

Lincoln Frederick Armstrong - Correspondence - Transcriptions

Son of George Armstrong 1852-1932

Born: 4th December 1893

Died: 3rd September 1918.

Died aged 24.

Canterbury Mounted Rifles 7/1184

Correspondence May 1915 - July 1918

Please Note: Some of Lincoln's letters contain language and terminology that reflect the attitudes and beliefs of its time. Some expressions may be considered offensive, racist, or inappropriate by today's standards. They have been preserved in their original form to maintain the historical integrity of the record.

We acknowledge the impact such language can have and encourage readers to approach this material with critical awareness of the social and cultural context in which it was created.

Letters transcribed as written and include punctuation and spelling errors.

Transcriptions:

Item No:	To:	Transcription:	Date:
Folder 1 AK:2025.20. 71	Mother	New Zealand Expeditionary Force Presbyterian Institute, Trentham Camp 2nd May, 1915 Dear Mother, After a long wait, I received your most welcome letter on Friday and find out that after all it is not your fault that I didn't get it sooner. When I sent you my address, I left out 6th Reinforcements and if any letter is not addressed absolutely correct the post office in camp always keeps it for about two or three days before they try to find the owner. I have been in a pretty bad way for the last week and some days I have felt inclined to ask the officers if I could pull out for an hour or two. Of course I should have gone to the medical officer but thought that I had better not take any risk, because in our squadron we have about 30 men more than are needed and if I had paraded with the sick the doctor might have thought it a good chance to put one man out. Anyhow, I am going to hang on till after Tuesday when we are to have our riding test, and after that, we will know how we stand. "I'll Litchwork mine."	2 May 1915

Today I think the whole of the men in the sixth reinforcements had to be inoculated (if that's how you spell it), and three in our lot fainted and about half the others like silly chumps went and lay down on their beds

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with the consequence that they feel bad and have been quite contented to stay there all the afternoon and ask each other what we have to go and have next Sunday spoilt for. Next Sunday, we have to go through the same business again, but it doesn't trouble me how often we have to face it, because so far I have not felt anything from it, only a bit stiff in the left shoulder. Brown told me to thank you for the caps and asked me if he should give one to Tompson, who is another of my tent mates, and who had the misfortune of losing his Mother about a week before coming into camp. Of course I know that I have only got to write home whenever I want anything of this kind so I told Brown to keep both of his and asked Tompson if he would like one. He said he would be much obliged, but Mother, if you send him anything remember he is a pretty big man, and I am sure he would be glad of anything at all, because I know for certain that he is getting no help at all. Last night was the first night's leave for the Sixth and those without uniforms were allowed to take advantage of it if they wore their overcoats all the time, so all the Akaroa mounted went into Wellington, thinking that it might liven

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us up a bit. It certainly didn't do me much harm but Maurice and Hammond are feeling pretty crook and are complaining of the same things that Brown and I are just getting over. Vern talks of coming here shortly, but if he takes my advice he will leave this soldiering game alone, because it is no winter sport for a chap like him. Nearly everyone in camp has a bad cold and you can believe that some of the cases the doctors get are pretty serious when they have ordered that every man must be given an extra blanket. For our meals we get stew twice a day and dry rations the other time so you can guess it gets pretty monotonous and we are looking forward to another trip to Wellington so as to have another change of diet. I suppose you think "by this letter" that I am getting tired of this life, but don't run away with that idea, but take my advice and stop Tizzard. Well Mother it is tea time "stew for a change tonight" so I must be going. Remember me to all at home and if you think that Ida or Win or any of them would like one of those photos that I had taken I will send them one if you give me their address, because I have six left.

Still the same,

		Merry England	
AK:2025.20.72	Mother	Mrs G Armstrong Blythcliffe Akaroa Canterbury. Trentham June 12th Dear Mother, Seeing that I have plenty of time this morning I thought I would write and let you know that while the other chaps are away I am in for a ripping time. There are only 15 of us left in the hut so we have only fatigue work to do, but I was lucky enough to have the storeman's job offered to me and I got quite a pleasant surprise when the Corporal in charge came up to me last night and told me that I would be acting Quarter Master Sergeant. Of course, I had not much work to do I only have to look after the stores for the men that are in my hut and of course face the men with a big broad smile when they come and ask me for candles or anything they want and address me as "Quarter" "more in a joke than anything of course". Horrigan came down to Lyttelton to see me off the other night so it cheered me up a bit. I spent nearly all day Tuesday with Mrs. Hill who of course couldn't do enough for me, but I didn't see Mr. Hill. Well Mother this is only a note to let you know that I am perfectly happy and am again quite settled and am writing soon. Link.	12 June 1915
		<i>N.B: Following letters from Troopship:</i> <i>HMNZT Tofua</i>: 14 Aug 1915, as HMNZT Tofua #28 she was placed in convoy with HMNZT Willochra 27. They departed New Zealand with the 6th reinforcements, New Zealand Expeditionary Force, a total of 2,363 troops for Egypt, where they arrived on 19 Sep 1915.	
AK:2025.20.73	Mother & Father	At Sea 21/8/1915 My Dear Mother & Father, When you receive this letter I suppose you will be a little bit disgusted with it but to tell you the truth I don't know what to write about. All our letters have to be censored and we have a list of things (of which we are to make no mention) posted up, and have to leave our letters open. We have been at sea exactly a week today and so far the trip has been almost perfect, only one day the sea was a little bit rough. As a rule I am a bad sailor, but	21 August 1915

		this trip, up to now, has hardly made any difference to me, as I can eat and sleep well, and I think I could sleep more than ever if I got the chance.. All the Akaroa boys except Hammond and Tom McGuire are enjoying the trip and haven't been sea sick very much. Hammond has been pretty crook and has as yet only had one square meal, and I think has only undressed himself once, when going to bed. When talking to him yesterday, he told me that he didn't think life worth living and said that he often wishes he had left England to her doom and stayed at home. Of course Tom was bad when he came on board and has been in the hospital ever since, so I don't know how he is getting on. Everyone on board seems to be well satisfied, especially with the tucker, which is the best we have struck yet, and I think if they keep it up to its present quality, we will Page 2 be getting as fit as fiddles. Because as I suppose you know we are kept at drill just the same and have physical drill every morning. I thought that by this time we would be getting into a warmer climate, but if anything it is colder here than in N.Z. When we got away from the pier at Wellington our mail was given out and it was very nice to know that we were thought of by so many people, who sent telegrams to us expressing their best wishes for our safe return. I think that every Akaroa boy received a telegram from Mr E.E. Le Lievre and postcard from each of his daughters. The eatables that you sent aboard come in very useful, but it has been the work of art to keep them out of sight, for if they were spotted it's a dead cert that it would be the stone end of them. Maurice hadn't opened his box when it was found and thrown overboard, but as good luck had it the chaps that were told to throw it overboard, had the sense to open it and save a tin of honey, that was in it. Maurice doesn't know what the box contained and is in a great state about it, and I was thinking that perhaps he wouldn't like to let his Mother know, after her going to the trouble to fix it up so nicely and even have it put on board for him, so it might be as well to keep it xx Page 3 We all look as if we are going to serve time in a gaol now, because we have been ordered to get our hair clipped off, before tomorrow, and Maurice was taken out so as to show the others how it was to be cut. We are in for a real good time on this ship and I don't know how we will be able to take to work again. Tomorrow we are going to have sports on board and a fairly good programme has been drawn up, so we ought to get some fun out of them, and besides it will break the monotony a bit. So far we have only	
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		passed one ship and have only seen land once, for about three hours, so you can guess that in a way a change will be very much appreciated. Well, my dear people I have just been told that our mail closes tomorrow at mid-day, so as I have a few more letters to write before then I must ring off for this time, but must tell you that I have everything I want and am quite comfortable, and am still in the very best of spirits. Hoping that everyone at home is feeling the same as I do and trusting that everything is going on alright. I Remain Your loving son, Lincoln Armstrong	
AK:2025.20.74	My dear people	10/9/1915 Troopship My Dear People, It is over a fortnight ago since we have seen any land, so I can assure you that we are anxiously waiting to strike another Port. Not that we are tired of this sea journey though, because taking the trip right through it has been almost perfect, and as we can always find something to do, time seems to fly. Since leaving our last port, I have not once been sick, so I have been able to take part in all the fun. It is fairly hot now, so we have had to stop our dancing on the deck, but our musicians are getting stronger and every night give us a concert. We have quite an orchestra on board, consisting of three fiddles, a flute, a cornet and of course a piano, but the worst of the business is that our concerts stop at about 7:30pm because at that time most of the lights are put out. It is only lately that the lights have been put out but of course it doesn't make much difference to us because we can always go into the mess room "where all the blinds are down" and play cards. When at our first Port of call we couldn't help noticing the difference in the people to the New Zealanders. Page 2 At Sea Now I must tell you that the people there made it up to give us a dance, and as it was told us about that there would be a bit of a hop, a bang of a	10 Sept 1915

crowd of us turned up. They didn't open the doors of the hall till nearly 9 o'clock, and when the thing did get started you can imagine how disappointed we were when we found only about 15 girls there to dance with. This wasn't so bad, but after we had had two dances, we were asked to clear the hall, and all who wished to dance would have to pay 1/- admit. They seemed to stand off us a bit and even when we were marching through the town only the people working in the shops and offices came out to have a look. We were disappointed in the town itself too, considering we expected to see a big place, but found it to be a small place, which I heard some strangers comparing with Akaroa. One thing though I have missed is that the Mayoress gave a bit of a spread in the Town Hall, but with a mob like there was there, of course it didn't go very far. In fact we had the whole town eaten out at about 5 pm.

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On my bed

You can see that my opinion of that part of the world is very poor and if what we saw was a sample of the country, I wouldn't like to live there.

Hammond and Ralph Coe have had a crook run all the way and right up till now neither of them has done a tap of drill. Since leaving our Port at call they have been in the hospital for about a week, and when Hammond came out he was very downhearted and miserable and told me he would give £1000 to get his discharge as he said that if he were at sea all his life he would be sick all the time. The silly beggar seems to have given up altogether, he would get right if he bucked up a bit, because he eats like a horse when we take tucker up on deck for him, but he is frightened to shift; he gets in a place first thing in the morning and stays there all day. With Coe I think it is more than seasickness as the poor beggar says he has never been like this when traveling before.

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Crossing the Line

We have had some great fun out of our sports lately, especially on Wednesday 8/9/15, when all the finals were held. Each squadron held its sports separately, so as to get the best men to compete in the final on the last day.

On Wednesday, we were given a whole holiday (I suppose in honor of crossing the line) and spent a great part of the day in finishing our sports;

		the rest was finished in ducking everyone we could find on the ship. Nearly all the afternoon was spent at ducking because I suppose you know that it is always the custom to duck a man when crossing the line for the first time, but with us, it was not a question of whether he had been over it before, or not for as long as we saw a man in dry clothes, it was quite sufficient. We didn't have to duck many officers as they joined in the fun and ducked each other. There was a hose going on each deck and when we were stopped from using them, we sat the victims in a tub, and drew water up from the sea to throw over them. The beggars wet me through five blooming times. Page 5 Hurrying to catch the mail By jove Mother that was thoughtful of you putting that singlet and shirt in my swag, as I think without them it would be a trifle uncomfortable. I could have sold the shirt a thousand times over, but money wouldn't buy it this weather, as I find it quite hot enough just with the shirt on. These days often remind me of a snorting thrashing day as I think it would yield well. The worst part of our journey was the burial service of one of the Otago Infantry men from the other ship. Both ships stopped dead while the ceremony was gone through and I can tell you it cast quite a gloom over us for the rest of the day. Our troopship has quite an honour attached to her as she is the first N.Z. Transport to leave a port of call without an absentee. The cake you sent with me last until about three days ago, as you can see that I made it last as long as I dared. The trip seems to be agreeing with me as I am getting fatter than ever. Page 6 I can hardly see out of my eyes and the other day when taking part in the sports I might have done some good, if I could have lasted it. In the potato race I won one heat ran a decent heat in the semi-final but in the final got run out, I was third and completely done. The men with whom I ran a dead	
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		heat was the Squadrons representative. Well, my dear people, I must close. I remain Your loving son, Link Armstrong	
AK:2025.20. 75	My dear people	At Sea 16/9/15 My Dear People, Since writing to you last we have struck another Port, but as we arrived there late on the 14th and left again next morning, we were (much to our disappointment) not allowed on shore. Our canteen has run out of stuff, so you can guess that we would like to have landed and picked up a good feed or two and most of all a good cool drink. However before leaving on Tuesday morning the natives came out in their little boats with all sorts of goods, which were sold like hot cakes, but of course, they couldn't bring half enough. These natives are the greatest rogues I have ever seen (they are the biggest crooks unhung) and, as they were not allowed on board, all their stuff was pulled up in baskets from their boats, so you can see they had everything their own way. They are a pretty cute lot too and wouldn't sell anything unless the money was sent down first, so of course it was only a trifle if a man sent half a sovereign to get goods that they were selling for about 2/-, and got no change back. Page 2 Red Sea The beggars always asked for about three times the value of an article and of course we didn't bite, so they always ended up by saying "You no want" "How much you give?" and the goods were generally sold at our own price. I know I got a box of 50 cigars, that they valued at 10/- for 2/-, while others were giving as much as 5/- for the same cigars. It is hard to explain what a job we had with them, and how hard it was to get anything from them, because besides the natives, we had a great scramble to get hold of a rope, and draw their attention, I think we were about six deep. It is only a few days agon since I wrote, but I thought that as we reach our destination, in either two or three days' time, I would drop you a line, and let you know that I am still putting on beef and am still in the best of	16 Sept 1915

		health and spirits. Another thing that I meant to mention in one of my past letters is that I have enough socks and handkerchiefs to last me for about half a century, and it is almost useless sending any more for a good while, because I think that the old Sixth will go to the front almost immediately. Well of course if this is so, we will only be able to take a change with us and leave all the other stuff at the base. As far as my equipment is concerned I have every comfort, and am lucky enough to be able to say that so far I haven't lost a thing (not even a piece of cake, the last of which I saw when crossing the line). It does one the world of good to do this trip as it gives us a taste of a hardship or two, and also, after seeing what little we have already seen, makes us think what a grand little place N.Z. is. It seems a darned lot of rot to me having our letters censored even now, because by the time this mail reaches you, you will know the names of the places at which we called. Anyhow my letters might be missed so I will give it a go, and tell you that our first port of call was Albany and the second was Aden, both of which we have a very poor opinion. Well I must close now as I haven't much time before the mail closes, and I have to write a few more if I can manage it, so must ask you to be satisfied with these few miserable lines as they are only written to let you know that everything in the garden is lovely, and I am comfortable in every sense of the word. I remain, Your loving son, Link [Note on the side] I don't think anyone could wish to have had a better trip than we have had, but I think a little improvement in the tucker and canteen line wouldn't be out of place, but I suppose the best that can be done for us has been done. Anyhow we are not much the worse for the trip, other than being very soft.	
AK:2025.20.76		Not transcribed	26 Sept 1915
AK:2025.20.77	My dear people	Letter from: Zeitoun [Egypt] Sunday 4/9/15 <i>[N.B. Date cannot be correct. The troopship Tofua arrived in Egypt 19 Sept. More likely to be 4th October 1915.]</i> My Dear People,	3 [Oct] 1915

We have been here for a fortnight now and are still no further ahead, and there doesn't seem to be any chance of a move for some time to come. It looks as if we are here for the winter, and I am beginning to worry about getting snowed in. We have all been given our little jobs, and are settling down for a good long time here. It is a great show, about here, where the camp is, there is nothing but sand, wherever we go, and it is only a shame how it plays up with us for a start. Maurice and I have struck I've a good easy job, for all the time we are here because we volunteered to look after all the sick horses on the C.Y.C. lines. All we have to look after, so far, are ten horses, none of which are any bad, and the best of it is that the Vet does all the doctoring up, so really all that is left for us to do, to them is the grooming and the exercising. Of course if a horse gets pretty bad we will have to take it in turns sitting up and looking after it of a night, and it is on this account that we are exempt from all fatigue work, picquet, and guard. "Pie on eh what". As soon as our work is finished we can always take a stroll down to Zeitoun "about five minutes walk."

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but it is only a small place, only we can get almost anything we want there. I have never been in a camp where there were so many canteens (wet ones included where they sell nothing but rotten beer) and tip top dining and afternoon tea rooms, where ice creams are always on tap, so you can guess that we are living right up to the mark, and making the best of a bad job. When all the new squad left here all the boys under the age of 21 were left behind, and among them was Owie Ferris, who has now joined us and is in our tent, so even if the others go away soon I will still have an Akaroa mate. All the Akaroa chaps seem to be split in this camp, because Brown works in another Regiment, Handisides has been made a cook and Hammond I don't know what has become of him. "He is a dark horse".

Since I have been here I am afraid that I have been rather slow, because so far I have hardly seen anything, barring Cairo. Well, the other day Maurice and I went down to see the Virgins Well, but we had such a flying trip that we didn't have time to see all that was to be seen, so now that we will be here for a good time, we will go again. What we went for

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mostly was the donkey ride. We have to see the pyramids, the Zoo, Old Cairo and the Museum yet, so you can see that we have some eye openers to come yet. The thing that strikes me as being very funny about here is

		the way in which the people carry out their milk supplies, because they lead their cows about the streets, and milk them at their customer's door and then on to another and so on until the cow has given all her milk, then they take her home and get another one. Although there is nothing but sand all round this camp, there is some of the best land in the blooming world, not far away, and it would do you good to see the maize that grows on it. I should say it grows from ten to twelve feet high. I understand that this good land is all up along the River Nile, and stretches to about 15 miles on either side and of course is hundreds of miles long. When we came here first some of our mates (from the fourth and 5th Rein) told us that we would get more easy news from the N.Z. papers than we would get about here, so if you were to post a paper or two as soon Page 4 as this letter reaches home, they might reach me before I leave here, because I think, because of the mistake, they have made in my age, I will be here till after December anyway. "I will perhaps have my Christmas dinner here, worst luck." We see a good bit of the other British soldiers about here. "Australians and the English Kids" especially, and by jove, the Australians are fine fellows to talk to. They seem to be bigger than the New Zealanders, but they think the big world of us and say that they would go anywhere with the N.Z.'s, but they run the "English Kids" (as they call the Territorials) down to the ground. They say that Kitchener would have done far better if he had left them at home. Well I will have to go and see to my horses now so must close for this time, hoping to have more news next time. By the Bye Mother, when Vern was leaving he told me to get something and send it to you for him so I got a C.Y.C table centre for him and it was dated the very day that he left here so I hope it reaches you safely. Hurrah for the present. Still a bit downhearted. England	
AK:2025.20.78	My dear people	Zeitoun [Egypt] Saturday 15/9/1915 My dear People, Here we are at the end of another week and still I have hardly any news, but thought I would drop a line to let you know that I am still going on first rate. Some of the chaps in camp here had letters yesterday; from their friends who went away in our new squadrons, but didn't get much news because their letters were so heavily censored. All they were allowed to	15 Sept 1915

mention was that they were having a good time and were all well, so it looks as though they are still at Lemnos Island. Vern said that he would write to me, as soon as he got the chance, but I have not yet received word from him. Anyhow it might be a year before a chap gets his letters here because it seems to be too much trouble for the lazy beggars, in the post office, to sort the mail. Fancy being here for a month and without receiving a single letter, there must be a mistake somewhere, I believe all our mail goes on to the Dardanelles first, instead of being sorted here on the way. One chap here, who is back from the front, was telling us that we might go about six months, without a letter, and then perhaps not get one, because he said, that once he had been away from N.Z., he knew of five cakes that had been sent to him, and not one has come to light.

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Last night when we were sitting in our tent having a smoke, we got a big surprise to see "G" Spooner come along. He has been to the front for three weeks and is back here because of some sickness, which he said has kept him in one of the hospitals here for about two months. He showed us some slight wounds he had received from shrapnel shell, but they didn't have much effect on him, as his arm has only a few marks on it, and the knock he got on the head can't be seen now. He was telling us about the way he was treated in the hospitals, where he said he did not receive any of the benefits, for wounded soldiers, which were provided for by New Zealanders. He said that all he has seen of the Lady Liverpool's fund was three lollies (not the tins, he said), and they were given to him after taking medicine. As for a little luxury, I understand him to say, that for that, about two shillings out of their pay was allowed now and then. It seems a funny thing after New Zealanders responding so freely towards helping our wounded, that they should not get anything out of it. "G" does not look well at all, but he is still very game, and expects to be able to go back to the Dard's in two or three weeks' time. He had heard all sorts of rumors about his brother

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Ted, and said, that he would very much like to know what really had become of him, so I took him over to the Y.M.C.A. where we found it on a list that E.J. Spooner was missing. Sunday, 16th. My luck all over, as I was trying to get all my writing over yesterday, so as to be able to have half a day off today, but was just in the middle of this letter when the Sergeant came along, saying that another horse had taken bad, and that I would have to go out and help the vet. Maurice and I had an all night sitting with the brute, the third horse this week, the first two gave up the ghost. This afternoon I was talking to another Peninsula man, "Sergeant Major "Len"

		Parkinson", who has also been back here in one of the hospitals for some time, and who has been lucky enough, not to receive a wound. Old Parky is just the same as he was when I knew him in the C.Y.C, (a happy go lucky sort of man), and he tells me he didn't know what they were doing, keeping him here so long because all he was doing was eating his head off. Well, I must close now, because I have one or two more letters to write yet, and time is flying, so trusting that you are the same as myself, free from worry and have every comfort. I remain, Your loving son, Link "Merry England"	
AK:2025.20.79	Dear Old Dawson [Bert]	Zeitoun [Egypt] Dear Old Dawson, Here it is Saturday night again and of course as per usual I have left all my correspondence to the last minute, and this time I have a big mail to send, because there is talk of us getting away any day now, and I will have to get all my letters and Christmas Cards away, while I have the chance. "I am a silly beggar by hang I am blooming well mad". Yesterday news came round that 45 per cent of the fellows left behind here, to look after the horses, would have to go be ready to go away with only twenty four hours notice, and that extra niggers would be put on to look after the horses. Well, it seems to be a healthy rumour because today a big mob of fresh niggers were brought in, and tomorrow I believe still more are coming. When we first came here, there was only one nigger to a dozen horses, but tomorrow we will have one to three horses, and then it will be an easy job for seven soldiers to look after a stable of over two hundred horses, where now we have over thirty to do it. Nearly every day lately a big mob of Australians or New Zealanders leave here, for Lemnos Island, where it seems to me, they are preparing for a bit of a go at something, either a last go at the Dards or as the rumour goes a bit of a slathering up in Solonika. Anyway, wherever they go I would like to be with them Page 2 because they must have a good many thousands of Colonial Troops there now, ready for a "do or die rush," and it looks as if there will be something doing, and something that a man will be proud to say that he has taken part in. Since we have been over here we have only received one mail, and that left N.Z. a month after we did and got here yesterday. I received letters	23 Oct 1915

from Mother and Father and I can tell you they put fresh life into me altogether , especially when I heard that another little "England" had come to light, because it is very comforting to know that even if I do get snookered, my name won't be forgotten. Of course it won't be any good Joe calling the youngster Link, without giving him my good old nickname, and I only wish I had one of Fatty Ferris' pigeons here to send home and tell him about it.

The last letter I received from you was at Trentham, just a few days before I left, and as it was a good one, giving me plenty of good advice, I thought I would keep it so lined my blooming hat, which was a bit too big, with it. It struck me the other day that it was there so I took it out and read it, and it was then that I realised how true it was that the old people would be worrying about us, wondering where we were, and how it would comfort them to get our letters regularly.

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Well old sport since I have been here I have made it my business to write home every week, and you can believe me, that I will continue to do so as long as I am able.

You must excuse these rough and ready few lines, because I have a lot of letters to write, as I am going to try and drop a line to every one of the family before I go away, and will have to get them all away to catch Monday's mail.

I can't tell you how Fern is getting on as I have not heard from him since he left, but you can have the satisfaction of knowing that up to now I have enjoyed this soldiering life and besides enjoying every comfort and being in the best of spirits, I have never felt more fit in my life. In fact, I am keener and more ready, to do my little bit now, than I was when I left N.Z.

Wishing you, Mill and Lindsay a Merry Christmas and a happy and peaceful New Year.

I remain,
Your Loving Brother,
Link "Captain" England

AK:2025.20.80	My dear people	Zeitoun [Egypt] Zeitoun Camp October 24th 1915 My Dear People Just a few more lines, so as to keep up my weekly correspondence with you, and to send you my heartiest Christmas greetings, for although a trifle early, I must snap the chance before I am on the move. We have received word that we may have to leave here any day now, with only 24 hours' notice, but since then another rumour has come along, that instead of 45 per cent of us having to go, only 75 men out of the whole lot are wanted, and that they are mostly men who have been to the front before, and have got over their sickness. They say that these men are wanted to put in among the mounted men who have gone away, so as to steady them and help them when they get to the trenches. Still on the other hand the first tale seems to be a healthy one, because a lot more niggers have been put on with the horses and where, we only had a nigger to twelve horses when we first came here, we now have one to three horses. You see, it seems ridiculous to have eighty of these black beggars and about 30 New Zealanders in a stable of 200 odd horses. Another thing too that makes me think that we are going away Page 2 is that the other day when I was having a chat with Lieutenant Birdling, he was telling me what a pity it was for Vern and I not being able to get away together. However he said we may have to go away very shortly, and as all these new Squadrons will have to stay on Lemnos Island for some time to finish their training, we will in all probability join them and go on to the front with them. Of course this was my chance to tell him that even if most of C. Squadron did go away, I wouldn't have much chance of being in the mob, owing to a mistake, being made by the men in the ChCh defence office, in putting my name down as being under 21. He is a real white man is "Birdie" and when I told him this he said it is jolly bad luck, but I will do all I can for you. No doubt it is he who got my name put on the list, and not only mine, but Maurice and Owie are going too. It is a sort of an honour to be picked in the 75 considering our Squadron is over 120 strong. Another rumour going about now is that the men who were picked to go are going mounted, and are probably going to Solonika after a little bit of mounted work here. The paper magazine I am sending you was written for the Mounted Troops of the Sixth Reinforcements, and contains all our little jokes, and	24 Oct 1915
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		Page 3 gives you an idea of our pleasant little trip over in the Troopship Tofua. If Vern has already sent you one, I would like you to send mine on to Win, but I would like you to keep one, because if we are lucky enough to get back, they would be nice to have to remind us of our good times. The thing I want to reach you most of all is my little Christmas present a blooming tablecloth I think; perhaps it won't suit your room very well, but I thought it a more sensible present than any other thing I saw. I will try to send it with this mail, but if I can't I will post it for sure next week. By jove I nearly went mad yesterday when I received letters from both you and Father, as they were the first letters to come to light after a long wait of nine weeks. I don't know if there are any more on the way for me or not, but the ones I got were posted on the 12th and 15th of September, exactly a month after we left. Elsie's Akaroa Mail too was most welcome, as I was able to send it round to all my mates, who had not received any mail. Fancy having a little substitute in Akaroa, it makes me feel highly honoured. Well my dear people I must hurry on because I must try and drop a line to everyone of the family this Page 4 time, as I may not have many more chances of sending them my Christmas greetings so wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Peaceful New Year. P.S. I have not heard from Vern yet, but I am told that he is still on Lemnos Island. I couldn't get a decent Card and what I did get all had the same writing on them. I remain, Your Loving Son, Link	
AK:2025.20.81	My Dear People	Zeitoun Camp Sunday 31/10/15 My Dear People, Here it is Sunday again, and still we are no further ahead (in regard to getting away) than we were this time last week. Every day we look for our marching orders, but they haven't come to light yet, although we have	31 Oct 1915

