harbour

Dear Nell

Just a line to let you know that the spell has come to an end and we are going back to Anzac again. All things considered we have not had a bad time, quiet but comparatively easy all the same. Myself I would rather have had a month in Egypt than the 7 weeks we put in at Lemnos. Of course we should have had to run a risk from submarines but we are so used to running risks that we would not have minded this. If I had gone to Alexandria I would have sent you some very interesting curios from the Peninsula. I had lots of stuff that I brought from Gallipoli in the hope of getting it away but no parcels will be taken by the Post Office from Lemnos. They ban war trophies especially. I had to throw a lot of stuff away on leaving the Island.

The weather has been very rough lately. A hurricane springs up and will last for days at a time. We embarked yesterday morning but the weather is so rough that it is impossible to get away yet. If we did go out we couldn't land at Anzac the way the weather is at present. We are going to have a rough time on Gallipoli this time. It will be a hard job to get wounded off in the winter for it is very stormy most of the time.

We may not be there as long this time as last without getting a spell. We left camp yesterday morning just after daylight, after cleaning up the place. There was a concert in the Y.M.C.A. tent the night before, a sort of farewell affair to the 1st Brigade. The other Brigades and the New Zealanders will be back to the Peninsula shortly I suppose. I am pretty busy today so I can't write much but will write again shortly. This boat is not a bad one. The whole of the Brigade is aboard. The strength is only about 1100 all told. The full strength is over 4100. This boat belongs to an Egyptian Company, The Royal Khedivall Line (Royal Khedival Line). This boat is running between Alexandria, Marseilles and English ports. I have not got any letters from you lately but should score next mail. Trusting that this finds you all well and everything flourishing in your locality.

I remain
Yours Jack

Gallipoli

10.11.1915

Dear Nell

Just a line to let you know that I received yours of the 1st October a couple of days ago. I was pleased to hear that you were all quite well at *Adare*. I wrote to Bess last week. There was a storm here a couple of nights ago, it rained very heavy for a while and flooded some of the trenches. The dugout I was in is pretty wet. The water and mud ran down the sides of it like a [mudslide]. The roof of which is galvanised iron was alright but the water and mud coming down the sides made up for it. After a while it passed away and we put the remainder of the night in with comparative comfort. During the storm a couple of Trawlers were wrecked on the coast or somewhere about here. One had the Christmas mail from here to Australia on board. All the mail was lost. I suppose the letter I wrote to Bess was on board. I think we will have a lot of those experiences before long. Nearly every night there is a little drop of rain. One consolation is that if the weather is bad for us is must also be bad for our neighbours over the gully (Turks). Just here we're about 150 yards away from the firing line. A deep steep? gully separates us. If ever they attack us they will get a rough handling coming up the steep side of the gully. Of course I won't say what will happen to us if we do the attacking. The weather is getting pretty chilly of a night here now. There is going to be a magazine entitled the Anzac Christmas Magazine^{xxx} or some such other title printed for Christmas from contributions drawn entirely from the soldiers here. There are some good prizes offered for the best articles, poems, short stores, cover design etc. The prizes run from about £3 up according to the value of the contribution. I will try and get 3 or 4 copies and I will send you one. It should be a good souvenir if the magazine is any good at all. I am pretty busy today with one thing and another so will close. Wishing you and all the rest a very Merry Christmas and a Bright, Happy and Prosperous New Year. I hope by the following Christmas that the war is over and I am back in Australia again, if it is not, well it can't be helped.

As I write this the Turkish shells from a gun about 3 miles away are whizzing just overhead. One soon gets used to them and takes no notice.

Will write again shortly.

And remain – Jack

(Letter has photocopied very lightly in places so is very hard to read, especially the end bit.)

HM Troopship "Huntsgreen" alias Derfflinger
On the High Seas on route to Alexandria

26.12.1915

Dear Nell

Just a line to let you know that all's well I suppose that by this time you know of the evacuation of the Peninsula by the Australian and British troops. We were all sorry to leave it but I suppose that we did the best thing we could have done under the circumstances. Everything worked without a hitch. For over a week stores, ammunition, guns and troops were being sent away every night. The troops in the firing line left in 2 nights. The second night the men left were divided into 3 parties. In "B Coy", "A" Party 1 officer 5^{xxxix} men, "B" party 8 men, "C" party No1, 1 officer 10 men, and C party No2, 1 Officer 2 men. I was one of the last party. Lieut **Cotton**^{xxxix}, myself and a corporal named **Winterbottom**^{xxxix} were the last to leave B Company's line. From where we were it was about 2 miles to the pier where we embarked. A boat was waiting and we only had to get on board. Shortly after we got on board the Turks opened up a heavy rifle fire all along the line they must have been puzzled by the silence in our lines. We have had a lot of silent stunts lately so I suppose they were not alarmed much. The firing soon stopped. We got on a bigger boat and came to Lemnos and had a few days there and are now in this boat bound for Alexandria. This is the boat that brought us from Alexandria last April. She has been made into a fine troopship since I was in her last. Christmas passed very quietly yesterday. We left Mudros Bay about 8 in the morning passing quite close to the hospital ship "Aquitania". She is a splendid big ship sister ship to the "Lusitania" that the Germans sunk. I don't know what we are (doing/going?) in Egypt but will write later. I suppose we will have a fairly easy time for a while anyway. We are having a fine trip this time. It is generally pretty calm about the Grecian Archipelago. We have been doing a zig zag course for fear of submarines and everyone had to wear lifebelt all the time but nothing has happened of any consequence. We got puddings in tilly cans for Christmas, 1 between 2 men also billy cans full of different little things. I thought we would be in the trenches for Christmas but was a little bit out in calculations, fighting and work had been done and so many lives sacrificed but as we were not doing much good I suppose we did the best thing. When we were on this boat coming to Gallipoli everyone thought that we would be in Constantinople in a few weeks but it was not the fault of the men that we didn't get there. We may still have another go at the Turks somewhere else. I am sure that we beat them every time in open fighting. Trusting that this finds you are well as it leaves me.