		been served out with our kits and water-proof sheets. When on Church parade this morning we were told by the head man of the camp, that we would be going away very soon now (as soon as they could get us transport at Alexandria for us), and he took the opportunity of delivering his farewell speech and giving us a few hints. The day we leave here will be a happy one for us, as somehow, this lazy life and rotten climate is no good to us and I think will be the death of a few of our fellows, if they don't hurry up and shift us out. There must be about a quarter of our chaps in the hospitals now, with all sorts of complaints. You see here nearly every night we get a very damp and cold fog, which is followed with a dusty hot day, so can you wonder why it is that we are so anxious to get away. Of course too there is a chance of picking up our mates, who left here some time ago, and who we still expect to be on Lemnos Island, it would be just the Page 2 thing if we could strike them and go to the front with them. Maurice and I lost our job two days ago and as we have not been told to take another one on, we are just taking things easy, and will continue to do so until they come and dig us up. Since writing last I have received another letter from Mother from Nelson, and two more Akaroa Mails, so you see lately we have been getting a little bit more news. The Akaroa Mails get a good spin, as all the Akaroa chaps come down to our tent to have a look at them (they are rushed), we have Dick Hammond, Hardisides and Brown all paying us a visit when the 'mail comes'. By jove I will look forward to getting that Christmas cake, but somehow I have my doubts about seeing it, because one of the Main Body men was telling me that he has had a few cakes sent to him, but so far only one has come to light (hat one since Mr Rhodes has been over here). He said he is pretty well sure that all cakes, and things like that, go to the hospital, instead of being forwarded on to the men, but surely Mr. Rhodes will fix these sorts of things up. Some of our mail must still be missing because we have not received anything that was posted in August yet, and surely there must have been one or two letters written then, considering we left on the 14th. Well I will finish this letter tonight, because we are going to sneak out of camp this afternoon and have a look round the Zoological Gardens. Page 3 We had a great time this afternoon, taking things right through, because after breaking camp and getting to Cairo, we thought we would get a	
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		move on and see as much of the gardens as we could, so instead of waiting for a tram, we hired a cab (driven by one of these black rooks). He said the charge would be 2/- for the three of us, so thinking this was very reasonable, we hopped in but got a big surprise when he wanted to drop us at the Museum Gardens, which are about half-way to the ones we wanted to go to. Owie and I got out and threatened to knock his head off with our walking sticks if he didn't go on, and would have done something desperate, if another New Zealander hadn't come along and told us that the usual cab price for the Zoological Gardens was about 6/-. However, we wouldn't give him more than another shilling, which at last he agreed to take. The beggar was bent on beating us so took us to where there is one of these swinging bridges, which he told us was only a little way from the gardens and would be open for traffic in about five minutes' time. Well, we let him go, and much to our sorrow, because we had to wait for about an hour before it was swung round, and when we did get across, we found that we still had about another mile and a half to go, and had to Page 4 walk half-way in the blazing sun before we could strike another cab. We were well rewarded for all our trouble though for when we got to the gardens we saw nearly every different kind of animal under the sun, looking in the pink of condition and like the grounds beautifully kept. Among the things we saw were two pontoons that were captured from the Turks on the Suez Canal, and a little kangaroo, that was given by the Australian troops to the Museum. There are a lot of things I would like to mention but I have not time this trip (because when we came back, Maurice and I found that we were on horse piquet), so I will have to get ready. The latest news is that we have to parade in full marching order tomorrow afternoon, so it looks as though we will be leaving Egypt for sure on the 2/11/15. Hoping that all at home are well and that you have received all my little presents. I remain, Your Ever Happy England	
AK:2025.20.82	My Dear People	[Back of postcard] My Dear People, I could hardly leave here without letting you know, so as it is only two days ago since I wrote, I have hardly any news. This time we have had straight out marching orders for 5/11/15, but where we are going to I don't know. There are only 300 New Zealanders leaving altogether too small a mob I	4 Nov 1915

		should think to send to the Peninsula, so probably they are sending us as an advance guard somewhere, probably to Salonica. I am glad to be going as this Egypt is a rotten hole for sickness, I think about 8 out of C Squadron are being sent back to N.Z. temporarily unfit. I am writing this in a hurry and am naturally a bit excited. Don't worry about me as I am just in the right fettle and will dodge all the hail stones I can. [Front of postcard - handwritten over the image of Egyptian soldiers marching in Mansourah - some text unclear] "I am sending home £1 for which I have no use so you can do what you like with it, buy Christmas presents for Teddy & the Young England, or if you think I should give it to my namesake for a birth present. We have just heard about having to go, so I am in a hurry get out and buy some things that I might require. Owie and Maurice wish to be remembered to all at home. We are a happy trio. [All boys to write every week]. England	
AK:2025.20.83	My Dear People	Minnewaska November 10th 1915 My Dear People, It is nearly a week ago since we left Zeitoun and here we are still on the troopship at Lemnos Island. We arrived here three days ago, and of course we are disappointed at not being allowed to land here, before this, seeing that there is a chance of Vern and the rest of our mates still being on the Island. Now that we have got this far, we are not certain what is going to become of us, whether we will go straight on, or land here for a while. We all hope to go into it now, that we are fit, instead of doing any more training, as a little excitement will break the monotony a bit. From Alexandria we were mixed up with Australians and Tommies and had a real good trip all the way. There are so many of us on the ship that of course a little drill or exercise is out of the question so I suppose you can guess how stale it is for Page 2 us at present, with nothing to do but sit about the decks and smoke. By jove, these Australians are hard doers, they get up to all sorts of tricks, and keep us N.Zers alive and in the best of spirits, with their jokes. When in the train going from Zeitoun to Alexandria, we had the best fun with them,	10 Nov 1915

because at nearly every station on the way there would be a number, of these little niggers, selling fruit and other stuff, but it appears as though the Australians don't buy, or else are stoney broke, because as soon as the train stopped about a dozen of them would dart out and grab the fruit, forgetting to pay of course. Some of the niggers looked as if they had been at the same game before, because they stood back a bit with their goods, and were ready to run, but the Australians would chase them till they caught them. At one station there were a lot of trucks, full of bags of 'pea nuts' and dates, and as soon as the chaps spotted them, they were

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at them in about two hits, our chaps taking part too. About half of them filled their hats with the pea nuts, but one Australian got hold of a bag full and threw it out of the truck and, with the help of two or three others managed to get it into our train, and drag it right through leaving a big lot on the floor of each carriage. Another cove got hold of a big basket full of the dates and brought them up alongside the train so as to let the fellows help themselves.

Since we have been anchored in this decent little harbour we have seen no less than four troopships (loaded with troops) leaving for the front, and I believe the N.Z. Sixth Infantry were aboard one that went out yesterday, so of course I have been wondering if the Sixth Mounted will be long after them. You know, I hope they have not gone yet, because Vern and the Akaroa chaps will laugh if they get to the front before us, after coming into camp two months after. On the other hand, it would be a knock-out to them if we got there before

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them, because I don't think they know yet that we have left Egypt.

Fancy Norman Pilkington having seen his way to enlist at last, it was a pity he couldn't have come away with the rest of us, because if all goes well, we will nearly all meet again very shortly in the firing line. I think the only Akaroa Mounted man, to be left behind was Dave Handisides, and of course he was left behind through going into the cook house at Zeitoun, where he is a sort of a combined butcher & cook. Akaroa must be nearly deserted as far as boys go.

Well, these letters are censored, before leaving the ship, so I can't tell you much, and perhaps half of what I have mentioned will be crossed out, so I must ring off. We are being well treated on this ship, especially as far as the tucker is concerned, we are getting better food here than we have had for some time.

Well, I must close now, but will write again when I can get a little news, and find the time.

		With fond remembrances to all at home. Link.	
AK:2025.20.84	My dear People	Anzac November 14th, 1915 My dear People, We have at last arrived to within range of the shells and a few stray bullets, but I think it will be a week or two before we actually reach the firing line, as we will be kept busy (low down here) making a comfortable little resting place for troops. (Winter quarters I suppose), so I will be able to spend my 22nd birthday in safety yet. We expected to be put ashore at Lemnos Island for a short time, but as luck had it, we were brought straight on to the Dards. We were kept on the boat at Lemnos for nearly a week, before another one came alongside to bring us on here, and you can guess what sort of a pleasant surprise we got when we found Vern and Justin and the Page 2 rest of the other Akaroa boys were on boat and going on with us. They looked as if they had done a good bit of solid work, and envied them a bit as they had a good hardy healthy look on them as if they could go anywhere. When we got to Anzac we found it was impossible to land as too rough, so were send to Imbros Island until the following night. However the first night we were close enough to the shore to know that there was a war on, because a few stray bullets came whistling round, one or two hitting the ship and one man was wounded. The next night was very still and we were able to land without any damage being done, but when we were asleep in a little gully, further round, another man was hit, and the funny thing about it was, that he didn't know it till after he had been walking round Page 3 a little bit next morning. It must have been a pretty bad wound too, because he was taken away to the Hospital Ship. Yesterday I got a bit of a scare when I heard that an Armstrong of the 6th Rein. was wounded, as I thought it would be Vern for a dead cert, but it happened to be the other Armstrong (of C Squadron) who was the unlucky one. We have some great fun here, when a shell comes whistling over our heads, because as yet, of course, we don't know much about the brutes,	14 Nov 1915

		so as soon as we hear one we dive into the dug-outs about five deep, without waiting to hear which way it is going. All the old C's were put into their different Regiments yesterday, and Maurice, Owie, and myself were put in with Alex Adams, (who used to work at Bucklands) so as he came away with the Main Body, he Page 4 will know something about the game, and will be able to show us how to go about things. All the Akaroa boys will be pretty well together, because I think all out of our lot will be in the same troop as Justin. A mail has just come in and I have again received my most welcome Akaroa Mails and a Canterbury Times, but no letters come along. I seem to be having a crook run with my mail, as so far I have only received four letters. Well, I am supposed to be on guard and as it is nearly time to make a shift I will have to take a pull. All here are in the best of spirits, and it is decent to be among such a fine lot of cheerful chaps, they seem to know no fear at all. We are being treated far better than I ever thought for. Hoping that all at home are as cheerful as I am. I Remain "Merry England", Link	
AK:2025.20.85	My Dear People	Anzac 26/11/15 My Dear People, It is just on a fortnight since I last wrote, and we are still in the same place, doing the same work. Adams and the other three of us have been putting in all our spare time digging out a comfortable little home, because it looks as though we will be down here for some time. We have now got it finished and kid ourselves that it is the best of the lot, as it is a great big hole in the side of the hill, big enough to hold us and our gear comfortably, and in case of rain, we can cover ourselves in with water-proof sheets and keep as dry as a bone. In Adams, we have a handy section leader, as he understands all these little fine points of the game, as well as being able to cook us a dainty little dish when the chance comes along, besides this he is a bit of a barber, and	26 Nov 1915

nearly always comes to light with his razor when we want a shave.ere is not half bad, considering circumstances, and

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if we get the same right through, I don't think anyone could complain, any how it is a long way better than I expected. Poor old Vern has at last been taken away to the hospital, and not before it was time either, as he seemed to be fading away to a shadow. He has been crook ever since he left Lemnos, but the funny thing about him was that he didn't seem to be able to explain what was the matter with him, and the doctor couldn't make it out either.

Vern had lost his scarf so of course gave him mine, which I was just beginning to find very useful, now that the weather is getting cold. I would very much like you to send me another of the same sort as soon as you can, it was the one that had the seven uses.

Mr. Rhodes was over here for a day or two, and when he was going away, came up to our lines and asked to see all the Banks Peninsula boys, asking every one of them if they had any messages to send to their people. I only wish he would hurry my mail along a bit, because so far I have only received two letters

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from Mother and one from Father, I have not yet seen my first two mails, while Maurice and all the others seem to have received all theirs. You know, if there is one thing we look forward to here, it is the mail.

Since we have been here, we have not seen anything of our infantry chaps, I believe they are up in the firing line, and I heard that Gumming was wounded and Beattie was taken away sick.

We are all quite happy here and can almost get anything we want, especially tobacco, we have, since we have been here, been given all the tobacco we can do with.

Well, our letters are fairly heavily censored here, and there is not much one can write about, so I had better be taking a pull.

I think it will be some time yet before we get up to the firing line, as they have plenty of work to keep us busy down here for a while yet.

I Remain,

Your Loving Son, Link

[p.s.] Send us a bucket and some water so we can have a good wash water is scarce.

		Page 4 Link's Address: 6th Reinforcement – 7/1104 Trooper Lincoln Frederick Armstrong C Squadron Canterbury Mounted Rifles N.Z. Expeditionary Force c/o G.P.O. Wellington Egypt Forward	
AK:2025.20.86	My Dear People	The only thing we are short of is matches, we have everything else in plenty. I am short of a scarf. Vern took mine. Kings Own Avenue 6/12/15 My Dear People, Since last writing to you we have been shifted up to the firing line. We had a very sudden move, much sooner than we expected, and have now been up here for nearly a fortnight. The first night we were up here, I will never forget, because I was on duty, and in the middle of the night, it started to snow (only a shame how it did snow too) and grew bitterly cold. I thought that if trench life is all like this, it is no good to me, as I wouldn't be able to stand too much of it. However in a way it was a good job we got a little bit of it, as it taught us what we may have to go through later on, and what we would have to be prepared for. Since then the weather has been almost perfect, and we are beginning to think that trench life is not half as bad as it is painted. We get very good tucker and as much as we Page 2 want of it. Our cooks are up here with us, so instead of having to do all our own cooking as I thought we would, we have it nearly all cooked for us. When in the trenches at night time, we have hot tea brought round to us twice a night, so considering circumstances we are living very high. I have not heard of Vern since he went to the hospital, but Tom McGuire, was down on the beach the day he went away, and said that he thought they would take him to Lemnos Island. He just missed the rough weather. Things here would do me right down to the ground, if I only got a little bit more in the mail line, because since leaving Egypt I have only received one letter and a parcel, and that from Win.	8 Dec 1915

		Justin was down on the beach, getting stores the other day when he ran across Ditley who he says is looking very fit, and is just the same old doer. All the Akaroa boys are hanging out well and all seem to Page 3 be in the best of spirits. In Win's letter, she mentioned that Bert had given up his business and was taking up a milking run, well, I think he will find it a big change, and I am not picking him to hang out very long at it. He surely must have seen a good thing in it and taken it on as a bit of a spree. Some of the chaps here have been getting Akaroa Mails sent to them lately, and of course they go right round, so we get a little bit of Akaroa news from them. In them I have noticed a good few letters from some of the Akaroa boys at the front, well I only hope that I won't see any of mine in them, because I know they don't read very well, and I would much rather they were kept out. We have struck a fairly quiet post up here, as there doesn't seem to be much doing and very few of our chaps have been hurt yet. The worst part of the game is Page 4 the fatigue work, running round after stores and water, but of course everyone gets his share of that, so it doesn't come round very often. By jove, a mail has just arrived, and I have at last received 7 letters: Mother 2, Lorna, Father, Ida, Frank, with which I am delighted, as they are the first since we landed on the Peninsula. I am looking forward to my Christmas mail, especially all those cakes and parcels. Lorna mentioned something about photos and chocolate, which I have not yet seen, my first mails seem to have gone astray altogether. Well my dear people Maurice, Owie & I have to go down to the beach for stores so I must be ringing off. Don't worry about me, as I am in the best of health and am very cheerful, in fact everything in the garden is absolutely grand. xx. We have every comfort. Your loving son, Link	
AK:2025.20.87	My Dear People	A pair of socks now and then would go alright because when we go along we can only take three pair with us, and if a pair reaches us when away they are very useful. Troopship 'Hororata' Christmas Day	24 Dec 1915 and 2 Jan 1916

		My Dear People, Here it is Christmas Day & I am on my way back to Alexandria. This is the time when one misses home more than ever because there is no place like home to spend a day like this. The only thing, here, that reminds us it is Christmas Day, is that we had a little bit of duff for dinner, otherwise, it is just like an ordinary day, as we are too crowded to hold a service or have a few hymns on board. It is a long time since I last wrote to you, but you must not blame me because, for some time past all outgoing mail has been stopped, and I hear it is going to be held up for some time to come yet. I think this is because of the evacuating of the Peninsula, but anyhow, I am going to Page 2 do a little bit of writing while my luck is in. Lately, I have had a good run as far as mail is concerned, and I think I must have received all my parcels and letters, excepting those of the first two mails. Just a day or two before we left Anzac, we got the first of our Christmas mail, and among it, I spotted Vern's cake, so of course, as there was a doubt about it ever finding him, I claimed it, thinking that we might join him before mine came along. Well, we didn't pick him up at Lemnos Island (although we stayed there for three days), but we struck our Xmas mail, and I thought I would hang on to Vern's, and by jove, he had a pile. I had to get my old jersey and tie the neck and sleeves, and that just acted Page 3 the purpose nicely for his lot, so if I don't come across him in Egypt, I don't know how I will get on. You might think I am a silly to have taken them, but there is a very poor chance of him receiving them otherwise, and besides, I suppose it will be some time before we leave Egypt again, as I suppose we will have to do some training on the horses. We were on the Peninsula for five weeks, three of which we put in up at the firing line, the other two, as you know, we put in lower down. I think we had more casualties when we were out of the firing line than when we were in it, and talking things right through, we have had a sort of a picnic, and I think we are lucky beggars to have come over when we did, as we were the last reinforcement to see fighting on Gallipoli, and just had a Page 4 nice little stay at a quiet time. I will always have something to remember, as I spent my 22nd birthday in the trenches and it was on this day that I fired my first shot. One day when I was down on the beach for stores, I	
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came across Ditley and Arthur Jacobson and had a long talk to them. From all accounts, Ditley has a good job on, I should say the best to be had, as he seems to do practically as he likes, and can get what he likes. He gave us jam & milk and stuff and told us that next time we visited him to take a sack with us and get some things, but of course we didn't have another trip to the beach. When Ditley saw me, he asked me if I had had the toothache, or was it fat that made me look so funny, so you see I am not doing so badly since I joined the army. These boats agree with me. I never feel so fit as when I am on the sea.

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and this two or three days trip is far too short for me. By jove I nearly forgot to tell you about the way we were treated on a battleship, on the morning that we left the Peninsula. From the time we got on a boat at Anzac Pier to where we landed at Lemnos Island we were on four different boats, two before we got to Lemnos harbour where we were put on the battleship Hibernia, to wait for a lighter to take us ashore. As soon as we got aboard her about a dozen sailors got round each of us and took our packs and rifles from us and bundled us into their mess room, where they had prepared a tip top meal for us, and it is only a shame how they waited on us. As soon as we had finished that, they took us down to what we needed most of all, and that was a real good wash (the first wash for three weeks for most of us). The only drawback to our stay on Gallipoli was the shortage of

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water, we hardly got enough to drink, let alone anything else. Well when the sailors had straightened us up in this way, they took us around and couldn't give us enough cigarettes, matches, and tobacco.

2/1/16

Since I started writing this letter things have been pretty brisk for us, and we have been kept on the move, with our training getting straightened up for our mounted training. We were at it on New Year's Day and today (Sunday) so of course we are looking forward to a fair sudden shift somewhere. When we got back to Zeitoun camp here we were very agreeably surprised to find a lot more Peninsula boys amongst the Seventh & Eighth Reinforcements. We also came across Dave Curry & what surprised us most of all was

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to see Dick Spooner among the Australians. Dick came along our lines the other night to see if he could find anyone he knew, and when I went up to

him & spoke, he said "I don't remember ever seeing you before!" (I suppose it is because I have a little moustache, and now that I weigh 11st 8lb the heaviest I have ever been) I suppose I have altered a little bit. Poor old Vern I have not heard anything definite about him yet, but two or three chaps have told me that he is dangerously ill in Malta, but of course it might only be a rumour, because two or three have been surprised to see me back here, saying they heard I was wounded. Well as far as I know I was far from being wounded, although the

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beggars drew blood on me. You see a Turkish bullet has a very thin coating of nickel on it and very often, as it is going through the air the casing gets so hot that it bursts, and I was looking over the parapet one night when a piece about the size of 2 (pence) of it hit me on the side of the face. Of course it gave me a fright, but it was nothing, so after it had been a fortnight it worked out again. That same night a fellow who relieved me had a bullet through his hat cutting the top of his balaclava, & another through the collar of his overcoat, and yet it wasn't touched himself (a miss is as good as a mile).

Mail is coming in for me as fast as I can read the letters & spin the parcels. I didn't know I had so many good friends.

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before. Why even today I received about 15 letters, a dozen parcels & 5 papers, and goodness knows how many have come to light this last week. It is jolly good of you people to send so many things and many of them are most useful and are things that I would never have thought of myself. The only thing I have not received (and what is most useful) is a box or two of wax matches, you can't buy them for the love of money, even in Egypt, and you know what these wooden things are, the box breaks and the game is goosed. Well my dear people I must write a few more letters tonight so I must be pulling up, but as there are so many people to write and thanks for presents and things, I probably won't be able to find time for some days, so I must ask you to do so.

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"There is Mrs. A, Rhodes, Aunt Nellie, Aunt Min (I don't know her address), I Taylor, Frank & Kathy, Joe & Evelyn, in fact the whole family (Ida & Win have been very good) as hardly a mail comes along without something from one of them. Then there is Elsie who has also been a good friend with the Akaroa Mails and the Christmas cakes. There are heaps of them, you will know. I will post this in the envelope you so kindly addressed for me, I

		know I'm a bad correspondent, but you must excuse me for having to wait so long because it really wasn't my fault. Will write again next mail, goodbye, for the present. I remain Your loving son, Link Excuse all the mistakes as I haven't time to read it over. I have never been in better fettle in my life fair dinkum.	
Folder 2 AK:2025.20.88	My dear people	Zeitoun Camp 14/1/16 My dear People, Just a few lines to let you know that things are still going well with me. We are having a fairly solid time here now with our horses, and as a rule have the whole day out, but of course we enjoy our outings, as we see things carried out here as they were perhaps 50 or more years ago. Its great to see them watering the land., they have a sort of a water wheel which is turned by a beast which is fixed to a long shaft going round all the time. The water runs along drains which are formed into little squares all over the show, and it seems to do the trick alright, because their crops are very thick and healthy looking. Then again the way they plough would Page 2: make a cat laugh, because it is still done here with the oxen and a very rough-shaped wooden plough. Nearly every day we ride through palm groves and orange groves, and come across a dirty little native village or two. No matter how far out in the desert we go, we always come across the natives loaded up with their oranges, pea nuts, tomatoes, dates, chocolates, etc., and as soon as they spot us dismounting they dart across and try to do business with us. Somehow we always seem to run up against a fresh Peninsula man. There must be a mob of us here now, as last night in Cairo we ran up against Dick Allard (used to work at Newton's) and we now have in our tent Corporal R. A. Young from Little River. In your letters you seem to worry about me not getting my parcels. Well, there is no	14 Jan 1916

		Page 3: need for it, because I think I have received every one that you have mentioned so far. In fact, I only wish they would hold them back for a while, and send them on to us when we get out of this again, because we would have any amount of use for them then. I think I missed my chance when I was here before, as far as having a look round goes, because now it is much more difficult to get leave, and it is very seldom that the chance of a half holiday comes along. Well, my dear people, I am not in a good humour for writing tonight, and as I wrote to Siver a day or two ago, I am just about cut out for news so I will have to ring off for this time. I now weigh 11 st. 5 lbs. and remain not bad. Eh. Your loving son, Link	
AK:2025.20.89	My Dear People	P.S. I get all my letters and papers regularly now. Zeitoun Camp 22/1/16 My Dear People Today is one of the saddest days I have ever seen, as your letter telling me of poor old Vern's death, came to hand. Ever since I have been here I have been trying to find out what became of him but could get no satisfaction. Mr. Birdling and Sergeant Juggins did all they could to find out but couldn't find out the least thing, so the only news I have had is what comes from home. I have been taking possession of all his parcels all along, so you see they are not altogether wasted. You must not worry about me now, because as far as health goes I have never been feeling better in my life, and the way things are going now I don't think we will see much more fighting. We are on the move from Page 2: here any day now, but I think we are only going on about a month's outing. It is on this account that I am hurrying through this little note, as I	22 Jan 1916

		may not get another chance for some time. This last week I have come across Eric Julius and Len Johnston, so you can guess with all these Akaroa boys about, it is just like old times. I am sending Mother and Lorna a little present each, and am only sorry that perhaps Lorna's won't suit, as I suppose it is the wrong colour, but it is the only one I could get hold of. I am sending something else, which I will be proud to have if it reaches home, but I have my doubts. I picked it up on the Peninsula. Before we came over here, we were told that Egypt hardly ever sees rain, but it is only a shame how in can come down, once it makes a start. Page 3: I have been wet through two or three times, when foolish enough to sleep outside at nighttime, and even in the middle of the day we have had two very severe showers. Last week Alex Adams, Maurice & I had our photos taken by electric light, so if they come out alright, and we are away before they are ready, I will get someone to send them on to you. Handisides and Dierck will go along with us when we go next time, and I don't think they half like leaving the little home they have made here. Well my dear People, my thoughts are any where but letter writing and under circumstances you must excuse me for just writing these few hurried lines. My deepest sympathies are with you at home, but I suppose these sad things come for the best. Your loving son Link Love to all.	
AK:2025.20.90	My Dear People	Serapeum [Egypt] 3/2/16 My Dear People, There is not much that one can write about these days, because things with us at present are very quiet, and then again our letters are fairly	3 Feb 1916

heavily censored. Since last writing to you we have been on a seven days' track (roughing it generally) doing things as we would do in time of action, and I suppose it was just because we had to sleep out in the open that it rained pretty hard every night, and of course the consequence was, that we had wet blankets, from when we started till we reached this camp. Once it "poured" rained for about twelve hours without hardly a break, so most of us lit big fires and sat round them for the night. However we are hardened to this sort of thing and none of us are any the worse for our

Page 2

little outing. Our officers are shaping as if they are going to make things pretty lively for us in the way of training, because they have settled us down, here in the desert away from civilization altogether (well, nearly). It takes us about an hour, by train, to get to the nearest town, but I think it might just as well take a year, because there doesn't seem much chance of us getting any leave. Anyhow after a good day's outing we don't feel much like going out, and as we have a very fair little canteen here (run by the natives) we haven't much need to go darting about. (Trusting to this being overlooked by the censor).

On our way here we put a night in at Ismailia where our infantry mates are camped and we had the luck to strike the Peninsula (Akaroa) boys. They too are getting plenty to do, but are looking in the

Page 3

pink of condition.

Our meeting would have been a very pleasant one, only for the very sad news we brought, which cast a gloom over all. Some of the chaps I knew only by name, but they all came along to tell me how well they knew Vern, and to inquire after him. One of them I hardly knew at all, he is a friend of Joe's too, I think he said his name was Norman Forsyth from Little River. Fair dinkum no matter where I go I am always striking Peninsula boys, and I am beginning to wonder how many more single chaps there are, left down that way. There can't be many, and surely what there are, we are not very proud of themselves, after seeing all their mates come away to do their little bit. This soldiering life is certainly not one of the best, but still I never regret having

Page 4

come away, because I think that anyone who could come away, and won't,

		is far more unhappy where he is than if he were over here doing his bit. No I would sooner (do as poor old Vern did) die a hero than live a thousand cowards' lives. This camp is situated quite close to the Suez Canal, and every Wednesday and Saturday afternoon we are marched over to it for a swim, and in spite of the water being very cold, it is only a shame how we rush the chance to have a plunge in, and get a little swim in safety. Of course when on Gallipoli, although the sea water was very tempting, we dare not go in because of the snipers and machine guns. By Jove I am lucky with my mails as everything that you have mentioned in your letters has come to light. Page 5 The last parcel I got, I think, was a tin of some real good biscuits from Mrs Rhodes, who is very good to us Akaroa boys in the way of presents. All the Akaroa Mails come to light very quickly, they come along before the letters written on the same day. The paper mail always gets here before the letters, and for me it is always a pretty big one because Ida & Ted send me the Weekly Press fairly regularly and there are generally some good old Canterbury Times with something inside from home, Tell Billy Wilkins I received his soap and it was still in good order so I showed it round, and everyone thought it a bit of a novelty. I carry it with me as a stand by. Well my dear people I am dashed if I can think of anything more that I do mention so must close for this time. I Remain Your Loving Son Link P.S. I see where Uncle John too enlisted. I admire his pluck. Good luck to him.	
AK:2025.20.91	My Dear People	Serapeum 20/2/16 My Dear People, It is a fortnight ago since I last wrote, and I am truly sorry, but it really	20 Feb 1916

wasn't my fault, because we were taken away a little before we thought for, and as the mail closes at 5, I missed the buss. Last week I received a letter from everyone in the family but old Dawson, and nearly all were written at home, at Christmas time, so you might be able to imagine my joy. I also received a number of snaps of the happy little groups, that Siver took. By jove it was dandy to know that all who could, went home for Christmas, as it would surely make you all forget your sadness for a little while, anyhow, you looked to be having

Page 2

a good time according to the photos. That blooming Dawson, I have been wondering what has gone wrong with him as he is the only one I haven't heard from since leaving NZ. Surely the beggar isn't backing his cart out & going sour on me, now that is a bit of a farmer. If his farm is keeping him as busy as all that, the only thing I can see for it, is that I will have to resign my position here, and go to his assistance "I don't think".

You good people over there seem to be worrying a good bit about my letters and papers, but there is absolute no need for it, because everything you have mentioned to me so far I have received. Even the chocolate, socks and cigarettes that were sent when your lost letters were written have come to light already.

Page 3

It is quite true that some of the chaps here, don't receive all their mail, in fact, all the Akaroa boys seem to think that some of their stuff has gone astray, but I have not a single thing to complain about. I think this is because my goods are done up so well, because a lot of parcels break open on the way and when the bag is opened here the stuff falls all over the show, and of course the consequence is that the right owners don't get all they should. Another thing is that all my parcels arrive in the best of order, while others are sometimes mouldy, especially cigarettes.