I remain yours Jack.

PS It seems a terrible long time since I was at Adare for Christmas. It was 4 years ago. The last part of the time has been a bit exciting. Perhaps by this time next year things will be brighter and the war closer to an end. I received your letter of 27 Oct while in Lemnos. There is a lot of mail for the Battalion to be sorted as soon as we

(written on Y.M.C.A. letterhead)

30 Jan 1916
Overseas Base Ghezirieh.

Dear Nell

Just a line to let you know that I am still knocking around. I have been discharged from the 4th Auxiliary Hospital Abassia. I wrote to Bess last week from there. I was admitted with mumps a little over three weeks ago, but soon got alright again. I was sent here yesterday. I don't know how long I will be here, but it will be some time before I join the Battalion again. I suppose, in the meantime you can keep on addressing letters to the Battalion as usual. I haven't got any letters now for over a month, when anybody gets away from their Unit their mail usually goes astray somehow in going around the different Hospitals and camps. There are a good lot of men here. Only the men who have been to the Front come here. The camp is very dirty and dusty. In places there are 6 inches of dust so you can imagine how it is especially when it is windy. We are about 4 miles from Cairo, and the train runs passed the camp. We are camped about half way between Cairo and the Pyramids. It doesn't look so far as that, but the country is very flat. It is all green around the irrigated area now, as the crops are just coming up. The days are fine and warm but the nights are very cold. It is a pretty sudden change from a bed to the ground but I will soon get used to it. It is rumoured that we may go to France soon, but I don't know how true it is. If the Turks don't try and invade Egypt soon I suppose that we will be sent somewhere to do a bit. It would be a good change to go to France, and I am sure that we should give a very good account of ourselves against the Germans. There is not much to write about here, and it is dinner time so I must ring off. Trusting that this finds you all well and everything flourishing as of your, and everyone brimming over with prosperity in your locality.

I Remain Your Affectionate Cousin Jack.

THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
WITH
HM MEDITERRANEAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE IN EGYPT
(LETTERHEAD)

7th Feb 1916

Overseas Base Ghezireh

Dear Nell

Just a line to let you that that I am still at the base. I haven't had any letters from you for about 6 weeks, but expect to hear again any day now. I am enclosing some photos for you all. They are not too good but you can see that I am still all there, hoping that you get the letter safely and the photos meet with your approval. I will get a better one taken again if possible. There is not much to write about here. Cairo is still in the same place and everything is going along as before. This has been the wettest season for years. It rained very heavily a couple of nights ago, and I may say that we could do with the rain. It laid the dust in camp which was about 6 inches deep in some places. In windy weather it was something awful, but it is quite hard after the rain. I have been put in charge of the details "B" Class 10th Brigade. I have to look after about 150 men and they are continually coming in and being transferred to "A" Class, or getting duties in camp or cleaning out for a few days so it is a job to keep everything running smoothly. It is a big difference in having ? some men, and in having men passing through your hands all the time.

I am thinking of joining the Camel Transport Corps but haven't finally decided to do so yet. They are forming an Australian Camel Corps in Egypt. I met a mate of mine the other day that I knew when I joined and we may try and get in together if the job will prove satisfactory. It would be a new experience anyway and there is always the possibility of having a bit of fun in Egypt. I haven't time to write much so will 'ma feesh'^{xxxiv} Hoping that this finds you all well at Adare and everything flourishing.

I Remain Yours Jack

21.2.16

Ghezirieh Camp

To

Dear Nell and Adare Generally

Just a line to let you know that I am still in the same place and likely to remain here for some time to come. I haven't got any letters from you for about 2 months but am living in hopes. As I told you before it is very hard to get your mail once you get separated from your Unit. I write about every week to keep up the usual correspondence although there is little news about of any interest to you. Cairo is full of soldiers of a night time. There is a big camp of British soldiers at Mena where we were camped before going to Gallipoli. I think there will be a big move here before long. All these thousands of men won't be kept doing nothing here much longer. All the old battalions are being split up I believe. The 2nd Battalion now forms the 2nd and the 54th Battalions. Half the old hands remain in the 2nd and half go into the 54th. The idea of this is to stiffen the new battalions with experienced men. The first officer I was under in the A.I.F. has temporary command of the 54th. If I was only there now I should get some further promotion but there is no chance of getting back to either the 2nd or the 54th at present so I don't know where I will pull up. I have taken over the job of permanent line sergeant for the 1st Brigade "B" Class at the Base here I can stay here as long as I like or as long as the powers that be choose to keep me. There is nothing doing anywhere at present so I will stop on. Of course, I always keep in mind that I came away to fight not to loaf around but I am not loafing by any means I can assure you. I have a lot of work to do during the day. There are men coming men going out, others getting transferred, some going to hospital, some to jobs, besides a considerable number of absentees, dozens of other little things like, fatigue parties, guards, picquets^{xxxv}, kit inspections, passes, kit parades, and so on keep one busy during the day. I like it though. I don't know what I would do if I didn't have some work to kill the time.

I sent a registered parcel the other day. I hope you received it safely. I am enclosing a couple of photos. They are not much good but it can't be helped. I am wearing a red Egyptian fez, and an old tunic that I picked up after the memorable battle of Lone Pine^{xxxvi} and I have been wearing it ever since, so it is no wonder that it looks the worse for wear. The fez is a sort of national headdress among the Egyptians all Government officials wear it as well as the Army and Egyptians of all classes.

I would like to get a letter to see how you all are. It makes one feel a sort of lonely when no letters come, especially when you are always looking forward to them. I have heard nothing further about the Camel Corps and I think it must be off. Hoping that you receive this safely and trusting it finds you all well and everything flourishing and fortune and prosperity smiling on all.

I Remain Yours Jack

Remember me to the old folks around. I often think of you all and wonder how you are.