In one of Mother's letters to Justin she asked him to take a brothers part, and try to keep me in good spirits, but I can assure you that there is not much need to ask them, as I have a great many good

Page 4

friends, who are always too willing to help me along, especially Maurice. He and I left together as great friends and since we have been over here, we have been almost like brothers. Maurice is a fine fellow and if at any

		time any of you have a little time to spare, I wish you would drop him a line, because he has with his cheery way been a big help to me in my hours of sorrow. Fair dinkum you would laugh till you dropped if you could see him sometimes when a hurried order comes along, because he darts about like a little Frenchman until he gets ready, and then if I am not fixed up, he blows along to give me a hand. In fact I find all the fellows in the C.Y.C.. to be a fine lot, and I can't see how a fellow could ever be anything, but in the best of spirits with such a lot. Page 5 Fancy old Joe coming to light with a letter, I got quite a pleasant surprise, as it was such a cheerful one too. I am sending you three photos of Adams, Maurice, and myself, just to show you what a fright I look in my little mustache. I only ordered half a dozen and gave two away to a couple of my friends, so if you think Ida and Win would like one each you can let them have the extra two. I must be off to stables now, so must ring off. Love to all at home. I Remain, Your Loving Son, Link Page 6 Can't find the photos in my hurry, will send them next time.	
AK:2025.20.92	My Dear People	Serapeum 26/2/16 My Dear People There is not much to write about, but I suppose I must drop a line, to let you know that I am still in good fettle. Well we are still in this deadly sort of a hole, and keeping on waving the flag with the training. This game, after being over at the Dards is getting a bit monotonous, and we are looking forward to another little bit of a scramble with someone. You know (although I suppose we could not account for much) the thought of	26 Feb 1916

		us being here, doing nothing, makes us think, that we (all NZers) are, a sort of prolonging the whole affair, and that there is not much doing elsewhere. Most of the news we get here is old stuff, and at the best of times, we only hear of victories on our side, which, of course Page 2 we hope is “<u>fair dinkum</u>.” Last week we heard of a few big Russian successes, and if all we hear about them is true, they are the beggars that are going to take some stopping. As far as I can see, they are the boys that are going to be in at the finish, and as long as they wait for us to get over that way somewhere, I don’t care how soon the finish comes. One good thing about this camp is that it is near a railway station, and we always get good fresh tucker and other goods issued. Last week when the 9th Reinforcements arrived at Suez, one of our Officers went down, and told us before he went, that if we liked he would buy up the ship’s canteen stores for us, so of course we jumped at the chance, and nearly all of the C.Y.C. chaps put in about ten bob each. He came back with tobacco, tin fruit, butter (the greatest luxury) and other Page 3 stuff “<u>to burn</u>”, and got it at a far cheaper price than we could get it here. In my last letter, I mentioned that we went away for a week, but I forgot to tell you that we (C.Y.C. only) only shifted over the Canal, into what is supposed to be the enemy’s country. Well we were out expecting a bit of fun, but I don’t think that one of our patrols ever saw a Turk. Every day some of our chaps used to go out about twenty five miles from the Canal, but always came back with the report that there was nothing doing. When we go over to the Canal for a swim, we always have to go over the trenches that were used in that first bit of a scrap here, but I don’t think they will have to use them this time (if they come “that’s if”), because the beggars will strike a rather tough proposition a little further back. Page 4 In one of your letters you seemed anxious to know if I received your Christmas greetings by cable. Of course, we were at sea for our Christmas and wouldn’t have got it in any case, but it might surprise you to know that I got mine three weeks after the Le Lievre boys, sometime at the end of January. The letters written, the same week as the cable was sent, found	
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		me first. By cripes I am thinking that it is just as well I don't get <u>stoney broke</u>, and have to cable home for a bit of <u>jink</u> now and then, because I think it would be a case of having to owe it a little bit. Time is getting on so I must ring off with only these few lines, but I must ask you not to worry about me, because (<u>straight wire</u>), I am perfectly contented and in great fettle. Tat ta, I remain, Your loving son, Link	
AK:2025.20.93	My Dear People	Postcard - Front Side: Serapeum 3/3/16 My Dear People Only time for a postcard this time, because we have just been warned that we may have to go away again, for a few days. It's getting fairly late, so I thought a few lines would be better than nothing. Tonight Maurice, Hammond and myself put in for a transfer to the Artillery, where they come round for volunteers. We did it not because we dislike the mounted game, but because we thought that there would be a better chance of getting away to England or France, sooner, than if we kept where we are. Of course, a big number will have a go at it, so there is a chance that we may not get any hearing, but I would very much like to get into the Artillery because as far as I can see, it is the best game of the lot. Les Smith was in camp with us tonight, and by jove he looks pretty crook and thin on it yet. When he came back he had no option, other than go into the Artillery, and he was telling us that it is the best caper in the outfit in every way. Today I received two more parcels from home, but I have not had a letter for Back Side: over a fortnight. They tell us that our last mail missed the boat, at one of the ports on the way, so I suppose that accounts for it. The parcels I received today contained a towel, chocolate, socks, and cigarettes, etc., which came as a bit of a surprise packet, but still "very nice I found them". You good people down there are in a quiet little way a good	3 March 1916

		advertisement for good old Akaroa, "fair dinkum" the fellows have got a great opinion of the place for that reason. My Akaroa Mail papers go a big round now as a good few pick them up to see what was collected at the last patriotic fund. They all think that you are doing your share in everything that comes along, and say that when they get back, they much visit this "far famed Akaroa" as the people there seems to be so liberal and always ready to help in a good cause. Of course, we are always boasting about our little town and the blokes are quite curious to see it. Well I must be closing down. Still "Pie on the Did." Hurrah for this time "England"	
AK:2025.20.94		Not transcribed- Field Service Post Card	12 March 1916
AK:2025.20.95	My Dear People	Ismailia [N.B.crossed out by censor and rewritten above] Sunday 12/3/16 My Dear People, I suppose when you receive this, and hear that I was successful in getting my transfer into the Artillery, you will think, that I am a silly flat and am beginning to get sick of this life. Well my reason for leaving the Mounted was, because I don't think that they will ever leave Egypt with horses, and so long as they are here they will always be stuck away out in the desert, doing nothing but monotonous patrol work. When they came round the other day and asked for volunteers for the Artillery a big crowd stepped forward, Maurice & Hammond among them, but only three Page 2 were taken out of the C.Y.C. and unfortunately Maurice and Hammond were not accepted. However I have a real good fellow with me, and besides a good number of the Mounted fellows, who were left behind in Zeitoun (when the Mounted Brigade moved of to Serapeum), have been put into the Artillery, and a number of them are in the same lot as I am. Among them are Vic Fergus, McKay, Wright, so you see I am still with some Peninsula chaps. Up to now I have been in the Ammunition Column, but	12 March 1916

		they are shifting men all over the show, and will be, till they get things a bit ship-shape, so there is a chance that I may be put on to something else. We have only been here for three days, so I can't very well pass an Page 3 opinion as to what this game is going to be like, but so far I am well satisfied with it as it seems to be run on better lines altogether than the Mounted. Here we get plenty of warning before we have to do a thing, and won't be darting about the country so much as we would in the C.Y.C. where if we got about 3 minutes' notice to pack up and be on the move we were doing alright. The other day when we were coming to this camp (in a light railway across the desert), we passed two men on horseback, one of which I thought was Roy Robinson, and whoever it was, he seemed to recognize me and waved to me first. I would have given a good bit to have been able to get out and see if it really Page 4 was him and have a bit of a chat. Yesterday I saw Eric Julius and a young Rhodes in this camp, but didn't get a chance to speak to them, but I know where they are camped and will be able to look them up. I think there are so many in this camp that I know, as there were in the other, so you can see me having a good time, while I am here in civilisation. The only thing that will be a bit of a beggar is that our mail will go astray for a while and I suppose will take some time to find us out, especially if we shift away from here before you get our right address. There is some talk about our outgoing mail being stopped for a week or two, so I suppose, this means Page 5 that there is a move of some kind on tap. I hope it is us, going to the Old Country to finish our training. It would do me if they would shift us out of this sandy Egypt, and I think they will because it will soon be too hot in the middle of the day to do any training here. I am sending you our Field Service P.C. this time as well, in case this letter is held back for a time. It is not worth while my trying to find out what my new address will be, until we get properly settled down in our permanent places. Well, I must ring off for this time. I am quite well and am perfectly	
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		contented with everything. I Remain, Your Loving Son, Link Look on other side for address Page 6 Until further notice I think it will be advisable to address my mail as follows, because even if I am shifted, my mail will come here first before being forwarded: No. 7/1884 Gunner L.F. Armstrong 3rd B.A.C N.Z. Field Artillery c/o G.P.O. Wellington Please let the others know.	
AK:2025.20.96	Bert Armstrong (brother)	Moascar 18/3/16 Dear Dawson, After receiving a most welcome letter from you and Mill I thought I had better answer it before I forgot. It was a long time since I had heard from you, and I was beginning to think that you had "gone sour" on me, or backed your cart out, but when I heard that you had taken on farming, I quite understood. You must have found it a bit queer at first, after being used to darting about all over the country, and I suppose you found it a pretty hard thing having Page 2 to get out, early in the morning. I know when I joined this outfit, I thought that this early rising was a bit of a beggar, but now I feel much better for it. Ever since we left Gallipoli, we have been kicking about here in Egypt, either doing solid training, or else patrolling the desert, on the other side	18 Mar 1916

of the Suez Canal. Of course that is alright for a little time, but this seeing nothing but sand, and always being short of water, soon gets monotonous, especially when the prospects of leaving Egypt with horses are looking black. Anyway it was no good to me, so when the chance of joining the

Page 3

Artillery came along, I didn't think twice. Nearly all of the mounted men are full up of being stuck here in Egypt, and when the officers asked for volunteers for the Artillery, the other day, I think about half of them stepped out, Maurice and Hammond among them. Unfortunately, only three men were wanted from the C.Y.C. and Maurice and Hammond didn't get away. I am sorry that Maurice and I are parted, but I still have some of my old friends with me, so I am not too badly off. Anyway, a chap (in this turn out) is a sure thing to go away, sometime

Page 4

in the near future, but I think the Mounted men will be here till the end of the war, as they will have to watch the Canal.

The work here is new, and very interesting, and as there is a good bit to learn in it, I think, we will be on the move before we get stale of it.

By jove Dawson, it was thoughtful of you to offer to help me along in the money line, and I must thank you for it, but I think the little bit I am getting will be sufficient to keep me jiggling along. In fact up to now I am undrawn, and I find that in a low place like Egypt is, and where there are

Page 5

many great temptations, a man is better with too little, than too much. Fair dinkum I have not seen so much gambling and drinking and some of these dog low games in all my life till I came over here. This Egypt in my mind is the home of everything that is bad.

Well it is getting late and I must be winding up, but I must have a word to say to Mill. You know when you were at Blythcliffe with the "White Hope", you promised to let him have a night out on Christmas Eve, but when the time came you backed out. If I were him I would certainly go crook, after having to keep good for so long, and then being thrown over at the last minute. It won't

Page 6

		happen again, I bet, even if I have to take him out myself next time. The way things are going now, I think that we will have our next Christmas at home, so he is on a sure thing. As yet I have not had a chance to look Lionel Bailey up, because the Infantry are camped in a different place to us, but I will try to find him out if we ever get in the same camp. I have tried to make this readable, but with only one candle in the tent and enough noise going on to deafen me, it has been a bit of a struggle. You can rest assured that I am in the best of health and spirits and perfectly Page 7 satisfied in every way. Now look here Dawson, <u>even if your swag gets wet</u>, you don't want to pull out, because I have found out that a wet swag is a mere trifle, and all you have to do is to <u>keep on waving the flag</u>. I thought I had better mention this because I thought this was the reason of stopping you from writing. Your letters are always so cheerful, and I look forward to them, and I am always interested in your doings. Captain England My new address: No. 7/1884 Gunner L.F. Armstrong 3rd B.A.C.. N.Z. Field Artillery c/o G.P.O. Wellington	
AK:2025.20.97	My Dear People	Saturday 18/3/15 [<i>N.B. date incorrect - written in 1916</i>] My Dear People, I suppose I must make another attempt to write a few lines, and let you know that about things with me are in "apple pie" order. We have now been in the Artillery for nearly a fortnight, and nearly all of us seem to be settled down again, and as for myself I am still in the same place as I started in. All our work is now new to us and is very interesting, and is very different to the monotonous Mounted work, that we were doing out in the desert.	18 Mar [1916]

		Of course our being in the ammunition column doesn't mean that we will be Page 2 in it permanently, because we are having gun drill and signalling, and have to be able to fill up a vacancy at the guns in case of a casualty or anything like that. We have to go through the same training as the men in the batteries, so you see that we stand a chance of getting at into one of them, any time. I am in a tent with a fine lot of fellows. One is an old C. Squadron man who has been in the same tent as myself right through the piece, and another is a Wellington fireman, who happened to be down at Akaroa when the conference was on "Cook.." He remembers both Father and Mother well, and often talks about the grand time he had down there. He has a great opinion of Page 3 Akaroa and its inhabitants, and says that it is the best holiday he ever had. This camp, although a fairly big one, has in no way got the conveniences in the canteen line, as I thought for, and the water supply is very poor, but still it is for in a way ahead of [censored].. A few of us are allowed off, two half-days a week, to go into the town, but I have not yet had a try. We are still near the Canal and can go for a swim in a little salt lake, twice a week, if we wish to, and it is only a shame how we rush the bathing parades. Well, I am not in a mood for writing today, and anyhow there is very little I can tell you so I will ring off for this week. I have just written these Page 4 few lines to let you know that I am still in the best of health and am in real good going order. This little bit of foot drill is doing me the world of good, and I am feeling the benefits of it. Fair dinkum this artillery game is one of the best, as far as we have gone so far. I Remain,	
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		Your loving son, Link We have been told to inform you of our new address. Mine is as follows: No 7/1884 Gunner L.F. Armstrong 3 B.A.C. N.Z. Field Artillery c/o G.P.O. Wellington	
AK:2025.20.98	My Dear People	Moascar 26/3/16 My dear People, Another week has nearly come to an end and so I suppose it is up to me to give you what news I dare to. We are now fairly well settled in the Artillery, which we find to be a very smart and interesting turnout. It is a great deal different to the Mounted, where things seemed to be run in any fashion at all, and where we were always unsettled. Of course you will think that I will be quite satisfied with the game, while it's new, and I suppose, in a way it is ... Page 2 yet a sort of a <u>new broom</u> yet, but I don't want you to think that I am following in Dawson's footsteps. It is true that I left a number of my old mates out in the Mounted Brigade, but by jove I have come across about twenty other Akaroa boys in this camp, in fact I suppose that jolly near the lot of them are here. Eric Julius brings a different one along to me nearly every night. I see a good bit of Eric, and often go to the pictures, or for a bit of a stroll with him of a night. Since I have been here I have not received a mail and I suppose I won't get it very regularly, until you get to know of my change Page 3 of address. If there is one thing a man looks forward to, over here, it is a mail, but although it is a bit of a beggar, I suppose it will come out alright in the end, and I will have to sit tight and wait for a while.	26 Mar 1916

		When we were in Zeitoun we had a photo of the Canterbury Mounted Brigade taken, and I got one, but was unable to send it on account of it might get broken. Today Vic Fergus was sending some to his sister (Mrs W.. Pool), and as he had a nice little tin, especially cut out for the purpose, I jumped at the chance of his offer to send mine along with his. Page 4 It will give you some idea of what our old training ground was like at Zeitoun. You will see me in the second row, about 10 from the left with Maurice and Albans and Tom along side me. Just this minute a man brought along about an armful of letters for me, so I am not so badly off after all, and will have plenty of reading for a while. Well, there is not much news in this letter and there is not much else I can write to you about, so you will have to be contented with knowing that I am perfectly contented and quite well. Your loving son, Link Page 5 Please don't worry if you don't get a letter from me every mail, because now that I am in a different mob to Maurice and the others my letters may be held back while theirs are sent on, and I have a sort of an idea that it will be some time before you get another, although I will write every week. My new address No 7/1884 Gunner L.F. Armstrong 3 B.A.C. N.Z. Field Artillery c/o G.P.O. Wellington	
AK:2025.20.99	My Dear People	France Hospital 4/5/16 My Dear People No doubt when you hear that I have been in the hospital here, you will get	4 May 1916

a bit of a rude shock, after me telling you in all my previous letters how well I was keeping. Well for sometime I have been feeling pretty crook, but thought I was on the mend again, when to my surprise I was bumped into this outfit. Of course I have no objections, because a bit of a spell and some real good food won't do me any harm, especially this chicken diet that I am now on! I don't think I would

Page 2

have been sent to the hospital if I had reported sick to a different doctor, but we happen to have the doctor, who had charge of me when in the Wellington Hospital, "exactly a year ago", and as soon as he recognised me he gave me the "push off".

By Jove I got a surprise to find that Eric Julius was stationed here for a while, because it is alright to have someone you know, knocking round, and Eric very often comes along to have a chat. It is thanks to him that I am able to write to you now, because without him I would have had no means of getting a blue envelope. I have been here for four days now and have been allowed to get about

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all the time, so you might guess that my case is not very serious, and that I have only been sent here to pick up my strength again. I really don't know what my complaint is, but I think I must have been very near pleurisy again, because the doctors have thrice very thoroughly examined my chest. Yesterday I got another pleasant surprise, when Joe Greenfield, (who used to work for Uncle Jack), came along to see me. He too, is a patient here "pleurisy" and is now able to get about, so he and I kick round together. Joe would remember him well. Today I saw one of the men from the same unit as myself and learnt from him that it would

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be sometime yet before the R.A.C moved off to the firing line, so I will be perfectly contented to stay here for a day or two longer, but I wouldn't like to miss getting away with my old mob, because I would then have to join a new lot "the D.A.C."

For the last fortnight the weather has been perfect and the climate reminds me very much of the springtime in N.Z. One good thing about being here, in France, is that every day, we can get the latest news from the London papers which arrive here, only a day behind time. The latest

		news is that of the uprising in Ireland, the smashing Page 5 up of Dublin. By jove, those are the beggars that I would glory in having a slap at, because surely they can get all the fight they want without causing a disturbance in their own country. I reckon they ought to hang every one of those rebel beggars, that they can lay hands on, because in my opinion they are a rotten sneaky lot of brutes. The London papers are full of it and of course unlike the Egyptian papers, the news in them is always reliable. One thing I have often been going to mention to you, was that before I left home Mr. Leitz promised to give me the address of some of his relatives in England Page 6 Well, I never got them, and there is no knowing when they might come in handy, you know, a chap might find himself stranded in the Old Country one of these days and it would then come in alright if he had someone to look up. I believe poor old Vern had the addresses but I never saw them. News is very scarce so I must be ringing off, but must ask you not to worry about this little bit of sickness, because I am now having a dash good spell, and (as old Froggy Le Lievre used to say) am making rapid strides of progress. Hoping that all at home are cheerful and well. I Remain Your loving son, Link	
AK:2025.20.100	My Dear People	P.S.You people (especially Siver) must have a great idea that our parcels go astray, but I can truly say that I get all mine just as well too I think because if anyone got hold of one of those notes he would get a bit of a set back. France Hospital 18/5/16 My Dear People You will see that I am still in the hospital, but I am feeling much stronger	18 May 1916

and this good rest is doing me a lot of good. Of course I have been able, to get up and walk about, ever since I have been in here, but it is no use my trying to get back to my unit, until I have got rid of my cold properly, because this country is a pretty damp sort of a show, and anyhow I think it is best to wait till the doctor thinks I am fit to go back. The medical chaps, who are running this outfit, are a good lot, as nothing seems to be too much trouble for them. They wait on us hand and foot and as long as the country supply hangs out,

Page 2

we will be able to get what we like from the town, because every day, an orderly comes round, to see if we want to buy anything, and as soon as he has gone all round he blows off to do our shopping. By jove I won't have to do any shopping for a good while yet, because a couple of days ago the postal orderly, brought a bag full of parcels along to me, and of course I have got cakes and chocolate and other good things to burn. Among them there was a dandy cake from Ida, and four big parcels from home from Mother and Win, and they all arrived in good order except one, and that one wasn't so bad, but the raspberry jam came to grief, but the holes in the tin let it out, so no other damage was done. It would have been a bit of a luxury too.

Page 3

One of the chaps who has been in my tent ever since I have been in here is from Hokitika (he has something to do with a paper over there) and knows Ted well. He is one of those fellows who has travelled all over the world, a real gentleman to my mind, but might have been a bit too well educated for me to strike up a conversation with. His name is Chevassus, or something like that. One night last week my old friend Sheet, was roaming about the grounds here, and got a bit of a surprise to run into me. He told me that he volunteered to come in the mounted but was bumped into the Infantry, and is now in the same mob as Norman Pilk. As soon as Norman knew that Eric & I

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were camped near him, he came along and looked us up, and we were knocking about till all hours of the night. Poor old Norman is full up of the Infantry game, and says he has had two or three tries, to get into some branch of the motor line, (where he won't have to lug his pack about), but so far he hasn't had any luck.

		I believe that Gus Sergison is now in the mining Corps, and has been out in the front line for some time past. My mob are still a good way back from the firing line, so I still have a chance of picking up with them and joining my old mates. There is not much news to get from hospital, so for this time I must ring off. I remain, your loving son, Link So far I have only received one letter from last mail and that from Bert & Mill	
AK:2025.20.101	My Dear People	France Hospital 26/5/16 My Dear People This being kept in hospital is a fair beggar, especially when one feels as fit as a fiddle. I have been in here nearly a month now, and I am picking up my condition again, in great style, but the doctors won't hear of me going out yet. Since I have been here three different doctors have sounded me, but I don't think they could quite make out what my trouble is, because a couple of days ago after the doctor had been round all the patients, he went up to the Major Doctor and got him to have a look at me (he was No. 4). Well the Major gave me a real good examination, as he asked me all sorts of questions, and then went all over me thoroughly, and then made me go for a little sprint, then went over me again. As far as I can make out my trouble is with my heart, as my pulse averages about 106 to the minute and if I lift anything or do a good bit of walking about the blooming thing fairly bounds and sometimes gives a little pain. Anyhow the Major told me that he didn't think my trouble was a very serious one but when he got outside I heard him say something about, a light job for a while would probably set him right. I hope they don't give me one of these base jobs among the "cold footed brigade." Page 2	26 May 2016

When the doctor came round this morning he told me that they were going to keep me here for a while longer yet, to see how I get on, and said that I could do a few little light jobs about the hospital in the meantime. By jove I wouldn't like to be home among all those brothers of mine, complaining of heart trouble "wouldn't the beggars give me a rough spin!"

Well when you come to look at it, how can you wonder at a man getting a bit crook when you think of it in this way. When we were in Egypt, in a hot climate, we were allowed to have as many blankets as we could scrape together, but when we left to come here (a bitterly cold place compared with Egypt) we were allowed to carry only one blanket. The rest we had to leave in our base kits which we haven't seen since.

Yesterday was a great day for me because I received a big mail (14 letters and 4 Akaroa mails) which, I might state, is very acceptable, in a place like this, as it is a very pleasant way of spending the day. Among the letters there was one from Mr & Mrs Hall (and Graham) who wrote in a very cheerful way, and gave me every encouragement to keep in good spirits. The worst of it is, that now I am in a place where I have plenty of time to answer all these letters, I am not able to, because we are only allowed to send the blue envelopes from here.

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You see the Medical Officers have enough to do to censor the letters of their own staff, so of course our only chance is to get hold of a blue envelope (letters in which are not censored here). Occasionally I used to be able to land one from Eric, but he and the rest of the stretcher bearers, left to go up nearer to the firing line, last Sunday, so now I will have to be content with the hospital issue (one a week). Of course if that comes to light I will want it for home. Another thing, that hits a bit hard, is that if I have to stay here much longer I will soon be stoney broke, because I can only draw money from my own Unit. Just as well I got paid the day before I left. Now perhaps I have put things to you, so that they look worse than they really are, because I have told you just how they really stand, according to the Quacks, but my own opinion is that I will be out of this soon, and as sound as ever I was. Anyhow I am going to "crack hardy" and you can bet your life that I will keep on waving my flag. Well the darned hospital news is all I have to write about so for this time I am run out. Don't be surprised if my next letter is written from the firing line, and please, till you hear definitely, take this lot with 1 grain of salt.

I remain

		your Loving Son	
AK:2025.20. 102	My Dear People	Hospital France 7/6/16 My Dear People, It is nearly six weeks since I came to this flaming hospital, and there is not yet any word about going out, but I am feeling as fit as a fiddle, and am fatter than ever I was, so I don't suppose it will be long now before I am allowed to go back to my Unit. Well, this is not really a hospital, it is a sort of a rest camp, because anyone who is seriously wounded or ill is sent on from here and and cases that take a short time to fix up are kept here. I might say that I have been kept here for a longer time than anyone else by a long way, and what they are keeping me for I am dashed if I know. All the doctor says to me is that I am improving, and doesn't seem to take much notice of me when I tell him that I am as right as a bank. One thing about this outfit is that a man can always keep himself clean and can always get a change of clothing. If we wish to we can go twice a week to a big shed where there are a great many hot shower baths rigged, and where we can get a change of clean under clothing in exchange for our dirty stuff. Page 2 You see all the dirty clothing is washed there and fixed up ready for the next mob. French and Belgian girls ('by the score') work in these places, and I believe that they have them nearly all round the firing line, so as to enable the men, when they come out of the trenches for a spell, to go and clean themselves up a bit. By jove it is a bit of a treat after Gallipoli, where we had to do our own washing in about a cupful of cold water, and instead of disinfectant, we used to leave our things out in the frost to try and get rid of the little "jumping jacks". The doctors have allowed us to go for a stroll into the township here lately, for about two hours in the morning and afternoon. It is not a very big place, but it breaks the monotony a bit to be able to dive about among the Frenchies and see some of their funny ways. They only seem to be about a thousand years behind in their ways of farming. In fact I think that some of their implements must have been used sometime B.C. The other day I was going along the road and came across a butcher killing a pig right out in the middle of the road. This I believe is quite a common	7th June 1916

		Page 3 occurrence, but I was wondering how he would finish his job off because he had no tub or boiling water handy for the scraping purposes, so I stood and watched him. Instead of scalding the beggar he covered him over with straw and burnt the hair off, washing him with cold water afterwards. This little performance took place just near his shop where people were passing all the time but they didn't seem to take any notice at all. All the French people about here are greatly excited about the war, which they say is going to end in August. Their confidence it appears comes from the dropping of a church bell, that has been known to drop, on three different occasions. The first time it dropped was exactly three months before the end of the Franco-Prussian war, the second time was just three months before the end of the Boer War, and it was supposed to have dropped for the third time three weeks ago, so of course, there is no holding them. Of course someone might have heard about the <u>famous bell</u> and cut it down for a bit of a joke, but anyhow whether this little tale of theirs is true or not I don't think that it has fallen three months before the end of this war. More like three years by the way things are going at present. Your Loving Son Link	
AK:2025.20.103	My Dear People	France 26/6/16 My Dear People, It is a long time ago since I last wrote to you, so I suppose it is up to me to stay in and drop you a few lines while things are quiet. I am hanged if I can write when all the chaps are darting about in the hut and kicking up a bit of a shinty. Since I have been back here I have taken of a permanent job as "day picquet" and am on duty from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day, but have not to do any night work, at all. I always have enough little jobs to do to keep me on the go, but they are not very strenuous, so I am going to hang on to the business so, as I won't have to see that flaming hospital again. Page 2	26 June 1916

Fair dinkum I am in great fettle again and am feeling just "Pie on the did." This Ammunition Column business is a very quiet turnout after what we went through on the old Peninsula, as we don't ever even get a shell near us, and sometimes things are so quiet that we forget that there is a war on at all.

By cripes we are near enough to be disturbed when there is a gas attack on though, but we always get the warning, in time to slip our gas helmets on and jump into our clothes, before it reaches here. You know these alarms wouldn't be so bad in the day time, but they don't come at them then, they must wait until about midnight and spoil our night's rest. I don't suppose the Germans think about that, or surely they wouldn't disturb us so often at such an inconvenient time.

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In the fortnight that I have been here we have had three gas alarms, and every one has been sometimes in the middle of the night and we have had to turn out of bed for about a couple of hours till it blows over us. Never before I came here have I had to use my gas helmet, and the first time I put it on I thought I would suffocate, but I am quite used to it now, and I don't give a dash for their gas attacks, so long as they don't come at them at night time. Anyhow I don't think they have done much damage about here yet, as I have only heard of one or two men being effected with the gas and a cat killed. It spoils the crops a bit too as all of them about here seem to have a sort of a dead, rusty look, but the

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French people say most of that it grows out in time. Talk about crops, well I am satisfied that we have never seen a good one in New Zealand, because everywhere here the crops look like one solid wall and not patchy either, but these Frenchies are hard workers and deserve a good result, you event see soldiers who are home on leave, working out in the fields all day.

Well things with me going on in good stile, the only thing is that this outfit is not a very lively affair, and we don't see much of what is going on, but it will do me for a little while longer. We are in a very snug little camp where we can get every convenience, even a hot bath and a change of clean clothes every week. We are in clover compared with some of the other poor beggars.

		Must turn in now. Hoping all is well with you all. Link [Back of page 4] Plenty of parcels arriving lately but I haven't received a letter since I came back here, I often wonder if Maurice wrote and explained why I couldn't write for such a long time, at the time when were leaving Egypt.	
AK:2025.20.104	My Dear People	France 14/7/16 My Dear People, It seems ages since I last wrote to you and still I have really nothing fresh to write about. Since I have been here I have not once been out on the, and of course as nothing startling happens here about our billets, you can see what a fix I am in, as far as writing goes. Lately we have not even had a gas alarm, and I think since last writing to you we have only had one fright of it, but it must have been travelling in a different direction to us, because soon after we were roused from our slumbers, by the old excited cry (gas, gas, grab your helmet and get on to the parade ground as soon as possible) an Officer blew along, and told us that we needn't turn out unless the alarm was given again, but told us to keep our helmets handy, so as to be ready to slip them on. Nothing more was heard of it. In one of the last letters that I received from home, you asked if I ever received any of Lady Liverpool's Parcels. Page 2 Well to tell you the dinkum truth I have never seen one or even heard of such things, since I left N.Z. Now, in this Column there are men from every part of N.Z., so just for curiosity I asked if any of them had received any of these parcels, and every one of them said that they have not received any gift stuff at all, since Christmas time. Anyhow I haven't heard of any of the N.Zers receiving any "cakesleesh" all the time we have been in France.	14th July 1916

		By jove those Akaroa Mails you send me get a good spin, because after I have done with them I pass them on to the other Peninsula boys. (Spencer Mackay & Wright) and after that they are passed on, to a Tom Steel an Infantry man. This man Steel was in the hospital the same time as I was, but I didn't see him (not thinking that he knew us). He is a fairly old man I think, and says he knows me well, and that he has often played football against me, but I think he has made a mistake. He must mean Uncle Link I think, so in that case, perhaps I am better away from him. Rather a funny thing happened with my last batch of those Akaroa Mails, because one of them had one of Page 3 my blooming letters in it, so of course before passing the paper on I ripped the letter out, so nobody would see it. Of course when the boys saw that something had been torn out, they got a bit curious, so looked up the Akaroa news in the Weekly Press and there they found this flaming letter. It happened too, that some of my hut mates had (without my knowing) taken the papers out of the wrappers, read them and put them back before I saw them at all. You might guess what sort of a time I got from all hands, but they are a decent lot of chaps and after giving me a of a fly, let the thing drop for good. All the same I think the beggars are looking out for more letters. Well it is getting late, so I must be pulling out for this time. I am in great fettle and in the best of spirits and now I often feel sorry that I wrote and told you that I was crook at all, because I am sure I painted things a lot worse than they really were. The old Quacks frightened me a bit but now I am quite sure that I am in good health so ever I was. Anyhow I can hardly see out of my eyes for fat. Hurrah for this time, and according to the good news lately I don't think I will have to write many more letters. Love to all. Link	
AK:2025.20.105	My Dear People	No time to look through this excuse mistakes. France 3/8/16	3 Aug 1916

My Dear People

I suppose it is about time I tried to make up a few more lines, and let you know that I am feeling in the very best of health again, and have every comfort. Things in this outfit are very slow and I often wonder if we are here to take part in the war at all, because we are situated pretty well out of danger, and hardly ever have to go anywhere, where things are at all lively. I often think what an easy and comfortable time, we are having compared with the Infantry, and sometimes feel as though we were wasting time in this blooming show. I mentioned to you before that I had taken on a permanent job as stableman, well all I have to do is to draw the feeds and get them ready, and keep an eye on the mules all day. I never have to go out with the waggons unless there is a shortage of men, or (as I sometimes do) if I ask for a trip. If I go out with the mob at night I am allowed to have the next morning off — “Pie job” “Eh what”.

Page 2

One night I had the luck to land a trip, which took us through a fair sized ruined town, and it's only a shame about the way it is knocked about, as I don't remember seeing one house that wasn't touched by shells. Every window is broken, and there is glass all over the streets. In some places there are great holes in the road (not very nice riding over them in these springless waggons I can tell you) and you can take it from me, it's the work of art to stick to the seat, when going at full speed. In places you have to squeeze past barbed wire entanglements in the streets and altogether (Mothers things make a very pretty show. (I don't think). Fair dinkum you people in N.Z. have no idea what these poor people about here have to put up with, or what things will be like for them after the war. Down here where we are it is nothing to find three or four different families living in one little tin pot cottage. Lately old “Fritz” has been lobbing a few of his (iron rations) in not very far away from us, and it is really a cruel sight to see the women, little children and old men etc. darting out of their houses and going

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for their lives, into a safer place, till the bombardment ceases. Most of them will be sure carrying some little article, which they prize very highly, while the others (mostly women of course) help the old people along. I wonder what the people of N.Z. would think if they had to put up with anything like this, I am dashed glad that my people are away from it all. It is the fun of the world to watch the kiddies though, because as soon as they hear a shell coming they drop on the road and lay as flat as a pancake

till the shell explodes, then they get up and for their lives saying "plenty bombard no bon". As soon as our aeroplanes get up this sort of thing soon stops though, and a little later it is very often our guns turn to have a go.

By the way, that reminds me about the address your people at home put on my letters, because I don't know where you got the idea of my being in a battery from. Surely I didn't mention anything like that, because although I would very much like to be with the guns, I have to stay where I am put, and have to be content to stay in this ammunition column.

Page 4

You see this is only a branch of the Artillery, in to which most of the new reinforcements men are put, and have to wait until there is a vacancy in one of the batteries before they can get a chance at the guns. I should very likely have been out of this by now if I had have kept in good health, but of course having to go to the hospital put the set on things, because now I am considered a new chum to men who came into the outfit while I was away. (Please remember that my correct address is third Brigade ammunition Column (you have the rest of the address correct), I can't say too much about this, because as it is now it might all be crossed out).

In my last letter home I mentioned that none of us had received any gift parcels from N.Z., well just a day or two after I wrote we were issued with a small parcel to two men, parcels containing two tins of milk, small cake of soap, and a small writing pad. This is all we have had so far. Anyhow most of the chaps in this outfit get enough parcels sent to them from their own homes, and (like me) can do very well without this gift stuff. You people look after me very well and it is many thanks to you for keeping me up in every comfort.

Page 5

If it is not too much trouble I would like you to send me a few more pair of socks (I am not cold footed) but I have a very good mate here, who does not receive any of these luxuries, and I would very much like to give him a pair or two. My base kit had socks to burn in it but I haven't seen it since we arrived at France, and am not likely to see it again for some time to come.

Not long ago I ran across two more of the Banks Peninsula men. McPhail from Wainui and Baily from Little Akaloa, both are in the same section and are camped just a little way away from us, so I am suppose we will often meet, and have a chat, as they can give me a good lot of news that I have

		never heard before. Well it is getting late so I suppose I will have to make a dive for my bed before lights out. You can rest assured that everything with me is well, and that I am in the best of health and am making the best of life in this monotonous outfit. My mail all comes along, but is a little bit delayed on account of the wrong address, so in the future you will know that the a before dac is meant to be left as I gave it to you. Hoping all is well with you at home. I remain your loving son, Link	
AK:2025.20.106	My Dear People	Somewhere in France 25/8/16 My Dear People, I don't know what you will be thinking of me, for not writing more than I do, but it is not really my fault, because we are always on the move in this outfit. We just get nicely settled down in a place, when orders come along, that we have to be on the move again, and once or twice we have struck some pretty lively camps in little townships, that are apparently well known to Old Fritz, as he seemed to land the shells in nicely, but without doing much damage. We are just beginning to think ourselves a lucky crowd, as so far, we have not had one casualty, and somehow it has so happened that two of our camps, were each shelled just the day after we left them, and had there have been any one there at the time things would have gone pretty hard with them. However we are now well away from the firing line and a long way, from the place in which we did our first fighting in France. I think it will be a week or two before we have another bit of a flutter, and I suppose you will know long before this letter reaches you that we are going to a fairly lively place, as it seems to me that the things we are doing, that although we are not allowed to tell you where we Page 2	28 Aug 1916

are or what we are doing, that you know almost as soon as we do. For a day or two we were camped in the same town as we were in, before I went to the hospital, and as my friends had made some very good friends there while I was away, our luck was in. My mates had often told me about this place, and the way they were treated when they went there, and no mistake, the people were out on their own. We used to go into the home whenever we liked, and always got a hearty welcome and a feed good enough for the King, and if at any time they were busy, we were allowed to cook our own food. Of course we used to pay for everything we had, but were only allowed to give the price of the meat or eggs etc. It was almost as good as a home to us, and the people took our departure, as if they were our relatives, giving us a great spread on the last night, and told us that if ever we were wounded or sick anywhere in France, to let them know and they would visit us or try to get us every comfort.

All of us who came out of the Mounted Brigade are anxiously waiting for a full account of the last smack up that the Mounted had, because in yesterday's paper we saw where a great number of our old mates, have been killed and have heard of wounded. Among them I saw that Owie Ferris

Page 3

was killed, and have since, heard that Maurice was wounded. The English papers only gave a brief account of the fight and mentioned the names, only of the poor fellows who were killed.

Spence McKay was telling me the other day, that he was looking round one of our Cemetery's, and noticed on one of the graves, the name of H. Bunny Canterbury Infantry, so it looks as if it is Bert Bunny from Akaroa, but of course in the army one can't believe anything he hears, and only half of what he sees, so I'm living in hopes that all these are rumours.

I have had two letters from Maurice since I have been in France, and from all accounts the Mounted men are having a fairly rough time of it and I am beginning to think that we who got out of it are very lucky all the time.

Now for a bit of a sally up. No doubt, when you put my letters in the Akaroa Mail, you mean well, but you don't think about the mistakes they make when they are printing them, and how they strike me. In the last paper that came along I was informed in the heading of one of my own letters, that I was there was in a certain Battle. Well it happens that I have often told my mates, that I was wanted to get into this battery so of course, when they knew of it, coming out in the paper, that I belonged to

the jolly thing, they said it was no wonder I was trying so hard for a transfer. This might not seem much to you, but you see we look for a shift to a battery as a big lift, and for another thing it looked as if I were not telling the truth, and was trying to make myself in a higher position than I am. I am not the only one who gets the Akaroa Mail you know.

Page 4

Our mail was stopped for a day or two, when I wanted to get this letter away, so I gave it up in disgust, but suppose I must have another go at the blooming thing. I am having a good spin with my incoming mail though, as nearly every mail day I get about eight or a dozen letters and always a parcel or two. A big mail seems to put fresh life into a man, but it is almost impossible to answer more than two or three, now and again, especially on times like these, when we are nearly always on the move, and trying to get things in order before having another bit of a fly at Fritz. Of course I know that all my letters do the round, and that the rest of the family will know how things are with me so I never bother writing to them, as I could only them the same news over again. Well I don't know whether it is news or not, but its all we can mention. A good many chaps have fallen in the soup lately for over stepping the mark, in the correspondence, so I don't want to be pulled up in front of the mob, I am taking a wide berth. It's good news to hear that you people (Mother, Father) have been doing the tour of the North Island and inspecting the gold mines up there, but I can't make out why you couldn't have stayed a month or two longer, as surely a good holiday and a long stay with some of those lucky beggars up there would do you more good than driving about with the responsibility of, all those public affairs on your shoulders all the time. Let someone else have a go for a while, or else these things will get you down. Every Akaroa Mail that hops along is full up of Mrs Armstrong and Red Cross work etc, or else Mr Armstrong and his thousands (more of less) of different meetings. (These local bodies ask [xx] for the rest).

Page 5

You are always asking if I have been to England on leave yet. Well for some time past all leave for there has been knocked on the head, but I think we will be getting it again soon, and then I ought to get in early as in this unit they have been letting the men away as the enlisted. There are not a great many here who came away before the sixth, and any man who has been to England since being in the forces, has to miss his turn, so I am anxiously waiting my turn, especially as my mate left N.Z. in the same crowd as myself and has had his people to go to over there.

		One thing you good people always seem to be worrying about is what you should send in your parcels, well I get a good many parcels and always find everything most useful, in fact I am always well supplied with every comfort (thanks to you). The socks I get are a luxury over there, where most of the chaps are nearly always wet-footed. (I always have a good supply but some poor beggars are always short. N.Z. tobacco and cigarettes are a luxury too after our issues stuff. We get an issue once a week, but I suppose you can guess that it's not the best. I could do with a little more in this line, if you can get it. You see although we are nearly always in or near a town, such things as these are not procurable. War news is looking bright and everyone seems to think that the end of this sight, and it's only a shame how we are looking forward to "<u>der tag</u>". Our side seems to coming out victorious, all over the show, and with Rumonia [Romania] in with us, we should smash things up in a very short time now. I am perfectly happy and in the best of health. Hoping this letter finds you all the same, Your loving son Link	
AK:2025.20.107	My Dear People	Somewhere in France 30/9/16 My Dear People Just a few hurried lines while I have a short time to spare, because there is no knowing when another chance will come along. We are kept pretty busy these days and in our spare time are always only too ready to take a bit of a spell or a bit of shut eye of course not thinking how you people at home are worrying about us or wondering why we don't write. Every time a mail comes along, I feel like kicking myself, for not writing more often than I do, because I think how miserable it would be, if you only wrote as often as I do. I never did do much Page 2 writing, but I always like to get a few lines home, to let you know, that I am well and in good spirits, and often think of sending a service card, but by the time you get the jolly thing the news is old and might not be right. Anyhow as long as you get no news, you can rest assured that it is good news and that I am in a fairly busy sort of place. If only I could tell you where we are and a few of our little experiences, I could give you a bag full	30 Sept 1916

of news, but I am afraid that all this will have to wait till better times than these come along. It's only lately that we have realised what war is like, because up to now we had only seen the quiet

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side of things, and have often told ourselves that we could be doing so much good, if we had stayed at home, but now that we are taking part in the real dinkum thing, we are quite contented to stay and do our bit. It is grand to think that we are coming in useful at last, and are doing all that is expected of us. We are being fed up like fighting cocks, and have plenty of timber and stuff to rig up snug little homes for ourselves, so we are set for the winter. My mate and I have made a little house for ourselves to which every improvement is being attached, and I don't think it will be long now before we

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will be able to use the electric light. Old Billy Fleming is complaining about the shortage of water, so I don't think we will take the iron on for a while yet! I often come across the Akaroa boys in the Batteries, but don't get much of a chance to have a yarn to them, as it is a case of go for your life in this place. Stanley Rhodes was telling me that Smithy is wounded and is away to England again. What a lucky beggar he is to get a bit of a baksheesh wound in the wrist and get out of it for a spell. Arthur Jacobson is another one I have seen darting about the roads, but he never has any time to stop, in fact it takes two to see him going. One to say

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here he comes and another to say there he goes.

So far we have not heard anything definite of the smack up our Mounted mates had in Egypt some time ago. We saw in an English paper that Owie Ferris was killed, and have since heard that Maurice was among the wounded, but one can't rely much on what he hears in the army. I can't believe that anything has happened, until the news comes from home.

I have given up the job I had (stableman) and have now got a pair of mules and drive in a team. There was too much of the stay at home business about it so I thought it was best to join the mob, and see what was to be seen, especially in an exciting place like this.

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		You can address me as driver now, I feel much more at home under that name, but I don't profess to know much about these blooming mules, although I am certain that for the work they do here, they are far more suitable than horses. I have never seen anything like them for a good, steady, pull on a heavy load, and under shellfire they behave splendidly. They are not so touchy and mad headed as horses, but they are brutes to steer. Well, it is time I turned in for a wink, I will write again as soon as the chance comes along. Don't worry if you sometimes have to wait a long time for a line, because you might guess what things are like. Your loving son, Lincoln Armstrong I am in great fettle and a perfectly contented and I hope that this finds you all the same. <u>England</u>	
AK:2025.20.108	My dear People	No 1 N.Z. General Hospital Brockenhurst, England 27/10/16 My dear People I am hoping that you have not received any word to the effect that I am wounded, before this letter reaches you, because there is really nothing the matter with me. I certainly got a big shock but the little bit of shell that hit me isn't worth mentioning. We were up on the Somme front at the time, taking ammunition up to the guns of the (famous) <u>13th</u> battery, and were at a standstill in about three feet of mud when old Fritz got on to us. It is a very common occurrence up there to have a few shells land pretty close, but on this day about a dozen big brutes landed all round us killing ten of our horses and making a bit of a hash of five others. How ever a few of the drivers didn't get killed, I can't make out, because I saw men and horses flying in all directions,	27 Oct 1916

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for one shell to lob underneath the team I was in, and send me up to see if I could find Baldwin. The man riding just behind me (in the same team) was knocked flying off his horse and when he got up again did the disappearing trick behind a bit of a mound, to find out if he was badly hurt, but couldn't find a scratch. Something hit me a terrible bang in the ribs and they are a bit tender on it still, although there is no mark there.

After about a dozen shells landed all round us, and half of our men were lying wounded we got the order to unhook and go for our lives. Nearly all of the animals we had left alive were badly out about, but the most trying part of all was to see our mates waiting for the stretcher bearers and crying for help. We were the only team with mules and were the only ones to come out of it with all the animals alive. (You can't beat mules) The only thing that saved us from a big smack up was the soft ground, and mud, because you see the shells

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buried themselves, before they exploded. The officer with us said that he thought it was a big naval gun that was on to us, so we can consider ourselves very lucky all the time to come out of it as we did.

You will probably have seen by the papers that the Somme front is a very deadly show, but you will not have any idea of what it is like especially when there is a bit of a straff on.

Just to give you some idea of where we were. When we first went up there we used to take the ammunition up to the guns at Montauban and I will never forget the very first night, because we were not prepared for anything like the reception we got. Thunder and lightning was child's play to it, but I couldn't help laughing when one of the chaps said to me "I can't make out how it is that some of those shells don't collide in the air." I firmly believe that there were more big guns up there than there were rifles on the Gallipoli. After our first advance we had to go up past Longueval and through Delville Wood, and it was up there that we had all the casualties. The road up there for several days after the advance was almost blocked with dead horses and waggons. We used to lose something near every day we went out, for the start off, till the roads were screened off.

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As soon as we got the big screens up and stopped old Fritz from observing the traffic on the open parts of the road, it was only pot luck whether he did any damage or not. Anyhow it wasn't long before the guns were shifted forward again and put near Flers, but the weather got so bad and the roads so muddy, that we used to have a big job to go right up with waggons, so the Ammunition Column used to cart the "iron rations" about three parts of the way and leave it for the Battery men to pack in.

The N.Z. Infantry were only on the Somme for about three weeks, but the Artillery had been there for seven weeks when I left, and were still going strong and were expecting to stay another ten days. Our first fighting place in France was at Armentières, but that was a very quiet place and there, we had every comfort in the way of huts for the men, and with civilians being about there we could get almost anything we wanted. The roads were all paved and a trip out now and then was a pleasure, as the shells hardly ever used to come anywhere near us.

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Anyhow I am in England now, and although it won't be very long before I am discharged from hospital, it will be some time before I get back to France again, because you see as soon as a man gets fit enough to work again he is given two or three weeks leave and then sent to a training camp to join up with the late reinforcements, who are camped somewhere in England. The worst of it is that if I get my leave soon, I won't have anywhere to go to in particular, because never thinking that I would even be leaving my unit, when I was ordered to go to the dressing station, I left everything I had behind addresses and all. In fact two of us laughed at the idea of being sent to the dressing station, but were made to go and were passed on from one to another, until we arrived at Rouen, where we struck an Australian hospital and were examined by a doctor for the first time. We would never have got over here had we struck any other doctor but this Australian, because we are only marked a little bit. As soon as he saw that we were New Zealanders he booked us for "Blighty."

Page 6 (final page)

Well I must ring off for this time as I want to catch this mail. I will get my mate to send all the things I want on to me, so I may get them before I am discharged. Mrs. Welby's letter and addresses had just come to light the day before I got hit, but I left it behind with the others. Hoping that all is going well with you at home, and trusting that you are not worrying about me,

		I remain Your loving son Link	
AK:2025.20. 109	My Dear People	P.S. I could write a bag full of news about all the old historic places I visited in London, but of course you know all the history as well as I do, only I have seen the <u>Fair Dinkum</u> places. King George & Queen Mary Victoria League Club, Ramsay Lodge, The Mound, Edinburgh 16/11/16 My Dear People As you see, I am having a good tour round and making the best of my fortnight's leave. I spent nearly a week in London, and every day was taken by a Y.M.C.A. guide to most of the old historic places. We were taken to the Tower of London, St Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, the Houses of Parliament, all through the King's stables at Buckingham Palace, through the Roman Catholic cathedral and to all sorts of different places, (too many to mention). When in London I stayed at the Y.M.C.A. club, which is meant mostly for overseas soldiers. Living was very cheap and we received the best of attention whilst there. It seems to me that all the ladies who help to run these places, for the benefit of us Colonials, do it for nothing, and the men who do all the showing round and thoroughly explain everything as they go, are business men, who give up two days every week for our benefit. The Tower of London was of course the most interesting place of all, because, it has such a history, and in it we saw all the armour and the weapons of battle that were used right from the first. Page 2 All the Crowns and Coronation gear for centuries past are kept there too, I must have seen millions of pounds worth of the best jewels in the world, in fact I had half a mind to duck off with the crown, that was worn by our present King at his coronation and to take the big diamond out. In St Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey, we were shown the burial places of all the greatest men of English history, but, owing to the "Zepp scare,"	16 Nov 1916

all the most valuable Tombs were covered with sand bags so we were unable to see what was placed over the graves of men such as Lord Nelson. The Coronation Chair and stone, that has been in use of late, was moved away into safety, but an imitation one was put up in the very place where it stood.

One of the Members of Parliamentary took us all over the Parliament Buildings, and took us in the House of Lords and the House of Commons, he even let us sit in the Premier's and the Speaker's chairs. It's only a shame how I kidded myself when I got up from the Premier's chair and thumped the box which the member (with us) said, had been badly banged about by the Premier, when a very heated debate was on tap! It was in there that we were shown the very death warrant of King Charles I, which of course was very old and it was impossible for us to make head or tail of the writing, but it was the fair dinkum "death Warrant."

We did not get to Buckingham Palace, but we were quite near it, and saw a part of the grounds. One of the King's head grooms took us all over the stables, and showed us all the horses, harness, and carriages that are used on different occasions. We did not see the famous grey horses or any of his racehorses, as they like a great

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many more valuable things in London are taken away for safety in case of a Zepp raid. The coronation carriage was one of the most beautiful things I have ever seen, and I can quite believe (that when our guide told us it was one hundred and fifty odd years old, weighed four and a half tons and took three and a half years to build) that he was right. I didn't altogether go nap on the blooming horses I saw there, as they looked fairly old, and were big-boned brutes, standing about seventeen hands, but I suppose all the very flash harness would show them off. Fancy a set of harness, for two horses, weighing about two hundred and eighty pounds, I don't think it would come in very useful for any of you over that way.

Well I saw a good bit of London and as my pass was made out for Inverness (as far north as we are allowed to go) I thought I would like to have a bit of a look round Scotland while I had a free return ticket. I have not been up here very long yet, but long enough to find out what a grand lot of people the Scotch are, in fact everywhere I go it seems almost like being at home, the people are so hospitable. I have always been under the impression that Scotch people are very mean, but after the way we have been treated by them, I am quite satisfied that they are just the opposite.

The clubs for Overseas Soldiers in London were very good and we were well attended to, but somehow the people didn't seem to be so free and homely as the Scotch.

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Of course, as soon as we got here we were asked by the girls who run this Club, where we came from, and had to write our names and the place of our birth in their little books, and to my surprise, one of the girls said that she had been to Akaroa visiting friends. I would liked to have asked her a few questions as to who her friends were there and that sort of thing, but they rushed us off for something to eat and I have not seen her since, but I must see her again before I go, because it will be interesting to talk to anyone who knows little Akaroa.

This morning a very old lady stuck me up to ask me if I knew her son who was in the N.Z. Rifle Brigade, as she told me he was a Canterbury man and came with the tenth Reinforcements. She told me his name was Steele, and that he had been killed in the Somme battle. I couldn't give her much of the information she wanted, but she begged me to visit her house and talk about N.Z., as she said she loved the sight of New Zealanders, but could not get many who would have much to do with her. She also told me that Wilding, the great tennis player (who was killed some time ago) was a nephew of hers. I felt really sorry for the poor old lady and promised to visit her tomorrow afternoon, as she seemed so keen on my going, and I thought that perhaps I would be doing good work.

Well look here, I must buzz off and have a bit of a look round, as my time up here is very short and I must see all I can. I am fairly certain that I will spend Christmas in England, because when I go back from leave I have to report at the convalescent camp at Codford, and will be kept there for a week or two before being sent to a training camp on the Salisbury Plains.

I am feeling tip-top.

Love to all

Link

AK:2025.20.110	My Dear People	<i>YMCA Letterhead</i> Stationed at: Codford, Salisbury Plains Date: December 3rd, 1916 My Dear People, Here I am back to the old drill again, and by jove don't I find it a hard life, after having such an enjoyable three weeks furlough. Us as a rule fellows who go out on sick leave are not allowed any more than a fortnight, and that is all I was supposed to have taken, but as Bill Massey was up in Edinburgh while we were there, some of the chaps asked him to recommend them for an extra seven days leave, which he did, and it was granted. Of course as usual I was out when this N.Z. party were going through the Soldiers Lodge, and my name was not put on the list for extended leave, so when I got back and the boys told me what I had missed, I was whipping the cat a bit, but as soon as the girls (who ran the place) heard that I had missed the buss, they wrote to the <u>Premier</u> explaining that I had been overlooked, and on the following night were able to give me a big surprise by handing me a telegram, saying that I had been granted seven days extra leave. Now this is only one little instance, of the many good turns done to me while in Scotland, but it will give you some idea of the way they look Page 2 after the colonials up that way. Anyhow Scotland will do me in fact I look at it, as being a home away from home, and the first chance I get, I will make a straight dive for somewhere up that way. Win sent me the address of a Mrs Ross, who lives up near Dundee and I am longing for a chance to get up and see her, because Ross is a real Scotch name, and I know exactly what sort of a good time I could have up there. Of course when I came back from leave there were about thirty letters waiting for me and to my sorrow this letter of Win's, must have just missed the buss. Among this pile of letters I found a cablegram that you people had sent to me asking for a reply as to how I was progressing, but of course it isn't worth while answering it now, because by this time you will have received a letter from me explaining. Fancy it not reaching me before I went on leave, and then it was a very funny thing for the people here to hang on to it, when they knew what address would find me in my absence from camp. The thought to wire and let you know that I was only slightly wounded, didn't enter my head, because I thought, that even if the silly beggars did report to you, that I had been hit, they would report me slightly wounded. When no word came from home, I felt quite easy about the subject and	3 Dec 1916
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thought that for once in their blooming lives, the people at headquarters had fixed something up alright.

After I had been in Edinburgh for two or three days, I discovered that Pat Brocherie, was staying at the same place as I was, so as I had been flying round on my own, you might guess how nice it was to pick up an old pal to knock round with.

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Pat and his mate were going up to Inverness to have a look at the country, going up one day and back the next, so I thought it a good plan and went with them. On our way we went over the great Forth bridge, and expected to cross the famous Tay Bridge, but to our disappointment, were on the wrong rout.

Inverness would be a very pretty little place to go to in the summer time, as there are some grand walks along the Caledonian Canal, as well as some very interesting things to see on the way, but at this time of the year, there is too much jolly snow about up there, to go far and besides the heather not being in bloom, spoilt things a bit. When in the train we must have passed miles and miles of country covered with nothing but heather, so just imagine what a sight that would be if one could only see it in full bloom. Then again we expected to see some of the famous highland cattle and goats, but not a beggar did we see. Anyhow if the country we saw is the kind of land to suit them, I am quite satisfied that the brutes would live anywhere. There are supposed to be a great number of deer up there too, but somehow our luck must have been out, because there was nothing doing while we were on the track.

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In my last letter home I told you that I was going out to spend an afternoon with an old lady, who stuck me up in Edinburgh. Well I went out to see her, and very nice I found it, because I found that she had two jolly fine daughters, who made me at home right away, in fact I was sorry that I hadn't met them before. I thought that I only had a couple of days to run then, (not knowing about my extended leave). I have been asked a few questions in my time, but never so many as these people asked me about good old N.Z. You see this young Steele had been in N.Z. for something like ten years, and was killed in France without ever being able to see his people, so they were naturally very keen on hearing something of the little

country. Anyhow I got a dash good hearing, they even wanted me to stay the rest of my furlough with them, and I think if I hadn't picked up some mates I would have done, because Mrs. Steele would have bet her life that I was some relation to them, as she said that her people were Armstrongs, but came from the north of Scotland. I don't know where our lot of Armstrongs came from, all I know is that the Grand dad came from America. You might let me know, I am interested now, because fair dinkum I am thinking about hanging my blooming hat up there. It was just a day or two after this, I was walking along the street on my own, when I felt a gentle little tap on the shoulder, and here was one of these flaming girls asking me if I could find time to visit them again. Bet your life I went, so you see "Mother" things are getting serious. "I don't think".