Overseas Base Ghezirieh [Ghezireh]

18/3/1916

My Dear Nell

Just a line to let you know I am still alive and floating about the universe as per usual. I got a letter from you the other day, the first that I have had for over 2 months, and I was glad to hear from you it was quite cheerful to get some letters again. I write from here every week but there is not much news here that is of any interest to you. It has been terribly dusty here today. You can't imagine what a time we have with it. The estimated amount of dirt that is eaten per head is about a peck, but I am quite certain that whoever made that calculation didn't spend much of his time in Egypt. I feel about 20 pounds heavier tonight both inside and outside. The weather will be very windy for a couple of months or more so the outlook is very cheerful isn't it. This miserable hot dry dusty country makes one think of Australia especially on such days as this as the best country in the world. I was to a place called Barrage^{xxxvii} last Sunday, it is about 20 miles from here just a nice run down in the train. I went down with a mate of mine in the afternoon. It is a beautiful place; two branches of the Nile are locked. The locks are like big stone bridges and the lock gates are kept closed and only opened to allow boats to pass through. The sluice gates allow a certain amount of water to pass through. Between these two branches or rivers is a garden island, or an island transformed into a garden. I think it is about the only place in Egypt that would make you forget that you are in the country. Beautiful green well-kept lawns, flower gardens, pretty trees, cool shady walks, miniature waterfalls, and all his sort of thing combine to make it a most beautiful place. We passed a very pleasant afternoon in the gardens and got back to Cairo about 5.30pm. The train was crowded both going and coming and although we bought First Class tickets 3½ pt each way (about 9d) we were lucky to get standing room in the second-class compartments. The Egyptian trains have the corridor carriages. A passage way by which you can walk the whole length of the carriage and train; each compartment has its own door opening into this passage. The fares here are cheaper than in Australia but I don't know whether soldiers in uniform travel half fares or not. We travel half fare on the trams. It is a great joke among the boys when they are coming back to camp of a night broke to tell the train conductors to put their fares down to Kitchener. I don't think Kitchener would have much of his salary left at the end of twelve months if he had to settle the bill even although the fare from here to town is only about a farthing. I am enclosing a photo with this letter so I hope that you will get it safely. You will perhaps recognise your humble servant sitting and the other chap is a mate of mine who went to Barrage with me. He is postal orderly of the 1st Brigade in camp and had the honour of handing me your letter, and I am hoping that he discovers a lot more for me. He is 2266 Pt J Fletcher^{xxxviii} from Victoria, and in the photo his hair is snow white. Although he is pretty grey he is not quite so bad as all that. Appearances are often deceptive you know. I suppose you will think I have gone mad on the photo business, but I may say that was his suggestion and I left myself be argued into it. We often go into town together to pass away an hour or so away from the dirt and dust of the camp. What we patronise mostly is the picture shows when "Charlie Chaplin" pictures are on. Perhaps you haven't seen the redoubtable Charlie. He is very funny, a born comedian, and in his pictures, you simply have got to laugh till your sides rattle even whether you want to or not. He is having a great run in the movies here and is very popular.

We had a great night here last night, in the early hours of the morning it rained like blazes, just like a tropical thunderstorm. The dry dust absorbed the rain for a while, but when it got saturated the water began to lay about the surface, and after a while it started to run into the ten I am in. Some of

the chaps in the tent were roused up but I just folded the waterproof rubber sheet around me and slept profoundly on. This is the wettest year that has been experienced here for a long time. The rain has been something phenomenal. All the men sleeping in the huts got wet through, but for all that we were more or less thankful for the rain as it laid the dust. The ground is quite hard in the camp today, and although it has been blowing a good bit, we are not troubled at all with dust.

Everyone is waiting developments here. I believe some of our troops have already moved to an unknown destination. I think I will stop at the Base and keep this job until they get into action again. You have no idea of the number of men here now. A person begins to wonder where they all come from. I hope that they are successful in raising a new army of 50,000 men in Australia by June. There will be a lot of fighting before June. Uncle Jim^{xxxix} told me in a letter that he had informed the authorities in his card that he was ready to go. He has had a couple of tries to get away already. I may yet have the pleasure of meeting him over here in Egypt or France perhaps. I haven't run against Bert^{xi} or Keith^{xii} Smith. I don't know what either of them is in, or I would drop them a line. They might be among those that have already gone. There was a big escort picked in this camp to go back to Australia a few days ago. They were to take some undesirables back. There have been several escorts picked since I have been in this camp. I think I would get back on one if I liked to try, but I am not anxious. I didn't come away to go back before the job was finished. I suppose I will see enough of Australia when this blows over, although I must say it is the best place in the world.

Sorry to see by your letter that poor old Queensland was having a rough time, hope things have improved by now. Give your girl chum in Bananaland my best respects. If they only had a couple of days' rain there like we had last night, they would all be doing the Arck (sic) act. Remember me kindly to the old folks around. It will be getting cool there when you get this letter, but on this side, it will be getting hot as the proverbial hell. Trusting this finds you all quite well, and prosperity smiling broadly over the land. I must draw to a close my dear old girl.

Remaining your Loving Cousin Jack xxx

I wrote to Auntie last week when I got her letter of 24 January.

Overseas Base Ghezireh

9/4/1916

My Dear Nellie and Adare Household generally

Just a line to let you know that I am still floating about and a member of that glorious institution known as "The Army". What I want you to do is to address any letters which you may possibly write to me to

387 Sergt J Curran
2 Battalion
Overseas Base Ghezireh Egypt

I am getting no letters at all lately. The reason of this is because letters that are addressed to the Battalion go to France, and goodness knows where they will finish up. If you write to the Base here, and I do go well the letters can follow me. However, I am reconciled in a sort of a way and have made up my mind that I must do without news of you all for a long time but keep on dropping a letter now and again and of course, I will do likewise. Did you get my letters and photos also the parcel^{xlii} and bottle of scent that I forwarded to Adare. I don't know how long I will be in this camp here. I think the camp will be shifting before long to some other place. It is getting very hot here, and we have a lot of dust storms. The heat here seems to fairly burn you, and the glare of the sand and sky is very trying on the eyes. I suppose our boys will be going into action in France before long. I think I will try and get to France in another month or two when the real hot weather comes on in Egypt.