I found them to be very respectable people, and they gave me a very kind invitation to make their house my home whenever I wished, and told...

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December 3, 1916 Yesterday my birthday, and the anniversary of my first shot. Still going strong.

...me that if I gave them my address they would be only too pleased to send me all sorts of comforts, they even offered to fit me out with a complete set of underclothing while I was up there. Wish I could take off old Jimmy. There you are that is another little bit of what the Scotch people are like.

Now Mother you always seem very anxious to hear something about the Lady Liverpool's parcels, well to tell you the honest truth, in the last ten months, I have only heard the boys speak of them once and that was when we received one parcel between two men, other than this I would not even know that such a branch had been formed if you didn't mention it. Now you know that during most of this time, I have been up where such things as you mention would be very acceptable, but our unit has only once had the benefit of receiving these luxuries, and outside our mob, I have never even heard it mentioned. Of course the Mounted and Infantry might receive them. I will inquire.

By cripes that old pet sheep must have been a blooming bounder to land £135, or else Father must have put in a bit of a tale when he was selling her. After that Dad I think you had better start selling all your stock.

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You might think that I was a bit silly, not to have gone to Mr. McKenzie and try to get some money when I was going on my leave, but I was holding fairly well at the time and I thought, if I didn't bother you for money, that it would be a quiet little way of assuring you that I am in no way going the pace since I left home. However two bob a day doesn't mount up very quickly, and I am not very flash at present, so if we get a week's leave at Christmas or New Year time, you will quite understand if I put the hard word in for a little bit of money. I hear rumours that we are getting leave then. Of course we will have to pay half our own train fare next time, and I will be making for blooming Scotland, so I have my doubts if I can save enough to do the trip.

It might interest you to know that it is an almost certain thing, that I won't get back to France till after the winter, because you see after they pass me as fit, from this camp, I will be sent to our base on the Salisbury Plain Sling (not far from here) where everyone has to go through a fairly solid training, before going to France. It will take a lot of training to make a good artillery man out of me, because all I know about the work is what I learned at the front, where of course a "slap dasher" (as long as he can manage animals) is good enough, but I will have to pick up all the red tape part of the business before being allowed to leave Sling. It will be a hard life having to go into solid training again, after having been through the real dinkum thing and doing the work practically at our own judgement. I think they will have to give some of us up as a bad job.

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All the same it will be a good win, if I can get out of going to France till after the winter, because I think she is going to be a fair sneezer over here, saying nothing of what the poor beggars in France will have to put up with. I feel jolly glad now that I left all my valuables behind in France, because I had a letter from my mate yesterday, telling me that he is hanging on to everything that is of any value to me, and that he is making good use of my sleeping bag, sox and other things. Well this chap (Dick Sedgwick by name) has been as good as a brother to me, although he is about 40 years old, and has always been a good straight fellow. He has more need for these comforts than I have, so I will let him keep them till I have to go back to France myself.

Well time is getting on so I suppose I will have to slope off to bed. "Keep the home fires burning" and don't worry about me, because I am set for the winter.

		I remain, Your loving son, Link Page 8 If ever you feel inclined to do my mate a good turn <u>Mother</u> in return for the way in which he has looked after me, and for the many good turns he has done me, the following address will find him. Socks and pipe tobacco or cigarettes are what he would value most, and I happen to know that he doesn't receive many of these comforts. He left N.Z. with Maurice and I and has been with me ever since. 7/1285 Driver R. Sedgwick 3rd D A C N.Z. Field Artillery, N.Z.E.F. G.P.O. Wellington	
AK:2025.20. 111	My Dear People	NZ Command Depot Codford Wiltshire 12/12/16 My Dear People As there is a mail going today I suppose it is up to me to drop a few lines, to let you know that things with me are going tip top. Since last writing home I have received your cable, about the five pounds, and have been notified by the Pay Master that it has been added to my credit, so it is quite safe, where it is till I want it. Old Bill Massey was in this camp a couple of days ago, having a look round, and in his speech told us that arrangements had been made to give as many of the New Zealand troops as possible a Christmas or New Years' leave, so if I get it, that fiver will come in very handy. I could spend a very happy Christmas in Edinburgh among my friends. Anyhow no matter where I am I think I'll have a better chance of my enjoying this Christmas much more than the last one, which you will remember was spent at sea. I always thought that old N.Z. was a cold place in Winter, but compared	12 Dec 1916

with this

Page 2

place it is quite warm. Nearly every morning since I have been back from leave, it has either been snowing a treat or else there has been a very heavy frost, and some mornings we have had to go without a wash on account of the taps being frozen, but I suppose the poor beggars in France are far worse off than we are, so we ought to be thankful that we have every comfort, and no blooming "whiz bangs" flying about!

I don't suppose that it will be long now, before I am sent down to the base camp at Sling and I am not very keen on taking on solid training again, in fact I would far sooner go straight back to France. There is too much red tape about these base camps as a rule, and if they make things too hot I will apply for a transfer back to the mounted again. The Mounted Brigade must be very short of men, because they are asking all men who left N.Z. in the mounted (and have since been transferred to other units) to join up again. The Artillery will do me, but it is a very spick and span outfit, and they are very strict about every little detail, (especially these late reinforcement officers). Anyhow I will give it another go, but if they start begging me about too much and expect a chap to do a lot of useless training, I would sooner go back to Egypt.

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My mail must me [be] darling about all over England, because I have only received a few letters and parcels since I was hit, and when the parcels do find me they are not in the best of order. The two last to come along contained cake, but in each case the cake had gone bad although the other things kept alright. I don't think it is worth while sending a cake unless it is a good keeper. The family cake that Evelyn made was also a failure, as were most of them that you bought from the patriotic affairs.

Well I have very little news this time, but I thought (as you seem to worry so much when you don't get a letter) I had better drop a line of some sort. Anyhow you can rest assured that no matter where I am I am always looking on the bright side of things and can make the myself quite comfortable anywhere.

Hurrah till next mail

Love to All

		Link	
AK:2025.20.112	Bert Armstrong	N.Z. Command Depot Codford Wiltshire 15/12/16 Dear Bert Many thanks for writing to me as often as you have been doing lately. I know that now you have settled down to farming, you have not much time for writing letters and when I never answer them, it is jolly decent of you to keep on waving the flag. I always take a big interest as to how all my brothers are getting on, but with the exception of a letter or two from Manawaru occasionally the only news I get of you chaps is from home. The old people who are heroes for looking after me the way they do I think they must spend a small fortune to keep me going with all the comforts they supply. You know Dawson that one has to go away from home for a while, and see some of the hardships of the world, before he fully realises what the real value of a good home is, but all the same I think that a look round the blooming world at a time like this would make a man of anyone, as long as Page 2 he leads a straight life. I know as far as I am concerned that this little tour will do me the world of good, because I am getting more experience out of this, than I would have done by staying at home for a hundred years. Your last letter has given me fresh heart altogether, because I have often thought that some of you chaps would be a bit too <u>high-strung</u> to wait until you were compelled to join the forces. If I were a married man and knew as much about this game as I know now, it would take all the blooming traction engines in N.Z. to shift me. In my opinion if a single man is fit and won't join up he is nothing but a waster, but if a married man wants to take the game on (if he thinks anything of those who depend on him) well he is a darned fool and should have his napper seen to. No, I don't want to see any more of my brothers in the army it is not the game it is cracked up to be. Up till now I have had a good spin, because when you come to think that I have been a soldier for nearly two years and have only had one little	15 Dec 1916

		scratch, it is a pretty good record. I have seen a good few chaps killed and wounded quite near me, and at times have wondered how it was that I didn't get a crack. There is truth in the old saying a miss is as good as a mile. Until we went on to the Somme front, I had no idea whatever, what a fair dinkum war was like, but now I have seen the real thing, and never want to see anything like it again. The N.Z. Artillery was in action on the Somme for eight weeks and it was only three days before they pulled out (wet swag) that I got a bit of a crack, so you might guess that I had a good skin full of it, and was not a bit sorry to get out of it for a while. The casualty list will have given you some idea of what things were like, but you want to see these things before you really know anything at all about them. By jove Dawson I would like to have one of those good old nights by the fireside again, and have <u>my</u> turn to tell <u>you</u> of my experiences. The time may be a long way off yet but still I am looking forward to visiting you. By this time you will have seen by my letter home that I was not very badly hurt, but I am not very proud of the wound so I am not saying much about it. I wasn't even sure that I was hit till we got out of danger, so you might guess that I was a bit excited and my knees were knocking together for a while. The piece that hit me went through the back of Page 3 my offside mule first so of course that stopped the force of it a little bit. Anyhow I might tell you that I was a lucky beggar to land a trip to Blighty out of it. I have just come back from three weeks' furlough and at Christmas time I am getting another five days leave, so I am having a dash good run, don't you think. Anyhow I don't suppose it will be long now before I have to go back to France again, because I expect to be sent to the base camp at Sling, as soon as I come back from Xmas leave, and once I get to the base I will volunteer for the front, sooner than go through a lot of training. France is safe enough for me as long as they keep the New Zealanders away from the Somme. In your letter you said that Mill was sending a parcel and a few lines, well they have not yet come to light, so I suppose (like a good many of the things you people sent me), they have gone astray. Well old sport it is just on parade time so I will have to pull out. Kind regards to you all.	
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		Your affectionate Brother, Link Don't forget to stay at home and keep the <u>home fires burning</u> ready for my return. Home was never like this – thank God. Page 5 7/1184 Driver L. F. Armstrong N.Z. Field Artillery c/o G.P.O. Wellington This is all that is necessary until further notice, because I don't belong to any unit now. Perhaps it would be as well to add: Base Camp, England Don't take any notice of the little fancy touches such as "3rd Battalion A Company". I don't know where that idea came from as there is no such thing as a Battalion or Company in the Artillery. B. A. C. was meant for Brigade Ammunition Column.	
AK:2025.20.113	My Dear People	N.Z. Command Depot Codford Wilts 17/12/16 My Dear People Another mail leaves here today so I must make an attempt to drop you a few lines, as I might miss the next mail if I am on my travels. In my last letter I told you that I had applied for Xmas leave. Well, it has been granted from 22nd till the 27th so I should have plenty of time to go to Edinburgh. I might put in the <u>hard</u> word for extension. By the time I am finished with the soldiering business I will be able to find my way about anywhere, because since I have been in England I seem to have done all the darting about on my own.	17 Dec 1916

I thought it would be a bit of a contrast to find my way about London, but a man can never go wrong there if he strikes an underground railway, because these blooming tubes have a stopping place at almost every street. Of course it is a bit of a beggar at night time because the streets are almost in darkness, and if a heavy fog comes along it is a case of almost feeling your way about, as all traffic is stopped so as to avoid accidents.

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They tell me that before going back to France we can get another weeks leave (especially men who fought on Gallipoli) so we are not doing so badly, but I am afraid that my pay book won't stand the strain. If I do happen to get it I will have to send home for some more jinx, so if you receive a cable you will know that I am out on the spree again.

I see by the Akaroa Mails that a good many of the Peninsula boys have been wounded, but very few killed, so considering all things I think that we are coming out of it very well. The Somme casualty list will make a few of the shirkers over there shake in their shoes a bit, I should imagine, and will put a set to the volunteer system.

Yesterday I ran across Tom McGuire, he is in the hospital here, and is looking pretty crook on it. I was only talking to him for about five minutes but promised to go up and see him again this afternoon. The silly beggar was telling me that he could get back to N.Z. if he liked to try, but says he would not like to go until he has seen a little bit more scrap. He says that it won't be long before he is fit to go back to Egypt

Page 3

and wants me to join the Mounted again and go back with him, but I don't like his chances of lasting out a rough life for very long. I know if I were in his place I wouldn't give the Quacks any peace till they sent me back to N.Z., but as it is I am too blooming fit.

By cripes if all my Christmas parcels come to light I will have enough tucker to keep me going till après la guerre.

In your last letter you mentioned that a returned soldier by the name of Wardell was down in Akaroa well I know him well as he was nearly always in the same tent as I was when training in N.Z., but he was never a great friend of mine. From what I have heard I don't think he could have

		received a very honourable discharge from the army. When in the hospital this last time I got a very good idea of the work you good people are doing for the Red Cross, because we received many a little comfort from the gift stores, and as I was one of a party working for two solid days straightening up freshly arrived stuff I saw every little comfort under the sun. All the same it was no game for me folding up every different little article over again, but I had Page 4 to go about it with a big smile, because the woman in charge was so very particular about every detail that she reminded me of Mother. In fact I looked two or three times to make sure that she wasn't, and several time had it on the tip of my tongue to say <u>this will make a pretty show</u>. Well it is time I buzzed off to see Tom so hurrah for this time. Hope you are all keeping as well as I am. Your loving Son Link No need to put B.A.C on my letters now, as I don't belong to any unit at present. N.Z. Post Office Base, England will always find me no matter where I go to, as I will notify them where I am. It is too blooming cold to write today, I am shivering like mad.	
Folder 3 AK:2025.20. 114	My Dear People	2 January 1917 Codford My Dear People I am now in London on my way back to camp and as I have to wait an hour or two for a train, thought a few lines home would not go astray. I left camp with the intention of spending six day Xmas leave in Edinburgh, but that didn't seem long enough for me, so I applied for an extension over the New Year and got it. I had nerve to ask for an extension after having an extra week just a month ago, but I thought I would give it a blooming go as the worst the beggars could do was to say "no." Well, I spent the whole fortnight at the Overseas Soldiers Club in Edinburgh where everything was	2 Jan 1917

		well prepared to make things as much like home as possible for us. On Christmas Day we were given as good a feed as anyone could wish for and I think the dinner was as good as I've ever had. In the afternoon games and competitions of all sorts were held and quite decent prizes given, but I didn't take part in any as I went down town to send for more leave, and while down there had my blooming photo taken (will send one next mail if they are any good). After a good afternoon's entertainment a flash tea was dished out to us Page 2 and like all the rest of the meals that day it was free of charge, so you might imagine that the Colonials who spent their Xmas in Edinburgh had a dash good time. Seeing that Christmas is never hardly recognized in Scotland, it was jolly decent of the people to give us such a fine turn out, it just shows what the people up there think of Colonials. Christmas Eve was not celebrated at all and on Xmas Day nearly all the shops were kept open as usual, in fact, I think the Banks were the only places closed. Funny don't you think? New Year was a lively time though and seems to be <u>the time</u> in Scotland as I think that everyone who can get about at all turns out to ring in the New Year. Every Scotty of course takes a bottle of whisky with him to celebrate the occasion so of course to hear the bells is impossible. After midnight most of the people go to other homes where they have a feast waiting for them and spend the rest of the night in singing, songs, dancing, or playing games. I had heard a great deal about the festivities at New Year time so when I was invited to join a party I of course jumped at the chance. The house I went to was a very respectable place, and I suppose I may as well tell you that the only interesting liquor I saw there was a bottle of wine, and as there were twenty of us, nobody went home with a big head. We danced, sang, played games, and eat our blooming heads off till daylight came and then thought about going home. I arrived back to the Club at eight in the morning, so of course didn't bother about going to bed, and am still feeling the effects of that night out. Page 3 When up in Edinburgh I went to visit my old friends the Steeles, but somehow they make too much fuss, and always want to do something for me. They gave me a dandy pocket book and I believe have sent some parcels to camp for me. Mrs Steele asked for your address as she said she would write to you and tell you how I was getting on. Look out Mother and	
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		don't go making any rash promises for the daughter, as they are always talking about going N.Z. Well anyhow I had a real good holiday and only for your thoughtfulness in sending me some money I would have missed it. I am sending a pay book which I have filled up, it has been with me ever since I left N.Z. and has the names of most of the places I have been in all through this outfit. "In the field" means of course and in the battle fields. Most of the men who have signed the book have gone under. Hoping it gets home alright, and trusting that this little note finds you all in the best of health and spirits. P.S. My mate is getting very anxious to be away so I must be off. I Remain Your Loving Son, Link	
AK:2025.20.115	My Dear People	New Zealand Command Depot Codford Wilts 8/1/17 My Dear People, It is well over a month since I last heard from home so you might guess how anxious I am to receive a letter from you. This is the first time I have had to wait so long and I'm beginning to think that my mail has gone astray. My parcels are coming along alright, but some are opening up in a pretty crook state especially those containing cake. The Xmas cake from home looked to be a beauty on the outside but when I cut it, I was sadly disappointed, and another little cake in a square tin had also gone bad. I don't like telling you about this because I know what a lot of work you must have put in with them, but I thought I had better break the news, so you will know that it is not worth while sending cake unless it is a real good one and packed absolutely air-tight. The tin containing the Xmas cake was not air-tight when it reached me. Today I received a beautiful Xmas cake from Win & Arthur and it opened up as fresh as a daisy, so you see my luck is not out altogether. Anyhow I had a dash good time out in Edinburgh on Christmas Day so I suppose I	8 January 1917

can't growl.

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(Note at top: "This is the universal Australian badge" [referring to letterhead 'Australian Commonwealth Military Forces']

I should have been away from this camp long ago, but I believe the N.Z. Base Camp at Sling is absolutely full up and they are going to shift our Artillery up to Aldershot, so we are waiting here till they get settled down properly. I believe there is a big Tommy camp at Aldershot so we should have every convenience there, and I believe it is not far from London, so we will be set for week end leave.

Anyhow I don't care a dash where we go as long as they take us to a warmer and pleasant place than this blooming Codford. I heard a rumour that we were going up to New Castle but that is too good to be true as it is not so very far from Edinburgh. Some of my Scottish friends send me papers and parcels of all descriptions so you might guess that I am not doing too bad, but all the same I could do without them, because it makes more letters for me to write.

By cripes when I come back (not very long now) I will have some nice little tales to tell. You wouldn't believe how ignorant some of the people over here are about New Zealand some of them would make a cat laugh with the silly questions they ask. Some of them think that the only inhabitants of N.Z. are black people and that we really come from a part of Australia that is named after it, some think that it is still more than half uncivilised, while others think

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that the country is very rough and covered with bush and fern and is full of all sorts of dangerous animals. I was in a carriage with a man who I would take to be fairly well up in the world (when going to Scotland last) and struck up a conversation about N.Z. with him. He said he understood that anyone could get land over there merely for the asking for it and when I told him that if he wanted to buy a real decent small farm over there he would have to pay up to £40 or £50 or more an acre for it, he laughed and said he knew the land in one of the biggest towns might bring that. I thought about the Ward affair so told him for a bit of a lark that I knew of an instance where a farm in a country place was sold for £80 an acre, but this spoilt my fun with him, as sooner than call me a liar straight out he closed the conversation and started talking to someone else. You won't

		believe any of this I know, but all these little questions I can assure you, are what different people have put to me. Numbers of people won't event believe that there are trains or motor cars over there. Wait till I come home. I will tell you a lot more that will make you laugh for a week. This just shows you what silly beggars there are in the blooming world, because if they only went to London and saw all the different stuff that was sent from N.Z. Page 4 they would quickly get some idea of what sort of country it is. When in London I went down to the store where all the frozen meat from N.Z. was put, as soon as it arrived, and I think if I had have wanted to go all over the show, I would have been walking yet. I did see the total number of carcass sent over each month (on the book), but not thinking to take note of it I can't remember just now. I will go again when I am in London someday, because anything like that is handy to know over here. If there is any truth in what the papers say, I don't think I will see any more fighting, because it looks as if this Spring is going to see the last of the war. It appears to me that all hands are looking for peace, as England is feeling the pinch a bit now too, but I only hope we go hang it out till we take a big piece out of old Fritz and settle him for all time. As far as I am concerned they can knock off now and call it a draw because my American blood is just beginning to come to light and is giving me the neutral feeling. Well I must ring off for this time, as I can't think of anything to write about. I am anxiously waiting for a letter from home to find out what news you received when I was wounded and how you took it, when I didn't send any word. Your Loving Son, Link	
AK:2025.20.116	My Dear People	[<i>Australian Commonwealth Military Forces letterhead</i>] Talavera Barracks Aldershot 2/1/17	21 Jan 1917

My Dear People,

Today I received a big bundle of letters from home dated from October to December, so you might have some idea of how our letters get boxed up. Why, a fortnight ago I received two letters from you that were written in November so I can't make out how it is that the silly beggars couldn't have sent the earlier mail along before this.

I was sorry to hear that you worried so much about my being wounded, as I suppose it was really my fault for not sending a cable and letting you know that I was only slightly hit, but I suppose it is not much use apologising now.

When it was done (20th Oct) I was whipping the cat, because it was not a little bit more serious, as I thought it would never take me to "Blighty". If ever you hear of anyone being wounded and not reported dangerously wounded you can always rest assured that whoever it is, he is patting himself on the back and thinking what a lucky beggar he is to get out of it for a while. My mate over in France is always writing to me, and telling me what a lucky beggar

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I am to be out of France for the winter and says he would give almost anything to land a similar crack.

It is pretty hard lines on him when you come to think that he came away with the Sixth and has not yet had one spell, (especially as his people live over here in England). He tells me they are back in the Armentieres again where there is not much doing in the fighting line at present and says they are in the most comfortable quarters they have struck through the piece, so at that rate our Artillery won't be calling for many reinforcements just yet. I am not going to be in a hurry to go back, but as I am marked as fit for service abroad again I might have to go over any time now.

Some of the fellows who came to this camp from Codford with me have already been warned that they will have to go away with the next mob. I don't know why it is, but as a rule all the old hands are sent back before men who have never seen active service. Well I don't give a dash when they send me back, because so far as I can see the only difference is that the men who are sent away now will have to stay at the base in Etaples till they are wanted, while the men who are kept here training will get to the firing line just as quickly. I believe that all our Batteries in France are going

to be made stronger in the spring and that the men who go through a proper course

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of training over here will be taken right into it when everything is ready, so if I am here for a while I should be lucky enough to get into a Battery instead of the Amm. Column.

Now in your last letters you seemed to be very anxious to hear something about Codford as Mr Hayward seems to have given it a good name. Well my opinion about Codford is that it is the coldest and most miserable place I have ever been in and as for the beautiful scenery I certainly didn't see anything worth writing home about and didn't hear of any historical places to visit about there (within walking distance). When there we used to go out for a rout march every day and I think we were taken out in every different direction and in my travels I never came across anything that came up to good old N.Z. scenery. The town Codford is not as big as Akaroa and is not in the running with it as far as conveniences go, but of course it is hardly fair to you to compare any of these places with Akaroa, because (as I have found out myself in my travels) it is a well known fact that Akaroa is the most beautiful spot in the world. Anyhow it is to me because I have learnt that there is no place like home. Well for those parts of the time I was in Codford the ground was white with either snow or frost and there was never enough sun during the day to melt it. I know you won't believe this but one morning...

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I saw a little pony (renowned) absolutely white all over with frost. Another thing I can tell you about the place is that I know for a perfect fact that about 300 Canadians died there last year from pneumonia. I can't recommend it at all.

You will see that I am now in Aldershot which as I told you before is only about 35 miles from London and as we are in barracks here you might guess that we have struck a good home. The town is just simply surrounded with these barracks which remind me of big three-storied boarding houses. We are better off here than we ever were at Codford (in huts) because we have proper beds and mattresses to sleep on, and the parade grounds are absolutely free from mud. Of course we have not got the guns and horses yet so I suppose when they come it will all be shifted away from the town and won't have such comfort.

Aldershot is a fair sized town and every night there is theatre and places of that sort to go to, but I suppose you will quite follow me when I say that it is a good place to keep out of at night time as there are too many soldiers and Pubs about and of course the consequence is that the majority of the people one sees about here are not the best of company. Anyhow the only time I visit the town is when I want to buy anything. It comes in handy for that. It is the best camp I have struck since I joined the army and that's all that worries me.

Page 5

By cripes I have forgotten whether I thanked you for cabling Xmas greetings. I received the cable about a week before Xmas. While I am on the cable stakes it reminds me that Father when sending money to me was advised to send a separate cable to me to warn me it was coming, well I think it was quite unnecessary to send extra word, because no matter where the money is sent to as soon as it arrives the people to whom it is sent send through word that the money has arrived. As a matter of fact I received word from the pay office that £5 was waiting for me, before Father's cable arrived. If I was sure I would be in this country for some time yet I would send for more money, but as it is now I may be away before I got a reply, so I will leave things as they are. Anyhow all week end leave from here has been cancelled, and as we will only get four more days' leave (embarkation leave) before going to France I think I will be able to hang it out in London on what I have got in my pay book.

I sent my old pay book home when in London last. I hope you got it alright, because it is a bon souvenir.

Now Mother you have been asking about some fancy shirts that are being sent out in the Lady Liverpool fund, well I have never seen or heard anything about them (like the rest of the stuff from that fund) but if they are the sort you mentioned I would be very pleased if you would send some for trial (anything to stop the scratching when there is no bath about).

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Well, I suppose it is about time I pulled up for this time as it is too blooming cold to sit here long. I am sending you a few postcards of this famous Codford but couldn't get any of the camp as they are not allowed to be sold.

Last Sunday Tom McGuire, Brocherie and his mate and I had our photo

		taken if they turn out any good Tom is going to send me three and I will forward one on to you. Your Loving Son, Lincoln	
AK:2025.20.117	My Dear People	P.S. The other Peninsula boys I met were Haylock (son of Alf Haylock) and Allen Turner an old high school mate. He used to live in Wainui. Talavera Barracks Aldershot 31/1/17 My Dear People As I have just come back from my embarkation leave to London so I suppose I will have to give an account of myself. I would liked to have gone further than London, but couldn't do it in the time. The first man I saw when I got into a soldier's Club to book a bed was Ernest Woodill and a little while afterwards I ran across Cecil Rhodes and a few more Peninsula boys. It seems funny that I should strike the same Club to stay in as these boys, especially in Mighty London where there are hundreds of these Clubs. Of course these chaps have not long arrived here from N.Z., so I got some of the latest news out of them and it was good to hear that all I am interested in over in that part of the world is going so well. I spent three whole days with them so for once my stay in London was most enjoyable. I believe Leslie Kearnly and Henning Page 2 were up there somewhere also, but I couldn't find them not even at the railway station when I went to see the other boys off. There was a special train running to their camp so I went down to see the boys off, at the same time hoping to see these other two but there was too big a crowd. Another fellow I met was Kelly (from Duvauchelle) who delivered a very nice little message that Evelyn gave him for me just before the troopship left Wellington. It was so jolly decent to meet all these chaps and hear all the latest, that somehow I think I must have dreamt all I heard from them. You could have knocked the beggars over with a feather when I first walked up to them and gave them a slap on the back and introduced myself. I was too much taken up with these chaps to see many interesting places in London, of course we went to a theatre every night, but outside	31 Jan 1917

of that the only fresh places I saw worth mentioning were the Zoological Gardens and Madame Tussaud's Wax Works of which I will try to send my guide book. The wax works were very good and the figures were so good and life-like it was funny to see people mistake them for real beings.

Page 3

I saw one man go up to a wax policeman and ask him the way into a certain room and another one went up to a (wax) woman sitting at a desk, thinking she was selling guide books. I fell in myself by waiting for a woman to move on as she stood at a certain number I was looking for. The number was at her feet and she happened to be the figure I was looking for. It took us all one afternoon to see the lot and in my mind it was an afternoon well spent as we saw the life-like models of all the greatest men of today and all of who are mentioned in history (as you will see by the guide) to say nothing of criminals.

Well I said I was on my embarkation leave so you see that now I will have to go back to France any day now may be tomorrow and perhaps not for months yet, as all I know is that I have to hold myself in readiness to proceed overseas when called on. It seems to be a funny thing that on one hand is sent back before a man who has never even seen the firing line. I don't give a dash if I am sent back tomorrow, because I hate this training business but I think it only a fair thing to send the later

Page 4

reinforcements over first and let them have a bit of a fly and give us some of their good camp jobs for a while. As far as training goes I don't suppose there is a man here who has had less Artillery training than I have had, and yet the mad beggars have picked me out to do specialist work (signalling, wire laying, observing post work and all that sort of thing). The morning my name was read out I didn't happen to be on parade, so now when they call on the specialists to fall out for training I just stay in the ranks, and when they find out that I haven't been through the training I will have the excuse that I was never warned. I believe they are training more men for this work than they really want so I am set. Hang the blooming specialists just a common driver is all I want to be, I am not flash.

There is one consolation in knowing that when I do go back to France I will be in a battery, so I won't be darting about all over the country looking for about six different batteries in one night. We will only have our own to supply.