There is nothing startling to mention happening here. I am like a newspaper which is short of copy. I haven't been into Cairo for about a month although we are only about 3 miles off it. I have scarcely been out of the camp. A couple of us generally take a stroll around the Gheziriah Gardens for a couple of hours from 7 o'clock to 9 in the evening. This is the best part of the day here as it gets very cool and pleasant especially so after a very hot day. This finishes the day for us, another day closer to the end of the war. There are not so many soldiers knocking about as there were. Such a lot have gone to France. The business places will feel the loss of the troops in Egypt for no doubt they have had a terrible lot of money and made big profits out of us.

The irrigated country round here looks beautiful and green now. It is spring here and all the crops are springing up, and everything is green in the Valley of the Nile. The boundary between the cultivation and the desert is sharply defined. The desert begins where the cultivation leaves off. The hot wind comes off the desert at times just like a draught from a furnace. It seems to scorch and wither everything up.

This camp was inspected by Lieut Gen Watson this morning. He is out of the Indian Army, and has a lot of ribbons. I don't know what position he holds in Egypt. The Prince of Wales was supposed to come out, but he didn't come. He is in Egypt somewhere and has got promoted to a Staff Captain. Promotion comes fairly easy this war whether it is deserved or not.

I think I am losing my mate Joe Fletcher^{xliii}. You got our photo alright I hope. He is going to Australia on escort duty, I think in fact I was the one to get him the job I might tell you. I will feel rather lonely

without him as we were great mates and the best of friends. I will give him this letter to take with him to make sure that you get it, and don't forget to address letters to me to the Base whatever you do especially if you want me to get them.

Perhaps I may come back on escort myself before long or else going to France. It would be good to be back again for a short holiday, but it is war and everyone can't have things arranged for their own satisfaction can they. We must show the other side what they are up against.

Come the three corners of the world in arms
And we shall shock them
And nought shall make us rue
If Britain to itself do rest but true^{xliv}

Don't you think so. I do. Joe will get back about the beginning of winter. He suffers a little with rheumatism and the damp weather won't improve things for him, but all that will most likely disappear when he gets home, he is married.

What I want you to do is to write a good long letter when you get this and from what I can see it may be the only one I will get until you get this new address. You hardly do yourself justice in your letters. Even things which you over there consider trivial are interesting to us in away because it is the little things that tell, especially when on active service. ***Bullets are very small things but they play a mighty big part in a man's life if he happens to get in their way. Things that occur every day in your life interest us because they help us to remember you people all the better*** and imagine how you are all getting on.

I am writing this letter in fits and starts just as I get the inspirations. It is very hard to get inspiration the way things are situated. I will have to go out and look for some news before I write anymore. The heat makes one feel very languid. I think I will have to go in and have a look at Charlie Chaplin on the pictures one of these nights again. He is a very great favourite here in Cairo and about as good a picture as they screen in the comic line.

If ever you mention anyone who is over here you know give me their addresses that if they are anyway close I will be able to look them up. It is no use just mentioning a name. The Army is a fair sized thing and an individual man may not be found in a lifetime with his number and Unit added to his name. I am absolutely on the rocks now as far as copy goes, so will have to [...] I will have to quietly sink. I hope this letter finds you all well and everything flourishing around those parts as in the days of old. Remember me to the old folks around there. I trust fortune and prosperity is smiling sweetly on all. Well my dear girl, take care of yourself, hope you all well and in the best of spirits as I often try to be and sometimes succeed.

X Yours Jack xxx

(Mention of the heat so probably still in Egypt)

20/5/1916

My Dear Nellie

Just a line to let you know that I received your letter of February 11 a couple of days ago, also one from Bess which I have answered. I was very glad to get your letter as it was the first for over 3 months and I was beginning to think that I would get none at all. There is nothing much doing here. I have been bumped about from pillar to post lately and am anxiously waiting to get out of this place altogether. The heat is something terrible at times here. This place has been named "The Devil's Playground" and whoever named it wasn't far wrong, as I don't think hell would be much hotter or any more miserable. I haven't been doing much drill lately but will be on the it next week. I suppose we would all like to get away. I met a chap called Ern (?) Anderson^{xiv} over here the other day, Aunty will most likely know him. He only came over about a week ago, having left Sydney about 6 weeks ago. He was able to tell me how things were going and I had a great yarn with him. I haven't come across Bert or Keith Smith^{xvi} over here yet. I think that most likely they will have gone to France. I may have the good luck to bump them over there. I hope that by next Christmas at least the war will be over. There are a good few soldiers among the reinforcements who were sent home on sick leave. I have met chaps out of my own company. They say that they soon get tired of staying in Australia because from what they say the people have no time for the young chaps who linger behind and they give them a rough time. It is only fair that every able bodied young man should come and have a bash for his country and those that are near and dear to him. I am afraid that there are a good number who are still shirking their duty, but we can't afford to waste think thinking of them. I am not making much of a hand of this letter, but my attention is being drawn away time after time. The boys have been paid and there is much hilarity in the camp at the present time, some are singing, for all they are worth, others looking for stoush, some swearing lifelong devotion, and some of the veterans of Gallipoli giving lurid descriptions of the campaign on the Peninsula. Although the boys are a bit wild and round at times, yet underlying all this is the sense of true manliness, which brought them from Australia to fight for their country. I always get on well with them. I study their character and treat them accordingly. It is just on "lights out" now and I am writing this laying on my blankets ready to turn over and go to sleep, so am not in too comfortable a position as you will understand, we turn out at 4.30am every morning, but don't do anything in the middle of the day. As it is generally getting on toward midnight before we get to sleep you will see that we don't get much sleep. Of course, I only speak for my own tent. Well old girlie, I must close this meagre epistle trusting that it finds yourself and all hands at Adare still on deck and well as it leaves me. Remember me to the old folks around.

Your loving Cousin

Jack xxxxxxx

Postcard various pictures with soldiers, army camps and Stonehenge

10/6/1916

Perham Downs Camp

My Dear Peachy Blossom

Just a line to let you know that I am safe and sound in England. All the country is beautiful and green. It is like getting a glimpse of Paradise after the Egyptian deserts. The weather is cold considering that it is the beginning of summertime, and there is a good bit of rain. We were out for a march yesterday and got drenched. This is a big camp here. We are in huts and very comfortable. I am going to try and get leave to have a look around. The people are very sociable and kind quite a change from Egyptians. I will write again in a few days' time when things get running smoothly. Hoping all well.

I Remain, Yours Jack xxx

387 Sgt J Curran
1st NS Wales Training Battalion
No 2 Camp
Perham Downs
Andover
Hants England

21/6/1916
Perham Downs
Near Andover
Hants

My Dear Nellie

Just a short letter to let you all know I am still thinking of you. I wrote to Auntie since coming to England about a fortnight^{xlvii} ago also dropped postcards to Bess and yourself. Things are very quiet about these parts, there is nothing startling to report such as Zeppelin raids^{xlviii} or the like although the zeps have been this way once or twice. I am writing this about midnight being on guard at the A.I.F. Administrative Training Headquarters Bhurtpore^{xlix} Barracks Tidworth, so I am taking advantage to drop you a line. We are doing a fair amount of work starting at the very beginning and don't get a great deal of spare time. We get football and cricket going in our spare time. We have good football and cricket grounds near the Camp and can play from six in the evening until nine easily, as the sun rises early and don't set until about half past nine. The days are very long, although it is summer time the morning are quite cold. Today is the longest day. The summer this year has been exceptionally cold and wet. Everything is beautiful and green, and it is a pleasure to drill on the green grass after the Egyptian deserts. We go for a march occasionally. This weather is splendid for marching and the road are fine being lined with big elm trees or hawthorn hedges or something like this. All the wild clover, bluebells, buttercups and flowers of all descriptions are out in the fields making a beautiful picture. The roads are good for motoring and all that sort of thing. A great lot of girls do a lot of cycling here in the fine weather.

I haven't got leave yet but will very likely try for it in the next week and go to London or somewhere to have a look around. I don't know how long we will be kept here but I am not looking forward with much pleasure to putting the winter months in at the Front. Although it is summer here now still it is quite cold enough for the open air life.

We had Andy Fisher the High Commissioner^l here the other day but I did (sic) hear what he had to say as I had to go on piquet at the Tidworth Railway Station, and only caught a glimpse of him as he flashed past in the motorcar.

I am looking forward to getting a letter from you soon as I have had no letters since goodness knows when. You can write to the address that I put at the top of the letter. I may be in France or somewhere else when the reply comes but letters will be forwarded on. I must close now as I can't find much more to say and feel tired. Hoping this finds you all well as it leaves me and everything continues to flourish.

Remember me to the old folk around I often think about you and wonder what you all are doing in those parts.

Good night, pleasant dreams

Yours – Jack xxx

No 1 (7?) Camp
Perham Downs

Sept 7/16

My Dear Nellie

I haven't wrote to you for some time but don't think I haven't forgotten you, quite the opposite. I have been so busy lately that I haven't much time for writing. I am going so fast that I hardly have time to think what to do next. I am going from about 5 o'clock in the morning till about 11 o'clock at night so you will see things are not too slow in the Camp. I am still at the same old place. There have been a couple of drafts go away lately but I haven't been put on them, but may get away in a week or so. I don't mind the work I am doing now although the hours are so long, puts me in mind of rabbiting, especially now it is getting colder here. I can notice it getting colder every week and we get a good bit of rain and have an abundance of mud about to make things more pleasant. Tom Priest^{li} was in this camp but he went away with the last draft to France, he was anxious to get away from here from drill and guards and all that. I think that if I have to get out of the parade ground I will make sure and get away on the following draft as I am about tired of parade ground work, it does get sickening day after day.

I was up to London the other day on escort but didn't get much enjoyment out of it as it was a wet miserable day, and I was glad when we got back cold and wet. I brought twenty prisoners back safely without losing any which wasn't too bad although escort is a job I don't like for if any prisoner manages to escape the N.C.O. in charge of the escort is almost sure to be court martialled although it may not be his fault. I would like to have seen the Zeppelin raid on London. I haven't saw a zepp yet. We see plenty of aeroplanes about here they are up every day. There is an aviation school near here and the planes are always up.

I haven't got any letters lately but should soon get a letter or two from you addressed to this camp as I have been here 3 months. I have got one letter from Australia in reply to one I wrote from England so I on the lookout for more which should soon come along. The mail goes for Australia about every fortnight from here and I have just missed the last with this letter but it can't be helped. I am just writing this as I get the time. Since I came back from the hospital in London I haven't been out of camp excepting on one piquet to Andover and the escort to London. Andover is about 7 miles from here and a nice place. I am on duty from the time I get up till late at night, writing most of the time and marking up rolls etc. As I am writing our band is playing at the Officers Mess. We have a very decent band here. They play the battalion on to the parade ground of a day and off again when drill is finished. We have received a big draft of men transferred from the Light Horse or Lost Horse as we call them. I will write to you again soon when I get time I am thinking of a dozen things of what I got to do and all that just now, so I am not making a very good fist of it. Hoping this finds you all well at Adare as it leaves me.

Yours Jack xxxxxx

Sergeant J Curran

Remember me to all the old folks around there. I hope they are all well and everything prosperous about those parts as of yore.