		Will write again soon, Your loving son Link	
AK:2025.20. 118	My Dear People	Talavera Barracks Aldershot 17/2/17 My Dear People There is not much news but I suppose I had better drop you a few lines even if it is only to tell you how fit and well I am keeping. So far we have not been doing very solid training in this camp as we have not got any horses or guns yet, so of course put in most of our time at physical drill and rout marches. Of course this is the sort of work to make a man really fit, and the fellows in this camp are all in the very pink of condition. As for myself I don't think I have ever felt better in my life, but I am beginning to get a bit too blooming fat. I can hardly see out of my eyes. This place is more like a home than a camp as far as conveniences go. Page 2 All our washing is sent to civilians every week and is always well done and very cheap. There are tepid swimming baths (like those in Christchurch) quite near the camp, and every week every one of us have to go in for a dip in them. Fancy a swim like this in mid-winter why we are in clover here. Les Smith came into this camp about a week ago, but I don't think he will stay here very long, as one of his hands is useless, he can't move three of the fingers in it at all. It is only fair that they should send him back to N.Z. and give him his discharge now, because being a Main Body man I think he has done his <u>bit</u>. Every time he sees me he tells me how well I am looking so I suppose you will hear all about it from his friends. Hope he doesn't think I am <u>swinging the lead</u> or got <u>cold feet</u>. Some army expressions – you will hear them after the war. Page 3 Last week about 200 N.Z.F.A. men left Aldershot for France and I fully	17 Feb 1917

expected to be in the mob, but as luck had it I missed. I don't mind going back to France but I don't fancy it in the winter time especially in a training camp where the last lot went. The lot I am going over with are only waiting here to get horses then we will go to France pick up some guns at Le Havre and from there straight into the firing line. Much better than hanging about. They are going to make our Artillery much stronger than ever it was before this spring. I can see a big smack up and the finish of this war before many months are passed, because the Allies seem to be getting ready for something big on every front.

I think we are going somewhere near Ypres. Our horses are coming from Scotland and are expected next week, so I suppose there will be something doing for us very shortly.

Page 4

Just imagine Old England on one of the Scotch Greys going for my blooming life. Some kid. Eh what. Make a pretty show.

Just now when I was down at dinner the boy next to me said "where is my Xmas hem that your dog got away with?" He was one of the Harris boys who used to camp in Jacksons bush every year, you will remember Joe's dog coming home with their ham one night. I wouldn't have known him if he hadn't spoken.

By cripes before I forget I must ask you to thank Karl and Frank for the Xmas parcel they sent, it arrived in first class order. I have had dashed hard luck with my parcels from home though, because last week I received a duff and when I opened it "No bon". "Pity nice duff" "gone." That's the cake and the duff from home gone west.

Little did I think I was going to be kept in Blighty as long as this, or I would have

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put the nips in for some more jink long ago, but of course it is too late now so I will have to keep the flag flying on the 2/- a day. I will know what to do next time, because you know in a big place like this, money flies, especially when we are allowed to go out every night. I am never really stoney broke, but I get things pretty fine sometimes. Lately I have been going out to all the little towns surrounding Aldershot to have a bit of a look round, and the other night my mate and I were out in a little place called Camberley (about 8 miles away) and of course never worrying about how we were

going to get home we missed the last bus. The blooming thing left at about 8.30, but we didn't know this well we tried to get a taxi or a train, but there was nothing doing so we had to walk back, and of course not knowing the roads we took a few long cuts arriving home at 2 in the morning. "Je finis Camberley"

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We were supposed to be back in camp by lights out and would have gone up "as high as Baldwin" if our sergeant hadn't reported all correct when roll was called. He told us afterwards that he knew we were alright and would come home quietly, so he took the risk. There are some good fellows about. If we had been caught the sergeant would have fallen in worse than us, so it won't happen again.

A few days ago the N.Z.F.A. were inspected by the Duke of Connaught (Uncle to the present King I think he is) who made a nice little speech pulling our legs of course about our smart appearance etc. He wasn't a bad sort of an old cove you know, but what I don't like about the big bugs is the red tape business. He had about an army corps of spare Colonels following him round, and I honestly think his party was bigger than ours. "Beaucoup swank."

Well there is no more to write about this time.

Your loving son

Link

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The other day a Tommy Colonel stuck me up (I thought for a sally up) and asked me what part of N.Z. I came from. He had been to Akaroa many a time himself and asked me about the Earnshaws and a Mr. Baker (I think it was), anyhow it was something about someone) who he said used to be a school teacher in Akaroa. I understood that he was some relation to the Earnshaws, but as he was asking about Akaroa in the early days I couldn't give him much information. I was on duty at the time and was called away before I could tell him who I was and ask him his name.

I just mentioned it because it struck me as being rather funny to find an old Akaroa man a Tommy Colonel.

This is only a small world isn't it or else Akaroa is big! It is to me anyhow.

AK:2025.20.119	My Dear People	Lark Hill Salisbury Plains 24/12/17 My Dear People You see I am still <u>swinging the lead</u> in Blighty and am back on the Salisbury Plains again for a few days. About 150 of the N.Z.F.A. came down here to go through a ten days test in field manoeuvres and shooting, and I believe it all depends on this test as to whether we go over to France shortly or not. So far the drivers have been given a good report and have made a name for themselves as horsemen and our gunners have done good work so it looks as if we are going to pass the test with flying colours. This Lark Hill is only about 15 miles away from Codworth and about three from Sling, so as you know my opinion of these two places I don't suppose it is worthwhile giving an account of this camp, if anything it is worse, and I will be glad when the day comes for us to return to Aldershot. As far as work goes we are having an easy time but I don't go nap on the rain, mud and cold and what is more this being about a hundred miles from nowhere would drive a man off his rocker if he had much of it. As yet we have not got any guns or horses of our own, so of course have to borrow from the Tommies to go through this test. Page 2 It is only a shame how we kid ourselves when we turn out on parade in the mornings and find the Tommies waiting on the road for us with their horses harnessed and hooked on to the guns and wagons and then again in the afternoon when we come back they are waiting to take their gear over again so we just have to hop off the saddle and buzz off home for the night. No harness cleaning, grooming or picquets to do. I wish it was always like this. These New Zealanders are <u>some kids</u> with grooms. Poor old Tommy always falls in for the dirty work, but somehow they don't seem to mind, one of them was telling me he had been in the army for two years and had been doing this sort of work all the time. Can you wonder at the poor beggar wanting to get over and see some fighting. I think that darting about in these base camps for two years would be the stone end of me, or else it would drive me stark staring mad. There are hundreds of German prisoners working about the roads here and the beggars look as fit and happy as ever they could be and as far as I can see they are treated like little tin gods. They are taken to and from	24 Feb 1917
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		their work in motor lorries, and one of the Tommy sergeants in charge of the guard over them was telling us that they were fed as well if not better than our own troops. They certainly look well enough and I am sure they don't hurt themselves by overworking. Page 3 Their job and the same treatment would do till the end of the war, but I don't think any of us would have such a home if we were in German hands. It might interest you Mother to know that one of my mates is a Nelson boy Atkinson by name and he knows everyone of my Nelson relations that I can know of and says he used to go to school with the Calder girls and the Snow's. From all accounts Nelson must be <u>some flash place</u> to spend a holiday in, and I feel sorry now that I never went there, when I had the chance, but after the war I will dart over and have a look at it. Perhaps you know this boy's people I think they are tailors by trade, anyhow he could tell me all about my relations and what they did for a crust he even told me of some that I have never heard of before. Well look here I am not feeling in a writing mood as I can't think of anything that is of interest to you so I think I had better swim out for this week. I am "<u>fair dinkum</u>" feeling as fit and well as ever I did in my life, and am quite ready to go over to France again any day. By cripes that reminds me that I would be all set if I only had a decent home made housewife you know what I mean one of those things to carry cotton, wool, needles and buttons in. I lost my old one when I was wounded and meant to write home for another long ago but forgot. Decent ones are hard to get so please send one along in the next bucket. You might guess how useful they are. Your loving son Link.	
AK:2025.20.120	My Dear People	Talavera Barracks Aldershot Hants 10/3/17	10 Mar 1917

My Dear People

When you look at the heading of this letter and see that I am still in England you will be thinking that I am working a point or swinging the lead to have been kept here so long. I am beginning to feel a bit uncomfortable about it myself because really I should never have been sent over here at all and my staying over here so long will make my mates in France think I am shirking it. Anyhow I think I would much rather go back and try my luck again than hang about these training camps, because when you come to think of it I have got to go back sometime so the sooner the better. We have a good home here and live right up to the mark but somehow I think the rough life in France where everything is free and easy going is a happier one. I like to be where I am doing useful work, we are certainly only wasting time by staying here. Everything seems to be pointing towards France for us at last but we are still uncertain as to when we will get away - we might go tomorrow or perhaps not for six weeks yet we were in the same position a

Page 2

month ago, so can you wonder at us getting tired of waiting?

Last week we were kept pretty busy as nearly every day some waggons guns or horses came along for us and I might tell you we have had some fun with some of the horses as half of the beggars were as wild as red shanks and I am certain had never before seen a saddle or any part of harness. The first day we took them out we had to harness them up and hook them together (there are some mad beggars in the army you know) so you might guess what sort of a time we had there were horses (to burn), bits of harness and men all over the parade ground. I was with a fairly quiet team so was able to sit and enjoy the fun. Anyhow it was a lesson to our Officers and taught them to take things a bit quieter, we are now getting these mad brutes a bit civilised but I don't know how some of the teams will get on in France when they get up where the whips are cracking. I think they will be able to retire in pretty fast time.

When we finished our test down at Lark Hill we were given a most satisfactory report and I believe were reported as fit for active service without further training, so that ought to help us to get away shortly. Some of the Canadians who went through the same test with us were

Page 3

ordered another three months training and then go through the same test

again so you see these NZ's are some class.

You would think the most of the winter would be over in this country now, but it seems to me as though it has just started, because it has been raining and snowing nearly every day for the last fortnight. Only a shame how it can snow too, we have had some fair dinkum snow fights and it has cost a few of our boys a nice little sum of money to pay for broken windows. Complaints has been coming in to our O.C. by the score from all over the show, about our boys and the snowballing so now the orders are that any New Zealander caught snowballing any one outside our own parade ground will be severely dealt with.

A few nights ago some Tommies who live just opposite us, thought they would play a trick on our boys by getting a heap of snowballs ready to give us a good pelting when we fell in for tea. Well the Tommies started the fight but our boys finished it and got all the blame for damage done. I don't think there was a window in the Tommy barracks that wasn't broken and for about a couple of hours there wasn't a Tommy who was game to open one of their doors. Damages were paid out of N.Z.F.A. canteen fund.

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Last week I had a letter from Tom McGuire telling me that Maurice Le Livre and Dave Handisides had been killed in action sometime in January, but I hardly think it can be true, because I received a letter from Maurice not long ago - it was dated about the end of January. Anyhow if it is true I can't realise it and am not going to believe anything till I get word from Akaroa. Maurice was a game little beggar I know and would go anywhere without fear, but he always said he was sure he would never see N.Z. again. Anyhow I sincerely hope that all you letters dated in January don't mention anything about his death, because then I will know that all is well. Maurice was the best mate I ever had and I would never have been here today if it wasn't for him trying to get transferred into the Artillery. I applied for a transfer with him because we wanted to stick together but he wasn't lucky enough to get through.

Well I must ring off for this time as this is my half day off and as I won't get another for a fortnight I think I had better buzz off.

I am in the very best of health and will cheerfully go back to France any day now. I hope this finds you all in the same way as far as health goes. Keep on waving the flag and never worry about me as I am always perfectly happy no matter where I go.

		Your loving son Link	
AK:2025.20.121	My Dear People	France 23/3/17 My Dear People, At last I am on my way to the firing line again we were shifted from England in a great hurry so of course I didn't get time to drop you a line before leaving. We are having very miserable weather over here just at present - plenty of snow, rain and cold winds and after being used to such a good home in England it is going pretty hard with us but I suppose it won't take Page 2 long to get into the old swing of things again. We are a long way back from the firing line yet and it might be some time before we get there, but of course one never knows till the numbers go up. Until we get up the line I won't know what unit I belong to, but am fairly certain that I will go into a battery this time if not I will have a hard try to get back with my old mates again. Good news seems to be coming along every day now it looks as though the Allies are making an early start this year and are going to finish this rotten Page 3 business before next winter. Nothing would suit me better than to be over here at the end and be on active service when peace was declared. I have had a real good lucky time of it up to now and if it will only last a little longer I am sure I will be into it at the finish. Well I can't give you much news as the censor will have a go at this when I have finished and might be fairly strict for a start off. Anyhow everything is in a jumble up at present as there are 12 of us in a small tent and with everything wet	23 Mar 1917

		Page 4 through I am not feeling in a humour for letter writing. I am in the very best of health and when I get into my old stride again will be as happy as ever I was. I think the best address you can put on my letters until I let you know where I am going to is to the N.Z.E.A. Base P.O. in England, of course adding France. Excuse these few scribbled lines but under the circumstances this is the best I can do. We left England four days ago. Your loving son, Link. L.F. Armstrong	
AK:2025.20.122	My Dear People	France 15/4/17 My Dear People It is a month ago today since I left England and since then I have been darting about all over the show and have not been able to settle down to letter writing, I am now what you might say, in the field again but we are not yet in action. Ever since I have been back here the weather has been pretty crook and we have been getting plenty of rain and snow, so you might guess that for a while we found this life pretty hard compared to our home at Aldershot. The mob I am over with, all came straight up to the firing line and were split up among different batteries, I wasn't in this battery more than about half an hour before I ran into an Akaroa man, no matter where I go there seems to be someone from Akaroa kicking round. This one was Fred Cobb you will remember him as he used to work at E. E. Le Lievre. Page 2 Now you can't get mixed up with my address this time, because if not	15 Apr 1917

		quite clear about it you can ask Mrs Le Lievre, as I know she writes to Cobb. My old number and 9th Battery N.Z.F.A will find me alright. We are now situated in nearly the same place as when we first came to France a year ago and things just now are fairly quiet about here and as far as I know always have been so you see you needn't worry, because so soon as we get some decent weather I will be <u>home and dry</u>. It seems funny coming back here where all the civilian people speak such a mixed up lingo and it is hard to understand what they are talking about. I often feel inclined to say "<u>you are blooming well mad you silly beggars</u>". This afternoon I was allowed the afternoon off so came along to my old unit to look up the friends I left behind. My old sergeant and S.M. want me to get a transfer and come back to them again and I am thinking seriously about giving it Page 3 a go. My old mate is on duty so I am writing this while waiting for him. I suppose he will have a hard try to persuade me to join this outfit. Last night I came across Percy Birdling and had a bit of a yarn with him. he looks much better than I have ever seen him before, but says he could do with a spell like I have had. All the old boys I know ask me for a tip about how to <u>swing the lead</u> in Blighty but I don't think they know how <u>seriously I was wounded</u>. No in my case it was more good luck than anything and I can fully realise now how lucky I was to have missed the winter in this Country. If this is spring time I hope I never have to spend a Winter in <u>sunny France</u>. Well as all my letters have to be censored again I have not been able to tell you much and I can't think of anything more to write about but you can rest assured that I am in the very best of health and quite cheerful. It won't be long now before I will soon be back home again, so you will have to wait till then to hear all about my travels. Your loving son Link L.F. Armstrong	
AK:2025.20.123	My Dear People	France	28 Apr 1917

28/4/17

My Dear People

Although there is not much news to give I suppose it is about time I wrote a few more lines home. Since I have been in this country the second time I have had a very easy time and have only been up to the guns once in the five weeks. It seems to me that we were pushed out of England in a great hurry all for nothing, because for all we have done over here so far, we could have done as much good by staying in England.

The weather this last week has been good, something like the good old NZ spring time and the French people tell us that we are now in for a hot summer. I am thinking it will be hot in more ways than one on all fronts shortly anyhow I hope so because a fair dinkum slather up all round should finish this rotten business before next winter.

Since last writing this battery has gone into action but the guns seem to be in a very quiet place because the drivers don't seem to be getting much work in the way of carting ammunition. I am driving in a gun team and the only trip

Page 2

I have had so far is when we took the guns into action. "Some stuff eh!"

The other two fellows in the team with me (Nelson boys) are late reinforcement men, and they often say to me that war is not half as bad as they expected it to be. They have not yet even had a shell land within a mile of them and think that things will always be the same. The other night when we took the guns up they were wishing a few shells would come over just to see how our new horses would shape. They won't be so keen a little later on. I have seen a good number of my old mates in the B.A.C. lately and would very much like to join up with them again, but somehow I think that being in a battery is much better than the Amm column and I take much more pride in driving horses than driving mules.

The other night I went along to look up some of my old mates (who by the way have nearly all got a stripe now) and while talking to some of them an Officer recognised me and sent for me he was a decent sort of a cove and always treated me well when I was with his mob. He said he quite understood that I would like to get back with my mates again and would have a hard try to get me transferred, but I am easy and don't give a dash what happens.

		Page 3 The mate I have been with ever since leaving N.Z. had saved what he thought was my most valuable gear and has carried it with him since I have been away, in hopes of seeing me again, so now I have pretty well all I want. It might interest you Mother to know that one of the first things he asked me was if I had any home knitted socks to give away. "<u>Some socks</u>" I have never had to wear an issued pair since I have been in the army so of course don't know the real value of a home made pair. I only know that they are jolly comfortable to wear and beat about three times as long as any others. As far as mail goes I am having a crook spin because I haven't had a single letter or parcel since I have been in France and I think it was about a fortnight before sailing from England that I received my last New Zealand mail. A note came from the post office in London yesterday saying that my mail was being attended to so I am expecting a bag full any day now. Well I am hanged if I can think of anything to write about that is of interest to you and will pass the censor, so I will have to ring off. I am "pie the did" in every respect in perfect health and quite contented. Your loving son, Link Sign in full for the censor (compre) Driver L. F. Armstrong	
AK:2025.20.124		[Letter incomplete. First and last page missing. Dated by Tom Penlington's death] When you last wrote you had the Taniwha people at home it must be just alright to have a visit of that sort and have a gathering of the clans once in a while, but by jove what a crowd there would be if the whole lot when home together. In nearly every mail I get (these days) you tell me that I have another niece of nephew added to the list. You tell me that when I come home you are going to have a full gathering of the clans, well I am thinking that unless I get home very soon we will have to meet on the recreation ground because I don't think the grounds at Blythcliffe will be big enough. I was sorry to hear of Tom Penlington's death and I am sure all the other young fellows from Akaroa will be, as no matter what sport was	c.May 1917

		on the go Tom was in it and although we used to throw off at him I think it would be hard to find a more popular man among the young fellows especially at the A.B.C. Fancy the boating club being on a sound footing once again, most of us over here were expecting to see it go bung any day, as there surely can't be many left in Akaroa now who are interested in it. Page 2 Things over in this par of the world are beginning to look up just at present as our troops seen to be advancing anywhere they like to try and I am beginning to think that there is something in what you said when you mentioned the way being over by this Christmas. Every month for some time past we have been advancing in different parts of the front and I wouldn't be surprised if there are three or four real dinkum slap ups before this Summer is over, slaps that are going to knock the heart out of old Fritz. The weather seems to be breaking a bit more though and it looks as though we are going to have a good lot of rain, anyhow we have had a good long spin of good weather this last week and if it would only clear up again for another month or two you will see things looking much brighter. Bad weather won't make much difference to us on this particular part of the front as it will never get very muddy here if it rains for a month on end. This part will do me for the winter that is of course if this rotten affair isn't ended before then. " I don't say it will <u>mind you</u> but it might" (Jimmy) Page 3 Well anyhow I suppose I will have to ring off as there is really nothing of interest that I can mention to you. By cripes a fellow has just come along with a big parcel for me from Win. I think there must be a piano in it it's big enough. Many thanks to Old Jonesy [?] for the two cheerful letters I received from him last mail. I think that as keen as he is to come away he will have to wait for the next war. Everything with me is A1. I always keep the old flag flying with <u>great gusto</u>. Your loving son Link	
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AK:2025.20. 125	My Dear People	France 17/5/17 My Dear People This last week I have received a big mail nearly every day parcels, papers and letters <u>to burn</u> nearly all from home of course, and only a shame how pleased I was to land a few letters. You all seemed to have doubts about the address I gave you (Base P.O. England) but you can take it from me that I am too keen on my mail to give you an uncertain address. All letters coming from N.Z. have to go through the N.Z.E.F. Page 2 Base P.O. London before being distributed in either France or England because there they know exactly where every man is, anyhow I write to them every now and then to make sure they know where I am. Just for instance when I was wounded my mail was held at B.P.O until they were notified which hospital I had gone to and was forwarded on before I thought about writing for it. If ever in doubt, that is the safest place to address my letters to. By cripes I did have a laugh to myself when you mentioned Page 3 a certain person (A.I) returning to Akaroa telling everyone about shell shock and some of his experiences (if he had any they were in his sleep). I know <u>for a perfect fact</u> (Mrs J.E) that he left England P.U. because of a bad knee and nothing else. In Gallipoli he had a good job practically out of danger all the time till he came up to the trenches where I think he lasted about ten days very quiet ones too. He told me himself (I suppose he thought I knew) that he only spent about a fortnight on the firing line in France. Page 4 Things were very quiet when we first came over here so I don't know where he got shell shock. Since last writing to you our battery has pulled out from the firing line again and is now back here a good distance from the danger zone going	17 May 1917
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		through some solid training. I suppose getting ready for a big do. We have been back here for about a fortnight now, but expect to go back to the firing line any day now it will take us two days to trek through. We are camped in the middle of a decent little town and have Page 5 good billets so you might guess we are having a very fair time. The weather over here has taken a very sudden change from very cold to very hot and now instead of mud and slush the whole place seems to be burnt up all the ploughed ground is as hard as rock, it seems to me that we are in for the same sort of summer as you have had in good old N.Z., so there should be some <u>big things doing</u> over here very shortly. We should soon have the Yanks over here to give us a hand Page 6 I guess and calculate there will be something doing then "kid" "some fight". I think it is just as well America is coming into it, because it certainly looks as if Russia is going to throw in the sponge "the rotters". They have gone sour on us. I was pleased to hear that Mrs Steele had written to you and given you a full account of my carryings on when on leave. Well since I started to write this letter we have been on the shift again and have had about a week's shifting Page 7 round so of course I have not had a chance to post this letter, in fact the officers have not had time to censor letters so have closed all outgoing mail for a few days. We are now on the firing line again and expect to be kept fairly busy very shortly things seem to be fairly lively already. Well I must ring off now and get this letter away. I will write again in a few days' time. Everything with me is in the very best going order xx and well.	
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		Your loving son, Link Driver L. F. Armstrong	
AK:2025.20. 126		Somewhere in Belgium 3/6/17 My Dear People, Nothing much doing today so I suppose there is no better way to spend the afternoon than to drop a few lines home. The King's birthday perhaps a great day in good old N.Z., but old Fritz doesn't give us much chance to celebrate it over here. In fact, he seems to be making things a bit hotter today. "<u>I wonder why</u>". Shells are flying fairly freely today and although a good distance Page 2 from us one can't rest at ease. Fancy three years ago today the <u>famous B hockey</u> team won the competition in ChCh. Little did I think then that in three years time I would be darting about with shells instead of the ball, but never mind every thing today seems to point in the same direction as it did three years ago. <u>we are winning.</u> This Battery has been in action in a fairly warm corner for some time now so I feel as though I can compare notes with life here to that in Page 3 the ammunition column. I am having a much better time in this outfit than what I had when over here before not half as much work to do we have a certain amount to do and always know that once it is done we are finished, in the other outfit things were very uncertain. Then again instead of touring all over the place in finding different batteries, we now only have to supply the one. I am quite satisfied with the change this battery will do me. You will be thinking me	3 June 1917

Page 4

a bit of a rolling stone when I tell you I like being changed about like this, but you know in a game like this there is nothing like finding out the best job anyhow a change is as good as a rest. "Ask old Dawson "ha ha" he's the man what knows.

In all your letters you seem to think that I could have had a much better time when over in England if I had more money. Don't run away with the idea that money troubled me. I could have a good time over there

Page 5

on practically nothing, anyhow you have only got to look up my old pay book and you will see that very often I went a month or six weeks without drawing a penny, it soon mounts up you know. You see I get so many parcels from home and abroad that I really don't need to buy much stuff, so of course can save. I am sure there can't be another man in the whole of the British E.F. who receives as many parcels as I do. I can't go wrong.

For the last two months the

Page 6

weather has been almost perfect and the country (behind us of course) is a sight worth seeing every inch of it is under cultivation and the crops are a picture. Even up near the guns there are crops of wheat and oats. This sort of thing gives one great hopes as it looks as if everyone thinks it impossible for our side to be pushed back.

If you could look round out near where we are (cut out the rattle of guns and bursting of shells) you would think you were in one of the very

Page 7

best parts of N.Z. in the best time of the year.

Can you wonder at everyone feeling happy and contented as I feel when everything has such a bright outlook.

Well there is not much to write about so I will pull out for this time. I only want to make you understand that I am in great working order and am perfectly happy hoping this finds you all likewise.

		Your loving son, Link.	
AK:2025.20.127	My Dear People	France 24 June 1917 My Dear People, You will be wondering what has come over me when you have to wait so long for a letter. You will have seen by the papers that lately there has been <u>some stunt</u> on so you can guess that we are kept going, and I am afraid I have been too keen on a bit of shut eye instead of writing. For a while in the thick of things we were on the move Page 2 almost every night and all night. However the worst is over now and things are much quieter it seems to me as though old Fritz is on his last legs and is trying to do his worst before throwing in the sponge. Any villages or towns within his reach have been getting a sad time lately. It seems funny that he has left them alone for about two years perhaps he has just woke up to the fact that there is more chance of his being pushed back than coming forward. He seems to be set on destroying anything whether of military value or not. Page 3 I have seen a good few of the Akaroa Infantry boys lately. They seem to have come through the stunt alright a good few of them seem to have struck easy jobs which keep them pretty well out of the firing line. I have been receiving plenty of letters and parcels lately last week I even struck a lady Liverpool parcel it was a beauty, although about the only one I have seen. In one of your letters you mentioned something about sending money through the National Bank to buy cigarettes for a few of us boys Page 4 Cobb and a few others received theirs but mine has not yet come along	24 June 1917

		the cake is missing also but I have no doubt about it turning up someday. By jove that strike in N.Z. makes a man's blood boil. The boys over here often talk about it and wish they could have a bit of a slap-up with them with the bayonets. I think I would sooner have a go at those brutes than old Fritz, because surely there is enough worry and sorry in New Zealand now without some of these drunken shirkers causing trouble. Page 5 Well I was never cut out for this writing game or to use my nut much. I will have to leave everything till apres la guerre. I must say that this last bit of a scrap has not been nearly as bad as the last one I went through, although some people seem to think it was a lot worse. I always have an easy feeling about things and always feel confident that I am going to return safe and sound. I am always in the best of health and as happy as the day is long. If you at home don't worry any more than I do you won't lose any sleep. Your loving son, Link.	
AK:2025.20.128	My Dear People	Somewhere in Belgium July 17/ 1917 My Dear People, Since last writing I have again been on the move and we are now settled down in quite a new part of the line for our boys. By the time I finish with this outfit, I don't think there will be much of France that I haven't seen not as far as the firing line goes anyway. In my travels I have seen a bit of Belgium also and in a way have altered my mind of the people about here and their Country because at one time I thought they were some of the best fighters we had on our side but what I've seen of them makes me wonder if they are on our side at all. The civilian people I expected to see in rags and homeless but if they have ever been better off than they are now and clothed better, well they have lived a pretty high life, they give us a very cool reception, as though above us. Of course I am not talking of the people I have seen about here. I don't	17 July 1917

		suppose they are the people you good New Zealanders help anyhow I hope not, because my opinion of them is that I wouldn't trust them as far as I could kick them. I would like to tell you more but perhaps I have already overstepped the censor's mark. Tell me when you write next time. I often wonder if ever he throws my letters out to the fire or what he does with some of them. My letters and parcels (addressed N.Z.P.O. Base England) are still coming along in good stile. I think the only things you mentioned that have not yet come along are two cakes one from Win and one from home, (perhaps they sank the ship). What a rest you people must be getting from the Carrack I almost forget what it is like to sling off now, because cooks in the army don't encourage it. Page 2 The housewife you sent was just the thing I wanted, it contains everything I have any use for and when some of the boys saw Lady Liverpool Fund marked on it, they said it was a pity a few more such useful parcels didn't float along occasionally. By the way that reminds me not long ago I received one of the famous L.L.F parcels we didn't receive enough to go round one to a man, so had to draw for them. I was lucky enough to strike one and found that it contained one thing that you have so often told me these parcels consisted of. All the boys were pleased with what they got out of them but if I may suggest it, there was one most popular thing among the boys that was missed out of almost every one, and that was cigarettes and tobacco. We certainly get an issue of tobacco but it is poor stuff. Something to smoke comes first with nearly every soldier. I have seen many a man sit down and open his parcel (when only half way to his dug out) just to see if it contained any cigarettes. When our guns pulled out of our last position we were in we had about a fortnight to get all our gear in good fettle again, and to make sure it would be worked at properly our officers offered prizes for different things. We had a special show day the Colonel acting as judge, it took him all the morning to inspect everything (in fact from 9am to 2pm) so you see everything was thoroughly inspected. Competition was keen and nearly everyone worked day and night for about a week. (something unusual, I might state.) Well, the team I am in landed the prize we were after, the best turn out in the battery, but only by two points we got 185 points out of a possible of 200 according to the judge we were long way from perfect. Points were given for condition of horses and grooming condition of leather and steel	
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		work of harness cleanliness of men condition of vehicle and appearance of turn-out in general. Page 3 The prize was only worth about 2/6 each but we were quite satisfied to think our work was not all in vain. In the afternoon sports were held, just how it ought to be. It's a pity every day wasn't the same. Perhaps I have told you before that I am driving in the same team as two Nelson boys, Brewerton & Bell who by the way are cousins and only the other night I was asking them if they knew my relatives in Nelson I mentioned Major Stiles and Bell straight away asked me if I was related to him, as he said Stiles was his Uncle. Well I am altogether in the fog as to who my relatives are but it looks to me as though I am somehow connected with these fellows I am driving with, because I have often heard you talk about cousin Bob. Bell is the only one of the family, his father's name is Earl Bell, do you know anything about them. I can see myself having a ripping time in Nelson after the war, as about half the fellows in this battery are Nelson boys so I should have a pretty fair time if all they tell me is correct. Things with me are going tip top. I am keeping in the very best of health and to make things more cheerful, the weather for some time past has been almost perfect. That as you know is half the battle in a game like this. If it only lasts I can see us darting about the streets in Berlin very shortly: "I don't think." Well it is getting dark and as no lights are allowed I will have to pull out. Keep the home fires burning. I am getting cold feet. Hoping all is well in the good old home, Your loving son, Link	
AK:2025.20.129	My Dear People	Somewhere in Belgium 23/8/17	23 August 1917

My Dear People,

Last week I received another big mail from home and in the bundle there was a dandy big cake with greetings from home 29/3/17 written on the icing. It arrived in perfect order (a bit too rich) and I didn't even like cutting it as it made such a pretty show. Just fancy it turning out almost as it had left home after being five months on the way. About a week before this I received a real beauty from Win and it turned out in first class order also, so you can just imagine how I am living away out here somewhere in Belgium. I might state that I have a good many friends on mail days as I hardly ever miss getting a parcel of some sort. The other day I went to go into the orderly room to see about some pay and as soon as I gave my name the sergeant said in front of the mob "oh yes you are Armstrong the man who gets all the parcels" he said that I received more parcels than any man in the Battery. I don't think many go astray.