No 1 Camp
Perham Downs

Oct 9th 1916

My Dear Nellie

I received a couple of letters from you a few days ago, and was pleased to hear from you. I wrote to Auntie last week enclosing a photo which I had taken in London when I was there on four days leave a fortnight ago. I had a very enjoyable time the worst part is coming back to work again. London is about 77 miles from here by rail and takes about 2 hours in the train. It isn't very nice of a night time because there are very few lights about on account of air raids. There was an air raid a couple of nights after I came back on leave. I should have liked to have seen it. The zeppelins were sighted from this camp about midnight a fortnight ago, but they didn't drop any bombs about here. People always get warned as far as possible when there is a raid on hours before. They are seen coming over the North Sea and word sent by wireless from the fleet to the authorities here and they get ready for them. Things are much the same as usual here. There are a good few men going to France lately about a draft per week. We are expecting a big batch of reinforcements to come in from Australia in a few days. I suppose recruiting has fallen away a good bit in Australia by this. I haven't seen an Australian paper for a good while. It will be a good job when they bring conscription to light and get a few of the deep thinkers. The boys are doing well in France, but they want plenty of support to keep going. I won't be able to write for three or four weeks from now Nell as I am going to a School of Musketry tomorrow and will be kept fairly busy drilling studying and writing. I rather like musketry and am glad I was one of the ones to be picked for it. There are 4 going from this battalion to the school, it will last about three weeks. We are having rotten weather here lately. It is getting colder and raining a little nearly every day. There is too much rain here altogether. It is quite a change from Egypt where we almost forgot what rain was while we were there. There is very few Australians in Egypt now, only the Light Horse on the Canal and the police staff and a few others knocking about. I think we have done with Egypt for good somehow. I have a good few letters to write and I want to get them away before I go to the School so I must cut this short.

Remember me kindly to the old folks around, and I trust this will find you all well at Adare, and everything flourishing. I am getting my letters better now. Keep on writing to the same address as before.

Yours Jack xxx

I wrote to Bess about 10 days ago and to Auntie last week.

School of Musketry

Bhurtpore Barracks
Tidworth

22/10/1016

Dear Nellie

Your letter of 21st August to hand when I went up to the camp last night and I was glad to hear from you. I am getting my mail pretty regularly now, as it comes direct. I also got some old letters last week including one with your photo in it. It was very nice and I didn't have any trouble in recognising you although you seem to have grown a lot. I was very glad to get the photo as you mentioned it in several letters that I have had from you. I also got a letter from Auntie written about the same time which I will answer later on. I am at present at this School of Musketry and have about 10 or 12 more days to do. We are doing a course of Musketry Instruction and also a course on the Lewis Automatic Gun which is very interesting, a combination between a machine gun and a rifle. I haven't run up against any of the boys you mentioned who are over here with the exception of Tom Priest^{lii} and he went to France over a month ago. I don't know how he got on once anyone leaves here there is very little heard of him. The next thing that occurs is that either you see him again wounded, or somebody tells you he is in hospital or in France going strong or that he has been killed. The Commandant of the School here was saying that he heard a rumour that the Australians would probably be withdrawn from the trenches during the winter months, and I think so too for I don't think our boys will be able to stand the cold as well as the rest. Even now we feel it severe here in England. We get white frosts and the cold winds blowing over the downs here nearly cuts one in two. There is a lot of wind here this month and next, and I can tell you Nell it is cold with a capital "C". Today is a cold bleak grey sort of day, just the weather before snow although I don't think there is snow here much before Christmas. Just imagine this sort of weather in the trenches with mud, rain, snow, wind and all sorts of other nice things not to mention Germans. There don't seem to be much possibility of it being over before Christmas either but we will see the end of it with patience perhaps this time next year, the outlook will be more favourable.

I was on leave to London during the last week and you will think perhaps I am rather greedy on the leave but I don't get half as much as some. Well it is this way, we don't know the minute we will be going across the other side to France and when we do get there, there is always the possibility of not coming back. So, that is the reason why we get so much leave as we can while we can. I will be able to tell you all about London or a little bit about it. It is a marvellous place in many ways. But all the same I wouldn't care to live there. There is too much hurry and bustle and crowds of people and traffic to dodge and all that sort of thing. It is a wonder to me that there isn't a lot of accidents of a night, because there are scarcely any lights at all, and what few there are shaded so that they can only throw light on a very small space. Somehow accidents seem to be avoided perhaps in lots of cases more by good luck than good management. You reckon you are having a lot of rain. Well I can assure you Nell that you aren't having it all. We are getting our share of it over here. There is too much rain in England especially in the winter months. I have to get up now, but will write again later. I have to write to Bess and Auntie yet, will do that this week or next. We don't get much time for writing letters here. There was a draft went away this morning from the camp for France. There are very few left there now. I trust this finds you all ok at Adare and everything flourishing.

From Jack xxxx

Remember me to Dick Burkeⁱⁱⁱ kindly and all the old folk about there including Jim Hyland^{iv}. I haven't struck Eddie^v yet.

Postcard booklet containing 8 postcards of the area/camp around the Perham Downs camp.

No 7 Camp
Perham Downs

10 Nov 1916

Dear Nell

Your letter of 10th Sept to hand yesterday also some old letters that have been chasing me about for months, and the look as if they had been travelling all over the world. I got a Field Post Card from Keith Smith^{vi} yesterday dated 1/11/16 and he was alright to date. I don't know exactly where he is or what his lot are doing but I am going to write to him tonight. I may be going over shortly, have Christmas in the trenches. It will be getting miserable over there now with the cold and rain. We are getting a lot of rain here lately and there is stacks of mud everywhere. I think we will be getting snow soon as it is getting a lot colder. I expect it is getting hot there now Nell. I think it would be a pretty good idea to have the hot weather in the winter time, over this way. I don't mind the dry cold but it is damp wet foggy days I don't like. I haven't run across any of the boys from around those parts but you know the army is a big institution and spread over a lot of country. I don't feel in good form for letter writing tonight Nell, I feel too restless and can't set my mind on to it. We are fairly comfortable here taking everything into consideration. We have a good stove in the hut and a plentiful supply of coal. I don't think the fire has been out night or day for the last fortnight. Do you think the war will be over this time next year? Well things don't look too bright do they. Thanks for the birthday card. I got it last night. It arrived in plenty of time. I forgot when yours was until you mentioned it in the letter. You are getting old Nell aren't you. I hope this find you all well at Adare.

Yours Jack xxxxx

The Salvation Army
With the Australian Expeditionary Forces
(Letterhead)

18 Mar 1917 (with Unit in France)

My Dear Nellie

Just a line to let you know all's well, and one is very fortunate in being able to say this in these days of lash on a large scale out here. At least the Huns seem to be yielding to our pressure and getting back home again and everyone is looking forward to the end of the business when we can all get back again and to use the old saying "cultivate the arts of peace". This retirement has put great heart into the boys and when we come in contact again I am sure that the Huns will feel the full power of our punch once more and I hope it will be a knock out, and la guerre fini^{lvi}. I think it will feel strange again when war is mafeesh^{lviii}, and people cease from killing one another, the atmosphere will be too tame and quiet, especially for those who have been engaged in the business for some time. I haven't been getting any letters lately but I console myself by saying that I won't have any to answer. This letter writing isn't too good as there is very little to say but plenty of time I don't think but not often a man feels in the mood to sit down and spill ink and use up paper. It is alright to get letters but writing in reply is quite another matter. I don't mind mixing things with the Huns / when a chap knows what to do but writing letters is quite another matter when a chap doesn't know what to say or if he does it and gathering all the information going in doing so. However victory looms large on the horizon, and we are going to win in a very short time if possible. But what the future holds of course no one can say but we must look on the bright side of things and prepare for the worst. Trusting you are all ok at Adare and the prospects looking brighter than ever and yourself in twenty two carat nick and all hands on deck and carrying on in the usual manner, as it leaves.

Yours Jack xxxx

ⁱ Richard Burke – also mentioned in letter dated 22 Oct 1916

- <http://soda.naa.gov.au/record/3170185/1>
- Died: Marrickville 13145/1932 parents John and Sarah
- Can't find a birth registration. Unnamed Burke registered at Bathurst 6173/1872 to John and Richard (War record states he was born at Orange)
- Died 13145/1932 John and Sarah Marrickville
- SMH: Mon 1 Aug 1932 p8: BURKE July 31 1932, Richard Burke of 25 Albermarle Street, Marrickville aged 65 years. Victoria papers please copy.

ⁱⁱ Yet to be identified

(possibly) William Mortimer Welsh residing at Neurea in 1913 Electoral Roll.

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- ⁱⁱⁱ Train which carries the gravel/stones that are laid between and beside railway tracks.
- ^{iv} Agnes Elizabeth born 1900 (sister to Nell) daughter of Cornelius Driscoll and Sarah Adeline Curran. Married Clifford B Williamson 1920.
- ^v Richard Burke see reference on first letter
- ^{vi} Helen Curran nee Robertson born abt 1843 Fife Scotland and died 12 Sept 1931 Molong NSW. Wife of Terence Curran married Newcastle 04 May 1869. Jack's grandmother claims NOK as she raised him from when he was 2 years old. (see war record)
- ^{vii} <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/166920891> "A Big Storm"
- ^{viii} <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/119152511> Carson mentioned in bridge building article (plus pipes being laid) Mr F J Carson, of the old contracting firm of Messrs, Carson, Carey and Simpson.
- ^{ix} SMH Fri 14 Aug 1914 p10
Kensington Racecourse:
The board of directors of Kensington Recreation Grounds Company, Limited, met yesterday, when it was unanimously decided to offer to the officer commanding the military forces the Kensington racecourse and properties for military purposes during the present war. The secretary is in receipt of a reply from Captain Page, gratefully accepting the offer, and the infantry go into quarts at the course on Tuesday afternoon next.
- ^x Helen Curran (nee Robertson)
- ^{xi} Richard Burke
- ^{xii} Agnes Elizabeth Curran 1900 – 1985
- ^{xiii} Unidentified
- ^{xiv} SMH Tue 8 Dec 1914 page 8 – "The Transports" article on the departure of the Fleet from Albany written by by A B Paterson, The Herald's Special Commissioner with the Australian Troops.
- ^{xv} No birth registration number has been located to date
- ^{xvi} Viceroy
- ^{xvii} https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hussein_Kamel_of_Egypt
- ^{xviii} Sarah Adeline Driscoll (nee Curran) mother of Nell and Bess and aunt to Jack.
- ^{xix} <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/15548265>
<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/reid-sir-george-houstoun-8173>
- ^{xx} https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Ismailia
Orange Leader Fri 8 Jan 1915 page 2 – War News – Kitchener's Six Weeks' Review
<http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/119907317>
- ^{xxi} <https://www.menahousehotel.com/history.html>
- ^{xxii} **Thomas Verran Hammond** born 28365/1893 son of William Charles and Mary Ellen Hammond, Granville NSW SN 406 A.I.F. 2nd Battalion shot 3 times in leg 11/7/15, transferred to Malta, leg amputated and died of wound 24/7/1915. Buried Pieta Military Cemetery Malta B.III.2.
(photo) <http://trove.nla.gov.au/work/165081429>
(headstone photo) <http://trove.nla.gov.au/work/165081429>
(Heros of the Dardanelles - photo) <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/15605376>
<http://soda.naa.gov.au/record/4256578/1>
- ^{xxiii} <https://faithinwartime.wordpress.com/2015/04/13/edith-gells-the-happy-warrior/>
- ^{xxiv} (Thomas Verran Hammond SN406 – see previous notes)
- ^{xxv} <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moudros>
- ^{xxvi} https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RMS_Aquitania
- ^{xxvii} [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RMS_Mauretania_\(1906\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RMS_Mauretania_(1906))
- ^{xxviii} Cornelius Driscoll (husband of Sarah Adeline Curran)
- ^{xxix} His uncle James Herbert Curran residing in Copeland
- ^{xxx} <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/ART00058/>
- ^{xxxi} Number illegible
- ^{xxxii} **Malcolm John Bernard Cotton** born 10289/1894 Cobar son of James Cotton and Ada Ruth Spark. SN 24 Captain A.I.F. 2nd Battalion KIA Pozieres 24 July 1916 aged 21 years. Mentioned on the Villiers-Bretonneaux Memorial France
<http://soda.naa.gov.au/record/3428878/1>
<https://rslvirtualwarmemorial.org.au/explore/people/188693>
<http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/122181014>
<http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/122170071>
<http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/123389443>
<http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/133890384>
<http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/133890384>
<http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/123395208>
<http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/123406319>
<http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/122170733>

xxxiii **Joseph Henry Winterbottom** born Minmi NSW 1852/1885 son of John Thomas and Janet Winterbottom. SN 575 Sergeant A.I.F. 2nd Battalion died of GSW to abdomen on 24 Jul 1916 aged 31 years at 3rd Casualty Clearing Station France. Buried Puchevillers British Cemetery II.A.43