In your letters I was pleased to see that you were going to take another trip round the N.I. (but only for a month). I don't know why you don't make a bird of it and have about six months rest at least! Surely the Red Cross contingent and the Council wouldn't go bung in your absence. "These local bodies again". I would like to hear of the boat stopped running after you get up there.

Page 2

If all goes well I can see myself going for a holiday in about three months time as since we have been on this part of the front leave tickets to Blighty have been flying round fairly freely. They have just about finished the twelfth reinforcements off with leave (as far as they are going this round) and will be starting off with the Main Body again any day now, so as there are not many of the early reinfts men left now I should get away pretty slick, that is of course if I have been in the firing line for six months at a stretch when my turn comes. Of course I will have to show that I have at least £5.00 credit in my pay book or else have money waiting for me in England before being allowed to go, so I must put the hard word on you to send some over to the pay office in London for me, because at present I only have about £2.10.0 credit. There is no much hurry about it. I will cable for some "jink" if there is any need to but it is always handy to have a little money waiting in Blighty, when there is a chance to leave kicking round. If you could send over about five or ten pounds anywhere there about I will be all set, so it won't take much to keep me going for fourteen days.

We are having a very fair time here at present decent weather and just

		enough work to keep us going steadily. There are some fair sized towns within about five miles of our horse lines and a few of us can get a days leave now and Page 3 again to go and have a look round, but there is not much in going, because one can't understand the lingo too well, and not a great many of the people can talk English nearly as well as some of the people in French towns. As far as I can make out they talk nearly the same lingo as the French so of course I can make myself understood "after a fashion" but I often regret I didn't make more use of my two years in the high school, at the time I didn't think it would ever be of any use to me. Anyhow it is decent even to be able to make myself understood and to understand roughly what they have to say, as I can often fix up some little matter for some of the boys who don't compare at all with the lingo. (Its a bit dark I am going all over the show). Last week when my mate (Bell) and I were out for the day we thought we would have our photos taken just to give you some idea how rough we look when in the firing line. The photos were as cheap as buying post cards so there is nothing wasted and I don't want you to keep them they are too rough. I only wish that we stay in this place for the winter because the wet weather won't affect us much here in the way of mud and we are all settled down as comfortable as ever we could be in a life like this. My mate and I have made a snug little house for ourselves all the walls sand bagged canvas overhead and two comfortable beds inside. We have the show almost papered with photos, so you see we are <u>home</u> and dry. Everyone with me is going <u>pie in the did</u>. Love to all, Link L.F. Armstrong	
AK:2025.20.130	My Dear People	Somewhere in Belgium 14/9/17	14 Sept 1917

		My Dear People, Here goes for another try to let you know that I am still going strong and in the very best of health. Yesterday I received another big N.Z. mail and in it were letters from you, some written from home and others from up North while you were on your holiday. Not much of a holiday if you only stay away for a month (a bit of a flutter I would call it), but of course as I saw in the Akaroa Mail Mr Armstrong would be back in time for a Council meeting "that's everything." In nearly all of your letters you mention one thing in particular and I notice that all of us boys over here think are greatly interested in and that is the calling up of the second division (married men). I only wish the general opinion in N.Z. was as it is with the boys over here because then you wouldn't even mention such a thing for at least another twelve months. Don't you think we have all the single men are done their little N.Z. has done her bit? anyhow we are only a mere handful in the British Army and if reinforcements are stopped, we will never be missed, if I had a say in it I would not even have supported conscription because in my opinion if a man is single and has no ties and is not man enough <u>to hop his frame out</u> well we are better off without him. Lead serving [men] in are only in a good mans way. Page 2 Only the other day I saw in a paper that New Zealand (taking the percentages of the male population) had sent away more men by far than any other part of the British Empire and I say if they intend to try and beat up the <u>silly beggars are blooming well mad</u>. This war can't possibly last much longer so take a pull over there and let what men we have over here now see the rotten job out without having our Fathers and married brothers over here to help us out. We'll fix them we'll put some salt in their tea. <u>I have spoken</u>. Well I suppose that long before this letter reaches you, you will have heard about the Main Body up to the 3rd reinforcements going back to N.Z. for a spell of two months, and will be living in hopes of me getting back shortly after them. It is a sure thing that the first three lots are going back, because they are getting ready now to get away any day, but whether the next three reinforcements will get away after them doesn't seem to be certain, although it is a sure thing that we are going to get a spell of some sort, perhaps in N.Z. or perhaps in Blightly the latter seems to be the most probable according to rumours just at present. Anyhow if we do get a bit of a flutter to N.Z. it will be sometime before I get away because I believe	
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		they are only sending 200 at a time and as they are going by reinforcements as they left N.Z the 6th will have to wait for a good while yet, but winter is coming on so there won't be much to do in the fighting line for at least another six months, so I am all set. Keep the flag flying I'll be there when the whips are cracking! Page 3 We have been on this same front now for quite a long time and are very comfortably settled down and it looks as though we are set for the winter. This place will do me for the winter for although it will be cold here we will be practically free from mud, that's the main thing. There are only a few of our boys up this way, so of course I never see many of the old boys I know and I don't think there is any chance of seeing any of them till we shift from here. I had a letter from my old mate Colin Fergus the other day written from somewhere in France. his brother Vic told him where I was, as he wrote and told me where I would find him if ever we get back with our boys again. I would like to see Colin again as he is one of the one time 'Algies' hatless brigade. One of those cheeky little owls in your remember. By jove I laughed when I read the description Uncle Jack gave you of the artillery, we are certainly much better off than the Infantry but I don't see where the <u>swell</u> part of the business comes in as there are times when we get it as hot as anyone. I always seem to strike these flash outfits, the C.Y.C you will remember were always known as <u>gentlemen</u> but only by those who didn't belong to it. Well there is not much that I can write about so I will pull out. All parcels and papers are coming along as regular as clockwork so thanks to you I am always well supplied, with everything that a man could wish for. I am always in the best of health and am far from being down hearted yet. Love to all. Link	
AK:2025.20.131	My Dear People	Belgium 3/10/17 My Dear People,	3rd Oct 1917

Just a few lines as per usual to let you know that I am still going as strong as ever and am keeping the old flag flying with my best foot foremost. In other words carrying on with all great gusto.

Things on this part of the front are fairly quiet and have been ever since we have been here, the nights are the worse part of the joint, because when the nights are fine and there's a bit of a moon up, though old Fritz comes darting about overhead and drops a few of his visiting cards every here and there, but as far as I know never does very much damage, only all the same he makes one feel a bit uncomfortable at times when he comes knocking at the door. Up the line a good way from here things for the last fortnight have been lively, we can hear the guns going when a stunt starts up there and after hearing one always eagerly looks forward to getting an English paper (which comes along about three times a week) to see what has been done. It does me to listen to a straff and then read about some stirring advance. Just how it ought to be. Anyhow an Artillery driver hardly ever takes a big part as far as I have seen of the game, but I would do in a retreat (Not likely now).

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Now Mother as regards the Y.M.C.A's and Lady Liverpools turn out, it is not much good you asking much from the Mounted or Artillery men, especially us, because you must remember that there are a great many men to cater for and it is only right to look after the ones who bear the brunt first (Infantry), and then if there is anything left, to dish it out to those who are not having such a rough time of it. I am sure that Y.M.C.A's do a great deal of good and would be very much missed by the likes of Infantry men, but to us they are nothing great and are very poorly patronised, even when they are handy, but we are in clover compared with some poor beggars, as we can always make tracks to a town for anything we want and as a matter of fact prefer to do so.

Blackwood might have had a souse to grumble. I don't know much about the Mounted, but I'm sure they are not nearly as hardly done by as the boys in the trenches, any how some are hard to please.

Things are good now compared with this time last year when we were going for it hard and horny in a sea of mud, as up to now with the exception of a few cold nights we have had almost perfect weather and as for mud I forget what it is like, and as long as we stay here no matter how bad the weather, there won't be much mud. I would like to tell you all but I can't its a secret. All I can say is that I am making the best of this life and

		always feel (as I try to make you understand) contented to Page 3 be out here doing a little bit as long as there is a war on and good health sticks to me as it has done up to now. Really, I don't think this rotten business will last much longer. I don't see how old Fritz can keep going at the pace on have my doubts as to whether he will see the Winter out. My mails come along very regularly and I don't think the mermaids have beaten me for any letters or parcels yet as the longest I have to wait for mail from N.Z. is about a fortnight. Anyhow I never miss when a mail hops along and I'm sorry that you can't say the same but never worry about me just keep in believing and remember that no news is good news. Well news is scarce and the blooming candle is getting that way so I must ring off Love to all, Your loving son, Link	
AK:2025.20.132	No name	Nieuport Front Coxyde Bains 6/10/17 As one of my mates is going away on Blighty leave tomorrow, I thought I should grab the opportunity to scribble you a few lines to let you know where I am and what I have been doing since I came to France this last time. Well to start off, will you know I was put into a battery which happens to be a mobile turn out, as are all the other of the N.Z batteries in this 2nd NZ Brigade. For a long time our waggon lines were in a small town Doulien and the guns in action on a very quiet sector near Armentieres and if ever I had an easy time of it, it was there, because we only had to do a trip to the guns about once in six weeks, we spent the rest of the time at exercising horses and cleaning harness. From there we were taken out of the line altogether and trekked through to St Omer where we were put in a fortnights solid	6 Oct 1917

training to get ready for open action. This of course made us think that we were going to take part in some big battle, bigger ever the New Zealanders had ever seen before in fact our O.C. told us that we were going into the biggest battle of the war. "What oh" I thought to myself and began to think about putting two pairs of socks on to keep from getting cold feet.

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Well you know what stunt we were preparing for, it was Messines where I found things very quiet compared with the Somme, and as for open action I don't think it was thought of. Of course we had to go in fairly hard and nearly all night work at that, but as for casualties I only saw one dead man all the time we were at that front and that was when we were taking the guns up to the front advance position.

Now you know how many casualties there were at Messines so from that you can judge for yourself how much of real dinkum warfare we Artillery drivers see. There were a great many Artillery men killed and wounded up there of course, but I didn't see a single man get hit, so you see I had a very fair stay spin. My opinion of Messines Battle is that it was only child's play compared with the Somme where we did see war.

Well after this bit of a stunt the 2nd Brigade N.Z.F.A. being mobile we of course had to go where we were most needed so left our N.Z. Infantry and all the rest of our Artillery boys to come up here to Nieuport where another advance was expected. You will see by the map that we are now right on the sea coast about half way between Dunkerque and Ostende. I think we were supposed to have linked up with the recent advance at Ypres, but there is nothing doing yet and by the way things are heading I don't think out stunt will come off, because this last week the weather has been very rough and looks as though winter has set in.

Page 3

The country here reminds me very much of Egypt as there is sand as far as the eye can see with every here and there a clump of prickly shrubs sticking up or else a little snow grass.

At one time this coast must have been a great place for tourists because there are a great many little towns right next to sea and only about five or six miles apart and I am sure without they are a sort of summer seaside resort they could never make a do of things here with such up to date looking hotels and other buildings that there are in these little towns.

Of course with it being so sandy about here you can see that no matter how bad the weather is, we will always be dry underfoot and that is it why we all want to spend the winter here, we don't mind the cold but draw the line at mud. It looks as if we are going to spend the winter here and also that the advance is off tap, because we have been told to build winter dugouts and yesterday started building stables and mess rooms.

I think that one reason why a stunt was put off was because a Tommy Sergeant of the Royal Engineers (who knew pretty well the run of things about here), went over the top the other night to do some work and instead of coming back to his men again gave himself up to the Germans. He told them everything he knew about our preparations for the advance, how many guns we had, how many tanks were taking part, where the troops intended crossing the canal and many other things of such importance being an Engineer he would naturally know practically every little scheme.

Page 3

Now I wouldn't mention a thing like this unless I knew it to be true, and how I know of it is that it came out on the order sheet of the Company to which he had belonged, that this man had intentionally given himself up to the enemy and a day or two afterward it came out again on orders that information had been received from German prisoners that the Sergeant had told Fritz everything of importance, and as proof, nearly every dump within range of old Fritz was shelled two or three days after the rotten beggar had given himself up.

Things have been fairly quiet all the time we have been here but I think the bad weather this last week has stopped a slap up of some sort, because just before this came on we received special orders that if an S.O.S signal came along we were to pack up and hook in, and if possible be on the move in a quarter of an hour after the signal was given, so it looks as if Fritz was going to try to advance. He might try but I would eat my hat he'll get through because we have got enough big guns here to cover every square inch of no man's land. Anyhow I am easy about this SOS business, I suppose we are all only worried in case the worse happens the aeroplanes must have spotted old Fritz making great preparations. Well I must ring off now and get ready for parade. I wrote a short note the other day so there is no need to skite about being in good health again just now.

Love to all,

		Link	
AK:2025.20.133	My Dear People	Not tears on this paper but a few drops from the roof. Belgium 31/10/17 My Dear People, Yesterday I received another big mail from home, it is about a month ago since the last one came along so of course I was thinking there was some truth in the rumours that two of our mail boats had gone down, but as I received four letters and several parcels from you people alone I don't think much has gone astray. The parcels too many even to mention are most useful (especially now it is Winter) and arrived in good order, that dandy big cake opened up as fresh as the day it was made, you might guess how much my mate & I appreciated a piece of it when coming home after a nights darting about up at the guns. My big supply of soup cocoa etc comes in very handy there times because my mate and I have built a comfortable little winter home for ourselves with a fire place, beds and everything complete except electric light. (We will have that put in soon as Harry Wilkins gets his 220 voltage system and meters going). It's just the thing these cold nights to be able to light the fire when we come home <u>call it home anyway</u> and sit down to a nice hot cup of soup or cocoa, it helps one to forget there is a war on. The little book of Y.M.C.A. tickets to value of 5/- you sent should come in very handy Page 2 they are the first I have seen or heard about, so the next time I come across a Y.M.C.A I will give them a go. In nearly all of your last letters you mentioned the possibility of the return of the Main Body and early reinforcements, well I suppose by this time you will know that it is a wipe out in any case I would not have got away from this till after the winter, but all the same old Jimmy Allen and a few more if the "<u>Duds</u>" should never have mentioned such a thing until they were quite certain about it coming off. The latest rumour now is that the Main Body is going to have a choice of a few months tour of duty in England or else a job on transport ships, all up to the third reinforcements can apply	31 Oct 1917

as long as they have seen twelve months' fighting. Not much of a catch anyhow. Anyhow I am easy about the whole dash lot and in a way would just as soon be out here as anywhere, while this war is on, when I get home I want to be able to say well I have done my bit and I have come back to stay. Quand La guerre finis. Je Finis. The general front is fairly quiet.

The biggest nuisance we have here these days is with old Fritz dropping his cards about at night time, because whenever the nights are fine and a bit clear we are sure to hear some German planes buzzing about overhead, and dare not even light a fire or candle in case he spots us and drops a pie. If he was only regular it would make us think we were back

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in the old days of the Curfew, but now is the night it doesn't ring best luck.

Blighty leave is still flying around fairly freely and I think if I liked to push things I could get away any day but I would sooner wait for a mate and until my money arrives in England. I suppose by this time you have received my letter asking you to send over a few quid. I must write to the pay office and inquire about it. Fred Cobb and a number of others got leave today. There is a rumour going about here this last day or two that we are not going to be up here much longer, but are going away somewhere else for a spell and pick up our own division again. I wouldn't be surprised if there was some truth in it, because it's usually the way to get nicely settled down in a place, and then buzz off to another front. We are seeing France anyhow, but it is a fair beggar having to build another winter dug out, when we are so comfortable here.

Well I have not much news as I must ring off for this time. I am in the best of health and still going strong and sincerely hope that these few lines find you all the same.

Love to all,

Link

P.S. I am sending a little Xmas Card, sorry it it arrives late but they have only just come out here. Evidently the people here only look to the Tommies for business. Better late than never.

AK:2025.20.134	My Dear People	Belgium 12/11/17 My Dear People, A wet miserably cold Sunday so as we have the afternoon off my mate and I have got a good fire going and the best thing I know to fill in the time is to sit up at the little table and scribble a few lines home. We have every comfort in this little house of ours which is built into a sandbank and has a wall two sandbags thick all round, so as to keep us from injury from anything but a direct hit from a shell or bomb. We have a table and chairs which we brought home from the ruins of a Belgians house and have a great many pinned up around the walls, so you guess it is some class and would do me for the winter, but the rumours of a shift from this front seem to have some truth behind them and I am expecting the order to pack and get out of it anyday now. Everybody talks of a trick but they all have different ideas as to where we are going to, but I wouldn't be surprised if we are taken out of this and given a good long spell before going into action again. Last week I received the parcel containing a birthday present Page 2 that dandy pipe, it's a snorter and there is nothing I could wish for more than a [stroming] good pipe, those £4.6 can't be bought over here, they are too expensive for a soldier anyhow. By jove I was lucky to get that parcel too, as instead of it coming to the 9th Battery it went to the Sixth where there happens to be another L. Armstrong who also is an old C.Y.C Mounted man and has the 7/o to his number. He opened the jolly thing before finding and his mistake and when he took another look at the address came over to look me up and explain his mistake. I had never seen the fellow before or even heard of him, so don't you admire his honesty. I wouldn't like to trust many soldiers with the same chance as he had. This is how I think the other boys parcels go astray. When I opened your last letter and found that photo of Siver and I inside, I didn't have do a grin, to see the old togs again and the flag with a big B. on it reminded me of the great old stunts Jousy and I (like two skippers) used to have when our teams were going to meet, I wouldn't mind if I could strip off and have one of those old games over again now instead of darting about here like a wet hen, this game is too blooming [long] for me and old Fritz is not like old	12 Nov 1917
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		Jousy he won't stand the back chat. According to photos Siver must have changed a great deal, I wouldn't like to try and blooming well duck the silly beggar now. Page 3 A week or two after I wrote home for money it came out in orders that men from our division could apply for six days leave in Paris and that this leave would not affect Blightly leave. Well I thought about putting in an application for this Paris stunt in hopes of my money arriving in England before my turn came to go but since I have found out that money sent to the pay office can only be drawn by the soldier himself when <u>in London</u> so of course if I had cabled home for money to be sent through the Bank of N.Z. after writing and asking you to send it through the pay office there would have been a mix up and I might not have got any at all so let it go. A great may of our boys are getting leave to Paris just now but only one man from a battery is allowed to go each time, so after all it wouldn't be much of a catch to go floating about Paris on your own and not being too good on the lingo wouldn't improve things. I should get leave to Blighty any time now (before the New Year anyhow if I push it) and if Paris leave is still going when I come back will give it a bit of a flutter. Well anyhow I am easy about the whole blooming affair as long as I get three feeds a day and a bed to sleep on at night I am set. News lately doesn't seem to be bright but there is always a dying kick you know. I am going strong and in the best of health. Love to all, Link	
AK:2025.20.135	My Dear People	Somewhere in France December 3rd, 1917 My Dear People, Just a few hurried lines, as there is not much time to write in these times of shifting about, and it is so blooming cold under canvas at this time of the year. We have been shifting about a good deal lately, only staying a short time here and there and I think we have still further to go before settling down again. This shifting about is a fair beggar as we don't get our mails very regularly and everything seems to be upside down. The only thing I have received so far is a dandy big cake "Love from Blythcliffe" and	3 Dec 1917

it is only a shame how welcome it is just now. I kept it for yesterday so as to have a birthday spree, and it opened up as fresh as daisy although the tin had broken open. Just fancy it was two years ago yesterday that I fired my first shot in this war, I remember going into the trenches on Gallipoli on the first of Dec and waiting for midnight so as to have the first shot on my birthday

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little thinking that I would spend two more of the beggar over here. It's a long, long trail.

I am expecting leave to Blighty any day now and according to rumours should be over there for Christmas or New Year as everyone tells me that I am about next on the list. The boys I came over here with from Blighty are the next to go, so as I am the oldest hand left among them my chances are good, and I am wondering whether I should cable for money or to trust to luck that you received my letter asking you to send money. I don't like the idea of a cable as it might give some of you a shock and you would be frightened to open the blooming thing.

We are now camped quite close to the place where I was in hospital when I first came to France and every time I pass the old chateau by, it makes me wish I could have those six weeks over again now the same chance of swinging it. I'm not as keen as I used to be, but am cracking hardy, in hopes of this rotten business ending up soon.

I might be writing a dull sort of a letter, but you will understand that this

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this is only a spasm as everything is upside down and the frosts and mud don't improve after what we have been used to in the sand. I will come around again, when we get settled down or I get over to Blighty.

Well I must ring off as it is nearly time to me to go out and my picquet I will write again as soon as we get settled down and have more comfort.

I am in the best of health and hope this little letter note finds you all in the same way.

Love to All

		Link	
AK:2025.20.136	My Dear People	France 18/12/17 My Dear People At last we are settled down again and are again making preparations for the winter, which is just beginning to set in in real earnest with its frosts and occasionally snow. By cripes I often think of the good old days when I used to hang to my bed till about nine o'clock in the morning waiting for the sun to come and melt the frost. I don't think it did me any good and certainly didn't fit me out for this life, where we very often have to turn out long before daylight in rain hail sleet or snow, but it's not so hard as I used to think. Anyhow I have not come to any harm out of it yet, in fact I feel all the better for it, and feel more able to do a day's work now than ever I did, the getting out of bed is the hardest part and it's then that I sigh for days gone by. I'm sure one can crack hardy and look on the bright side when Blighty leave is so close at hand, I expect to get Page 2 away any day now, there is every chance of my seeing England for the New Year and if my money comes over I will be able to put in 14 days of the best as I expect to be able to scrape together about £20. The Y.M.C.A. coupons you sometimes send me are most useful, because whenever I run out of money I can always dart down to the Y.M. and by tearing out a leaf or two can always get what I want. For a long time they wouldn't take the coupons as they didn't seem to know anything about the N.Z. scheme but now almost every Y.M is in the know. One cove was telling me that the N.Z. people sprung quite a surprise on them with their coupon scheme and sent the books over to the boys without mentioning anything about them to other branches. By jove the Y.M. is a good institution and seems to be improving every day, up here where we are now there are three or four of their canteens fairly close up to the line and when coming home in the early morning from the guns one can always get a hot cup of cocoa and a few biscuits free of charge Page 3	18 Dec 1917

and I may as well tell you it is only a shame how the boys rush it. In my opinion no help no matter how great, would be too great much for an Institute of this sort it is out on its own.

We hear some great rumours over here about the 2nd Division being called up, one was there was a riot in Auckland and three or four people were killed in the mix up and the latest was then that a great do has taken place in Hamilton over it and finished up by three parts of the town being burnt to the ground and real open slather from all hands, but of course one can hardly believe, that this sort of thing is taking place, because if the silly beggars go about showing such good fighting form they will be sure to be sent up here to try their weight.

As far as I can see there will be a bit of a mix up in Akaroa yet if they don't hurry up and get things settled in the Council, it's a pity that a few of them don't have to do as we very often have to, and go without lights altogether nearly every fine night. If old Fritz

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could only drop a bomb in the middle of some of the crying beggars they might come to their senses and see that there is a war and would be quite satisfied to leave things as they stand at present till the war is over. If Wilkins and his coppers are so blooming smart it's a pity they can't use their nuts for another purpose and think out a scheme to put an end to this war, instead of kicking up a shine over something that is going well. Hang the lot of them anyway.

There is very little I can write about just now other than to tell you that I am in the very best of health and am not down hearted yet. I am receiving plenty of mail and as only one of the big parcels you have told me about has arrived yet, I should be well set for Christmas because there are a few very few parcels that I don't get yet. I have one on the way from Scotland too by the way. I will be able to thank them for it when I get over there on leave wish I could do it with you.

Well I must ring off for now hurrah

Love to all,

Link

Those gauze shirts Mother are a boon. I meant to have written for some before, you seem to know better than I do what is needed.

AK:2025.20.137	My Dear People	King George & Queen Mary Victoria League Club Ramsay Lodge, The Mound, Edinburgh 14/1/18 My Dear People You see I am at last in Blighty again but I have no N.Z. mates with me and as it is now mid-winter, things are not as pleasant as they might be. I spent nearly a week in London, because when there I ran across George Checkly and Mr. Gray, of course I didn't see much of Mr. Gray but I kicked about with George Checkly a good bit, until I got sick and tired of London, so thought I would dart up here and look up a few of my old friends. I didn't intend staying in Edinburgh long this time but being on my own and not having friends anywhere else I thought I had better make for here where I am sure to make my short stay a pleasant one. You will hear all about me from Mr. Gray when he gets back, he has been boarded for N.Z. as medically unfit but he is as right as rain, he will be going back any day now, and said he would tell you that he met me and will tell you all about me when he gets to Akaroa. Page 2 By cripes it's a funny thing that as soon as I get among the Scotch people its the stone end of my travelling as somehow no matter where I go up here I feel at home. Just the other day I met a young fellow Tommy who is also over here on leave from France, and after talking to him for a while he just simply dragged me to his home for tea, where I was made to stay until just on midnight. I have never seen such a homely lot of people as these Scotch in all my life they can't do enough for you, and once they get hold of you, you have got to go back and make their home yours. This young fellow who took me home with him knocks round with me every night now and is always inviting me to go home with him but I can't make the pace too hot when he has two such nice little sisters, they might be thinking something and give me the shunt, but all the same it is jolly decent to get into a home where everyone is lively, and there are some fine looking girls playing the piano and singing it reminds me that I once had such a home myself. I am not so blooming backward and silly shy as I used to be, so you might guess that I am having a very fair time. Tomorrow night I go back to that house to a party and tomorrow afternoon I must go out and see my friends the Steeles. <u>Some time</u> I am having you see, but there is only another week to go worst luck. Winter time is not too nice a time for holiday making, but in a way I am	14 Jan 1918
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glad my leave came when it did, because it is quite a treat to get away from the war for a while, especially now when everything at its worst, with frost & snow and mud and when I left

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our boys were in as bad a place as there is in France because as well as being a fairly warm corner, Ypres and the country surrounding it is nothing but a sea of mud. The country where our guns are (just a mile or two in from the Ypres to Menin Road) is absolutely the most torn about that I have ever seen and I am sure there is not a worse sight to be seen anywhere in France or Belgium, there is not a square inch of ground that has not been broken up by shells and to try and walk or ride across it would be as bad as trying to tackle walking through quicksand. The only way we can get up to the guns with ammunition and stores is to stick to a track made of big logs (which are connected to each other so as to keep them from sinking in the mud) and should a horse or vehicle get over the edge it's the stone end of them, so you might guess that for three or four miles along each side of this log road there is nothing but horses and vehicles, and the consequence is that Fritz has got a nice little target and can blow the road up anytime he likes, it's nice having to stop and fix up a hole in road before being able to move on. Of course there is more than one of these log roads there is really a network of them and in places there is room enough for two vehicles to pass, but old Fritz treats them all alike, especially in the daytime when he can see what is going on. We never get many casualties, because we pack all our ammunition in in the early in the morning before it is light enough for old Fritz to spot us from his balloons, and of course as there are working parties on the roads all night we very often get a clear run.