<http://soda.naa.gov.au/record/8846676/1>

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/137106548>

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/133843299>

xxxiv I have nothing

xxxv Possibly pickets – a small line of soldiers placed on guard in a forward position.

xxxvi Did Jack fight at the Battle of Lone Pine?

xxxvii https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delta_Barrage

xxxviii Pte Joseph Gifford Fletcher

SN should read 2366

<http://soda.naa.gov.au/record/4007113/1>

Joseph Gifford Fletcher died 1921 (11020) Victoria parents given as Joseph Fletcher and Martha Nettleston Busst. Married to Ellen Rhoda Harvey in 1906 (259). No children recorded on his war record. Returned to Australia on escort duty in 1916.

xxxix James Herbert Curran (his uncle residing in Copeland NSW)

xl Herbert Clarence Smith (his cousin) son of Robert James Smith and Elizabeth Curran born Ref: 20936/1893 Maclean NSW. Brother to Keith Kallatina Smith KIA France 22/9/1917

<http://soda.naa.gov.au/record/1781555/1>

Wounded: <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/159092070> (2nd occasion gas)

Survived the war and died 1970 at Wallsend NSW

Married: Muriel J Ford at New Lambton 7084/1920

Divorced: Decree Absolute published in SMH Wed 8 Jun 1832 p8

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/16904201>

xli Keith Kallatina Smith, brother of Herbert Clarence and cousin of Jack. Born Wickham NSW Ref: 8540/1897 son of Robert James Smith and Elizabeth Curran.

KIA 20 September 1917 France

<http://soda.naa.gov.au/record/1785721/1>

20th Battalion

Remembered: Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial Panel 7 – 17 – 23 – 25 – 27 – 29 - 31

SMH Thursday 25 October 1917 page 8

NEW SOUTH WALES.	
KILLED.	
Lieut.-Col. ALAN HUMPHREY SCOTT, Wabroonga,	L
1/10/17.	P
Lieut. CHAS. THOS. McINTOSH HEATH, Merewether,	P
20/9/17.	P
L.-sgt. WM. ALFD. ROBERTS, Wollombi, 20/9/17.	P
Pte. ROBT. COLIN WATSON, Hornsby, 20/9/17.	P
Pte. HORACE WILKIE, Rozelle, 20/9/17.	P
Pte. RODERICK OSCAR WOOD, Mascot, 20/9/17.	P
A.-cpt. WALTER GEO. PREECE, England, 20/9/17	P
(prev. reported ill).	P
Pte. ARTHUR ROWLANDS, Tempe, 20/8/17 (p. r.	P
w., 2nd occ.).	P
Cpl. JOHN HAROLD WILSON, England, 20/9/17.	P
Pte. SYDNEY JOHN WARD, Petersham, 20/9/17 (pre-	P
viously reported wounded).	C
Pte. WM. HY. TWISS, Forbes, 20/9/17.	P
Pte. AUSTIN STANLEY TAYLOR, Woonona, 20/9/17.	P
Pte. THOS. SNELL, Woollahra, 20/9/17.	P
Pte. KEITH KALLATINA SMITH, Newcastle, 20/9/17.	P
(previously reported wounded).	P
Pte. HY. FABIAN SELLEY, England, 20/9/17 (pre-	P
viously reported s. wounded).	P

xlii Tapestry?

xliii See previous letter

xliv From Shakespeare's *King John*, 1595:

Now these her princes are come home again,
Come the three corners of the world in arms,

And we shall shock them. Nought shall make us rue,
If England to itself do rest but true.

^{xlv} Still to be identified.

^{xlvi} His cousins – see previous letters

^{xlvii} Arrived in England 1st week in June 1916?

^{xlviii} https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_strategic_bombing_during_World_War_I

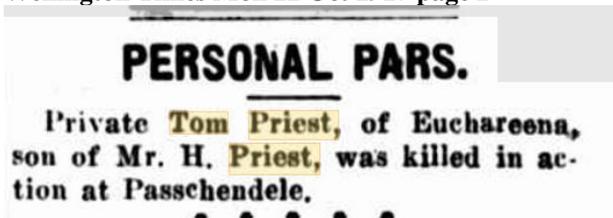
^{xlix} https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tidworth_Camp

ⁱ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrew_Fisher - PM of Australia

ⁱⁱ <http://soda.naa.gov.au/record/8023341/1> KIA 20 September 1917

Thomas E Priest 36721/1888 s/o Henry and Margaret registered Wellington

Wellington Times Mon 22 Oct 1917 page 2



Orange Leader Mon 22 Oct 1917 page 1

Stroud and E. J. Shindiafr.

Pte. Tom Priest, of Euchareena, has made the last sacrifice. He was a son of Mr. H. Priest, and was about 30 years of age. He met his death in the recent push at Passchendele.

United in marriage last week, Mr.

ⁱⁱⁱ See previous letter

^{liii} <http://soda.naa.gov.au/record/3170185/1>

Died: Marrickville 13145/1932 parents John and Sarah
? can't find a birth registration

^{liiv} Possibly James Peter Leo Hyland who later married Nell in Wellington (12320/1917)

^{lv} Edmond T A Hyland born 38318/1892 Wellington Parents James and Catherine M (brother of Jim)

<http://soda.naa.gov.au/record/6928723/1>

POW – letters with Jack's stuff

^{lvi} Cousin, son of Robert Smith and Elizabeth Curran

KIA 22/9/1917

<http://soda.naa.gov.au/record/1785721/1>

^{lvii} “la guerre fini” = “the war is over”

^{lviii} There is no more