Page 4

When I go back I am living in hopes of finding my unit on some other front or else out for a spell, as when I left rumours were floating about that the Yanks were going to take over from Messines to Ypres and it certainly looked as though there was some truth in it because some of their Officers were darting about there just before I came away. Anyhow I don't think we will have to stay up there much longer now, because we have been in action now for about eight months without a spell.

There seems to be a very strong rumour in the air both over here and in France that the New Zealanders are going to be sent back to Egypt again as they can't keep us up to strength much longer if we remain in France.

Well I must tell you about the Christmas we spent on active service of course it had to snow as is the usual way over in this part of the world, and by the way we started off in the morning I thought we were in for a miserable day and I thought well if this is Christmas Day roll on Boxing Day, as it was a fair beggar marching round with a pair of horses trying to keep the poor brutes from shivering. None of my Christmas parcels had come to light and I was wishing that there wasn't such a day, but when dinner time came things did get a bit more cheerful, as the Officers and men all sat down at the same tables (which by the way were rigged up only for the special occasion) and had as good a feast as anyone could wish for. N.C.O's had to be orderlies for the mob and took a back seat till the men and officers were satisfied.

We had a six course dinner and there was any amount of poultry and duffs, so you might guess what some of us didn't need another feed till next well on in the next day. Cigarettes and sweets were thrown out

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and those who wanted beer could get enough to drown themselves in, so of course the whole affair ended up with some very funny toasts and speeches and rank was forgotten for the time being. Ammunition packing and other work was as far as could possibly be arranged cut out for the day, so most of us were able to spend the day in peace and for the time being forget there was a war on.

I received two big Christmas cakes the day before New Year so was able to have another big spread on that day. One was sent from home and the other from Win, and a pair of dandies they were, they opened up as if they had been baked the day before, even the writing in icing was there just as it had been put on.

There is only my mate and myself in our little shack so I had Christmas cake for nearly every meal before I came away and there is still half a cake left, it doesn't take much rich food to satisfy me these times.

Well I must ring off for this time. I will write again before going back to the war. Trusting all is well at home.

Your loving son,

Link.

P.S. My money arrived in England in good time, so I am able to do things in

		stile.	
AK:2025.20. 138	My Dear People	France 3/1/18 <i>[N.B. this date appears incorrect - probably late January - should be read after the letter dated 14th Jan 1918 AEAC].</i> My Dear People I should have written to you a second time from England when I was over there on leave, but you might understand that I was only out for a good time and somehow couldn't settle down to write, my intentions were good, but I always seemed to have something on to drag me away from the club. I went twice to see my friends the Steeles and only wish I had gone over to see them more often, because going so seldom I felt always just like going home. They seemed very pleased to see me again and treated me as though I belonged to them, so of course I sort of picked up my old stride again and made myself quite at home and talked to them and carried on as though I had known them all my life. When in Edinburgh I saw quite a number of people (no girls of course so don't worry) who knew me and invited me out to dances and evenings so you might guess that I had a ripping time and everywhere I went the people made me feel quite at home. Someone has just got to introduce me as Mr. Armstrong ("that's enough") and they all tell me that I am Scotch or at least have a Scotch name. They certainly treated Page 2 me as though I was a Scotty and had been amongst them for years. Everywhere is the same up there. When it came time to get back to France again I thought I would cut things a bit fine, so caught a train from Edinburgh which I knew would just about miss the leave train from London and would thus give me the weekend in the "<u>big smoke</u>". As it happened there was a smash up on the up going express that night at Carlisle, so of course our train was delayed for about a couple of hours, and this of course freed me from all blame. I was two days overdue when I got back to the battery but not a word was said, anyhow I was easy because I had a good excuse to put up. Judging by the severe weather over in Blighty I thought it would be a fair	3[0] Jan 1918

beggar over here in France but it wasn't half bad in fact it was quite warm and seemed like Spring time. Of course there was plenty of mud kicking about (always is in this part) but the boys told me that they hadn't had any rain snow or frost for a week and since then the weather has been very mild, so you see we are not having a very hard winter. By the way I found the battery still on the same old front, and it looks as though we are here for some time yet. You ought to have seen the mail that was waiting for me when I got back, there were letters papers and parcels to burn, I received something from everyone in the family.

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My mate said he would go over and see if there was any mail for me, while I had some [serand], and after waiting for half an hour while they sorted it out, he came back with just as much as he could carry in his arms.

Talk about living high, well my mate and I can go the whole hog for some time to come, so as far as tucker goes I am not doing it hard after coming from Blighty.

There is every chance of us getting over to England again shortly as they have now started taking men away from the battery for a two months tour of duty in the United Kingdom. Just a few days ago all men who came away from N.Z. up to the third reinforcements (even some of the fourth got away) were sent away on this bit of a flutter, so if, when they come back some more are sent over, I will be sure to pick a winner. There is a rumour (only a rumour) that if any man going on this stunt can show £30 total (10/- a day) he can have the two months free, so if it is true, I will be very much tempted to put the hard word on you again for the money, because two months freedom would be much better than that time spent in darting about in some of the base camps. It would be a lot of money to ask for I know, but I was thinking that perhaps you could tap my allotment for it, if I did happen to send for such a sum. I must be holding fairly strong in the lock now. Anyhow I will give it a go by cable if I want it.

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I have a pretty sure thing on for Paris leave too any time now if I liked to put in for it, but I am afraid if I cable for money so often you will be thinking I have gone to the dogs, so I will leave things as they are till you get this letter and then you will understand and be prepared for squalls. I must ask you to send £10 anyhow, to the Bank of N.Z. London so I will have something to come and go on in case of emergency. If I don't get the tour of duty in about three months time I will be knocking at the door of

		nine day's leave Paris, so that is why I ask you to send to the Bank, because money sent there can be drawn in France, but if sent to the Pay Office it can only be drawn in England. It could be drawn here but the trouble one has to go to to get it and the time they keep you waiting, is more than the game is worth, it is easily got through the Bank. Well I must be taking a pull for this time as my mate is tempting me with a cup of tea and a piece of the Taniwha cake and Hokitika shortbread. In case I don't get time to thanks <u>everyone</u> (the whole D- family) separately for their kindness in sending me so many Xmas parcels I will ask you to make this do. I can assure you I appreciate every thing that has been sent, and besides its jolly decent to know that everyone of my brothers and sisters still give old England a thought. Everything is OK with me. Link	
AK:2025.20.139	My Dear People	France 24/2/18 My Dear People, Just a few hurried lines to let you know that all is well with me. I am still going strong and am keeping on waving the flag with my best foot foremost, in other words carrying on with <u>great gusto</u>. There hasn't been a New Zealand mail along this way for ages, I haven't received a letter from home since I came back from leave a month ago, but everyone else is in the same boat and anyhow I suppose it's nothing compared to what you have to put up with sometimes, so I am cracking hardy and looking forward to my ship coming home any day now. There has been plenty of work doing here lately so I have not had much time to myself, and my letter writing has been sadly neglected, but I know that although you are sadly disappointed at times, you understand the situation and put up with it as best you can. We are busy and no doubt Fritz is, but things are very quiet all round just now and I honestly think that this war is on its last legs and that one more big slap up will see it finished. There is every chance of me getting another trip to Blighty again soon and this time for a two months tour of duty. Page 2	24 Feb 1918

		All of our boys up to the fourth reinforcements have already gone on this tour and today I heard from good authority that the fifth and sixth will get away within a month from now so I should be knocking at the door, and even if I don't pick a winner this time I should strike it in about three months' time. Fourteen days leave for a kick-off and then two months on some light job in a base camp in Blighty will do me, but it will take money so look out for a big hit up someday soon. I told you that when on leave in Edinburgh this last time I made friends with a Tommy who used to take me to his home for evening suppers etc so as we had our photos taken together I am sending you one. When you see it you will be able to judge for yourself that soldiering for nearly three years hasn't dragged me down much and that I haven't been losing any sleep over it. Well time is flying and I have had a long day and don't feel a bit in the humour for letter writing so I must ask you to excuse me for taking a pull with just these few lines. Don't ever worry about me. I am set like a jelly and am quite easy about things. There's a silver lining you know, and it can't be far off now and anyhow I am having a very time and am quite contented with my lot. Love to all at home and the whole family Your loving son, Link	
AK:2025.20.140	My Dear People	Belgium 30/3/18 My Dear People, It is some time since I last wrote and I am sorry for it, but somehow I never seem to be able to get time for letter writing these days, as there is <u>plenty doing</u> just now. The weather seems to have settled down again so of course things are beginning to get lively and we have to do a bit of darting about to keep our end up. We are not so badly off on this front as yet, but old Fritz seems to be causing a bit of a stir elsewhere and looks as though he is either going to	30 Mar 1918

		break through or break down for keeps. I don't like his chances though. Last week I received another big N.Z. mail, of course about half a dozen letters from home and numerous papers (with cigarettes enclosed) from Hokitika. In one of your letters you were asking how it was that Lieutenant Jack Birdling [<i>Lieutenant Arthur John Birdling - killed in action</i>] came to be in possession of my field glasses. Well when in Egypt he was my troop officer, and as his own glasses had been mislaid and he couldn't get hold of a decent pair in Cairo, I used to lend him mine, as I didn't have much use for them then, and besides had a big enough pack to lug round without carrying field glasses. I told him that while Page 2 we were in Egypt he could have the use of them altogether, he assured me that should we get separated and anything happen to either of us, that the glasses would be sent home. He of course was transferred into the Infantry in about as big a hurry, and same time as I was transferred into this outfit, so of course in the rush glasses were forgotten, and I never saw him again. Words can't express the opinion I had of Jack Birdling he did many a man a good turn and helped them out of a scrape (me in particular) and I can honestly say that he was the best Officer and whitest man I have ever known, he was more like a common trooper than an officer to us. I was living in hope that I would miss a part of the war this Spring, as a short time ago there seemed every chance of some of us getting over to Blighty on this tour of duty, but now that old Fritz is leading off so early, with his best foot foremost, I think that every available man will be wanted over here to keep the Huns back, anyhow I don't think there is any chance of a spell for a while yet, <u>but mind you there might</u> and there mightn't be a chance, it all depends how quick we can get the <u>extinguisher</u> on to him. Anyhow an early start and a good fair dinkum Page 3 slap-up ought to see this rotten business finished this summer. By the way things have been going on in the old home of late it looks as though you want an armed guard about at night, surely if anyone about there wants to earn a bit of excitement or has a few dirty little schemes to	
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		try out, he knows that this is the place for him. I can't make out how anyone could be so brave as to try to burn the show out, when there is nobody at home, why if he came at such an act out here he would be a sure thing for a V.C. I can see myself having to do guards at night when I get home. I thought I would have been able to scrape up plenty of time for writing when we went back a little way from the line for a bit of a spell a short time ago, but if thats what they call a spell I would much sooner be in action. Talk about red tape, we were kept on the go from daylight to dark cleaning harness or else doing some of our first stages of training over again, then at night there were always extra picquets or guards to do, it seemed as though they weren't satisfied unless we were doing something. If anything hurts after a few years of this game it is doing to do some silly Page 4 useless training. Anyway it's over now I suppose will be a big help to us when we start to push the Huns back. This life when in action is not half bad, because although one sometimes gets a shell or a bomb or two land fairly handy, there is a certain amount of satisfaction about it, and for another thing we are not fooled about so much we just have our work to do and so long as that is done details don't count. Well I suppose must be ringing off to get a bit of shuteye. You can rest assured that everything with me is going O.K. I am always in the very best of health and look for signs of a silver lining in the near future. Parcels and letters are always turning up from home, so as long as I know how everything is going with you, there is nothing else to worry about, I am quite easy about the rest. Your loving son, Link.	
AK:2025.20.141	My Dear People	France 2/5/18 My Dear People You must be thinking me a bit of a <u>slacker</u> for not writing more often. I	2 May 1918

certainly feel ashamed of myself, but no doubt you can excuse me to a certain extent when you read all about what has been going on of late. We Pig Islanders have been right in the middle of it and you can take my word for it that it was hard slogging all the way but I feel certain that we have stopped the beggar at last and will soon be taking a step in the right direction again. Every dog has his day you know. I only wish I could tell you of some of the lively experiences I had when on this retreat. I could very nearly

Page 2

write a book on it, but you know the censor won't allow one to tell much. Of course being a driver in a gun team gave me the chance of seeing something lively as we were always kept well up in the thick of it and sometimes a bit too close to old Fritz for my liking, especially with two horses to look after. You might often have heard one say at home "I'll be there when the whips are cracking", well that saying has come only too true at times, you have a fair idea of how I can sail when I want, so you can guess the rest. I bet Fritz couldn't see me for dust. I like to be where the shells are thickest, that's on an oyster bed though.

We certainly have had a very strenuous time, but things are much

Page 3

quieter now and we sometimes get a night's spell and when I come to think of what we went through, I will always take a pride of saying I took part in it as a New Zealander. Fair dinkum our boys are out on their own and I don't wonder at the French and American papers having a special word of praise for them, they deserve it all.

We found it pretty hard having to give way, but our hardships were nothing to what the civilian people had to put up with, it was pitiful to see some of them getting out of it, leaving their homes and everything they owned behind them, knowing that everything would be utterly destroyed. Every little farm was coming on nicely with the beautiful spring weather we are having, so of course

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having to pull out when all the hard work was over and everything was coming on nicely made things worse for them, and I don't wonder at them having a sad parting.

One of our positions was quite close to a big farm and when we first went

there the people were just preparing to pack up what they could take in their waggons. They were kindly disposed and gave us the use of their kitchen for cooking utensils and told us that after they got away we could make use of what was left behind. Well they had to leave three or four cows that were in full milk, a few pigs and poultry to burn "bon pour soldat" so you see we lived well up to the mark, and as far as tucker was concerned it was a good war.

Page 5

We lived like lords all through the piece, it was a case of taking things or leaving them for the Huns, but of course where there was a possible chance all live stock was taken away, the French government I think taking it over.

These Tommies are some drovers, they go a long way in a long time.

Of course all leave has been stopped but I suppose things will turn out alright again soon when things quieten down. I have had word about my money having arrived in Blighty it will keep, and it's good to know that it is there when I want it, one never knows his luck you know.

"That just reminds me". When this disastrous affair first started we were in rather queer

Page 6

circumstances and we drivers and our horses did a bit of a starve as well as having to sleep out in the sparrow boarding house,"you know out on the blooming clothes line." Well I was just beginning to feel like a bit of a binder when one of our chaps came across from the guns with a parcel for me, a decent little cake and what fitted in it with the situation was the writing on the lcing "It all helps to make a pretty show" a prettier show I have never seen. It happened to be mail day and thanks to the good people at home we got enough between us to share out and satisfy us for the time being. Of course it was not until we were chased back a good way that we came in for all the other luxuries.

Page 7

Now Mother in your last letter you were asking about socks well of course ever since leaving home I have always had a spare pair or two of home knitted ones to come and go on and have never yet had to fall back on army issued ones. You send me far more than I can use myself, but they are never wasted as what I can't carry, I give away, to those who are not so

		fortunate as myself, the boys rush home made socks here you know. I think I receive every parcel you send (<u>I am very lucky all the time</u>) so am always well supplied with everything that a man could wish for. That Highland milk and the sugar is a God send, we can't get sweetened milk over in this part, for the love of money, so if you can get it in N.Z. you can't send too much of it, it has so many uses. Sugar I know is hard to get so never mind that, it comes on alright for the porridge and rice, but that will soon be cut out. Page 8 Well I must ring off now, because having no more to say I won't say it. Rest assured that I am always enjoying the best of health and have always got the old flag at the top of the mast with my best foot foremost. Your loving son, Link Don't forget to send along one of those little thin shirts now and then. They always come in handy. L.F. Armstrong	
AK:2025.20.142	My Dear People	France 2/6/18 My Dear People I suppose it is high time I made another attempt to drop you a few lines, and let you know that all's well with me. Things on this front are getting very quiet again now, so of course one has time to dart about now and then and look up some of his old cobbles. In this last week I have seen a great many of my old Akaroa mates whom I have not seen for twelve months and over, nearly every day I come across a fresh one, so of course there is plenty of Peninsula news floating about these days. I have not had a chance of looking these fellows up before, because until a short time ago, we were on different parts of the front. I think you know, Eric Julius was the first I saw, he hasn't altered in the least, except perhaps, he is a bit easier going and even more lively than he was before. Smithy	2 June 1918

was the last I expected to see over here, as I thought he would have been back in N.Z. long ago, but he doesn't seem to mind much having to come back to the war, he was telling

Page 2

me that he was going to try and get into the trench mortars and the same outfit as Arthur Jacobson, as he said, that was the sort of life to suit him, so you see he is still fairly game.

It is two days ago since I started to write this, as I was called out to go to the cannons, just as I had settled down to write and since then I have been getting ready for a military show that came off yesterday. The best battery (for show purposes) in each I Brigade was picked out by one of the heads the other day and told to appear on the show ground to be judged, so as this battery was picked we have had to go for the cleaning up stakes, but we didn't do any good as we got third place out of three competitors, so I suppose you could say we also started, but it was quite expected because compared to the others we have had a rough time lately and have done much more travelling about.

It was a great show and a good day's outing for those who took part in it, as there were all sorts of events and different sorts of post entry sports were brought in to make the thing go with a swing. I think the funniest thing I have ever seen was the hurdle race on mules, that had to be ridden bare back and without whip or spur.

Page 3

They had to run this event off in about six different heats, and talk about fun. I think I have got about three ribs loose with laughing. You would see them get over the first two hurdles alright, then the leader would jib and off course once one stops they all stop and run into a heap, they would after a lot of persuasion get them on the move again and perhaps over another hurdle when the leader would take it into his head to turn across the middle of the paddock, all the rest of course would follow and it nearly always ended up with the last mule (to come into the straight) being so far behind would lose the run of his mates and by mistake go for the finishing post.

It must be hard for you to imagine us having a show like this when in the line, and of course I can't explain how things are arranged for it, but it will just give you some idea that things are very quiet here just now and there

		isn't much chance of Fritz laying us a surprise visit for at least a day or two. Last night when I got back to camp the orderly sergeant informed me that I was to proceed to head quarters in the morning to see Col. Rhodes, and by jove you ought to have heard some of the rumours that got about the battery, some said Page 4 was getting a job on Rhodes' staff in Blighty, others said he was going to push me through for a commission and things of this sort, you see it is such an unusual thing for a Colonel to send along for a common driver, that they thought there was something in the wind. Well I braced up to him this morning and had a bit of a yarn about different things, he gave me his Blighty address and told me that if ever I was in need of anything, or wanted help in any way, that he would do his best for me. He is one of the whitest is Mr. Rhodes and made me quite at home to start off with, by saying that he would just as soon talk with anyone in the ranks as one of the heads. He seems to take it very hard losing Banks Peninsula from his electorate as he says he has made so many friends there that it seems like starting all over fresh having to go elsewhere. Anyhow you know more about that sort of thing than I do and as for the rest of our conversation you will hear all about it from him, as he said he would write to you and tell you how things were going with me. Well I must ring off for this time as I have just about come to the end of my tether. Everything is A1 with me in every way. Your loving son, Link	
AK:2025.20.143	My Dear People	France 28/6/18 My Dear People Just while there is nothing much doing I suppose I can't do better than drop a few lines home in answer to the many letters I have received from you lately. It is good to know that my old friend Mrs. Steele has given you such a good report about my doings when in Scotland on leave, I must	28 June 1917

write and thank her for putting in such a good word for me. The Steeles are jolly good friends to me and are always writing to me, inviting me to go back there, or asking if they can help me along in any way. When the big retreat was on of course there wasn't even a chance of writing to anyone, and my not answering their letters made them think that something had gone wrong and they worried over me as if I belonged to their blooming family. "They are some friends". I am beginning to think that I have enough relations in N.Z. without being counted as one in Blighty, fancy another nephew and niece added to the list, I think it will take me a lifetime to get to know which is which of the little beggars when I go home. If this war keeps going for another 20 years I can see a reinforcement of Armstrongs coming over to straff

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the Hun. Anyhow it is good to know, that if Bert appeals (which he surely will do) he will not have to come away for sometime yet, because this is no picnic and certainly not a suitable place for a married man to come to, before he really has to. If any of my brothers do happen to be stiff enough to draw a marble, try to get them to join up in the N.Z.F.A. where they can look me up, and anyhow keep them well away from the Infantry, the artillery is the best I can recommend.

Things in this part are beginning to look a bit brighter again now, and for sometime past there has not been much doing in the line, but of course something always crops up, in these quiet times, to keep us busy, it wouldn't do to take things easy, they must beggar us about by making us do something silly. It isn't exactly being in the line that one gets tired of and makes him wish he had never seen the blooming war, it is the times like these when there is nothing much doing up the line and one is rushed about doing unnecessary training and there is so much red tape about everything, that makes him dissatisfied. I suppose that long before this reaches you, you will have heard much brighter news than you have been hearing of late, because

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surely Fritz has had his fling, and it is time we showed him what we can do. I am picking him to get some slap up, something like the Australians are getting at the present time, and the sooner it comes off the better, one is always much more satisfied when we are doing something.

Now for another start. Jeff Fleming has been along to see me and stayed for about three hours. I was jolly glad to see him again as he of course can

		always give some news about the Peninsula Infantry boys I know. He told me of several of the boys being smacked out but of course you will have heard all about them. From all accounts Jeff has been up against it a good deal since he came over here, but he doesn't look too bad, he of course has been promoted to a lance corporal since I last saw him. About a week ago I had to take to bed for a couple of days. I caught a complaint that seems to be going right through the outfit, a sort of trench fever, it only affects one for a few days, but it is a fair beggar while it lasts. This is only the second time I have had to attend sick parade since I was wounded nearly two years ago, so I am not doing too bad By jove, it gave me a real surprise to hear of Mr Gray's Page 4 death, as it seems no time since I saw him in London. He looked to be in perfect health then and was telling me how lucky he was to be able to kid the Head's a big enough tale to be sent back to N.Z. It was jolly hard luck and I am sure that anyone who has ever had anything to do with him will take his loss very keenly, everyone I have seen who knew him mentions how sad a case his was. Well, there is the blooming trumpet blowing a warning for parade so I will have to spring to it and go and do a bit more darting about. Everything with me is O.K. I feel in the very best of health again, and never know what it is like to want anything, that of course I have to thank you good people at home for, as I am always receiving a parcel of some sort from someone of you. Those little shirts are <u>tres bon</u>, especially now when the days are so hot, as there is not much clothing required just now. Hoping that all is well at home and that you are still keeping the old flag flying. I Remain Your loving son, Link	
AK:2025.20.144	My Dear People	Leave is starting again but as yet there is no more talk of that tour of duty coming off. It is fairly certain to come off but I don't think this is any	21 July 1918

chance of it until the summer is over. The Y.M.C.A. coupons always come in handy, especially when one is on the rocks "stoney".

France

21//18

My Dear People,

I suppose I must strike while the iron is hot and make another attempt to convince you that everything with "Old England" is O.K., because by the look of things there is going to be something doing over here very shortly, and there might not be much time for letter writing. Everything seems to be getting much brighter and it looks as though the Allies are going to more than make up for what they have lost this last summer, the French seem to be doing just what they like with ole Fritz lately and I wouldn't be a bit surprised if we hop in somewhere very shortly and give him a big sally up also, and should with a bit of luck just about break his heart. Old Bill Massey and Joe Ward came over to France not long ago and had a look round all the N.Z. troops, before he put in an appearance there was great talk going on among our troops as to what sort of a hearing they were going to get, the general opinion was that they would get "courted out", especially Bill, because they have done quite a lot of things that our chaps don't agree with and don't very quickly forget. For instance

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that Main Body stunt is a thing that is often talked about and is a very sore point amongst those who were to have gone to N.Z. for a furlough and were at the last minute turned down. Fancy anyone saying that if the boys had the option of staying out here or returning N.Z., that they would prefer to stay and see the business through. I don't think they could have asked many, or if they did, the question was only put to those who have base jobs, because what Main Body men I have seen up the line here, are sick and tired of the whole affair, and would grab at the chance of going home for a spell without hesitating, I know if they tried me I would go for the bait like a big shark. Anyhow as it happened they got a very fair reception but didn't give the boys many chances, as they visited each unit separately, said a few words (laid stake), and then darted off while their luck was in.

The piece of canvas enclosed is piece of a Hun aeroplane that frightened about ten years growth out of me the other morning. We were on our way up to the cannons just before daylight, when we heard this plane coming

behind us flying very low and dropping eggs in great stile, the blooming thing flew straight over the top of us and although it was fairly dark at the time was low enough for us to see it. Seemingly we were very lucky that

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there were no more bombs in the brute when it passed over us, because owing to engine trouble old Fritz was getting rid of his load so as to be able to land safely. When about a hundred past us they had to land and I can assure you the three Germans in the thing didn't waste much time, they hopped out and fired flares at the plane till it caught fire and then walked away until baled up by a NZer who had a dummy rifle and no ammunition. When coming back we went over to have a look at what was left, in hopes of getting a decent little souvenir, but everything except part of one wing was burnt to a cinder.

From all accounts you seem to be having a very severe winter in N.Z., especially in Canterbury. I was reading in the New Zealander (a monthly cable news paper issued free to N.Z. troops) that there was a terrible snow storm down on the Canterbury plains, it made me think of that time when we all got flooded out of house and home. I think it is about time I went home to cut those willows down so as to save all accidents.

Well I must ring off because news is scarce. I can assure you that everything with me is A1. I receive plenty of mail and as far as I can see, I seldom miss a parcel. By the way, that last cake I think the one the baker made was great on the turn when I got it, the tin was still airtight so I can't understand why it should go bad.

Love to all,

Link

Correspondence – Official correspondence and from the front after death of Lincoln:
Selected transcriptions:

Item No:	From:	Description:	Date:
AK:2025.20.145	Bank of NZ, London	Letter to Pte Lincoln F Armstrong re money in account	16 Apr 1918
AK:2025.20.146	Governor General of NZ	Letter to: Mr G Armstrong, re sympathy of King & Queen	9 Sept 1918
AK:2025.20.147	E. Hayes	France 1-10-18 Dear Mr and Mrs Armstrong Being one of the Boys who was wounded by the shell that caused the death of your son I am writing to you to express my deepest sympathy in your sad bereavement and am forwarding on some of his personal belongings which I am sure you will be very pleased of. Hoping these articles reach you in good condition. I remain One of your good friends Gnr E Hayes 9/1569 Page 2 Your son lies in a place name Rouen France	1 Oct 1918
AK:2025.20.148	James A Brewerton	Kawhia Auckland 1/11/19 Dear Sir Having known your Son Lincoln and being his mate from the time he went back to France the second time after being wounded at the Somme until he met his death by accident from a chap playing with a German shell when it exploded and got about 3 pieces through the side of the head. I missed him just like one of my own Brothers as we always made our own little dug-out for two and the good parcels we used to have from his Mother every mail and the Akaroa mail and the Auckland Weekly News with a packet of cigarettes inside. it would take me a whole day to tell you of the good times we had together he was often telling me of the cocksfoot seed grown down your	1 Nov 1919

		Page 2 way that is why I am taking the privilege of writing to you. my two Brothers have just got back from the front and we have taken up bush land and at present busy felling a block we would like to get some cocksfoot to cut on shares if you have any or know of any would you kindly let me know and we would come down and cut and thrash it after Xmas we are all single and just making a start in life and seed is pretty expensive up this way 1/7 a pound if there is any byroads we could camp on any small patch. we should require 12 to 15 sacks. we would be glad to cut it and also if you would let me know what time the seed is ripe. Faithfully yours James A. Brewerton Kawhia .P.O Auckland	
AK:2025.20.149	James A Brewerton	Private Bag Te Mata P.O. Via Hamilton 24/9/1931 Dear Sir.” It gives me much pleasure in writing these few lines to let you know how we enjoyed your talk last evening over the air. “Akaroa yesterday and today”. Although we are over 600 miles away you[r] voice was as clear as though you were speaking in our house. I have an Atwater-Kent 5 valve receiving set and live on the west coast of the North Island half way between Kawhia & Raglan. I have never had the pleasure of seeing Akaroa yet but hope to some day. as I heard about it from one who I presume was your Son Lincoln Fr Armstrong. I knew him better by the name of Fred and he with Clarence Bell of Nelson was my mate on a gun team in the Field Artillery of the Second Brigade in France for 2 years approx. until poor Fred was accidentally killed by a German shell which a Corporal foolishly exploded by unscrewing the fuse cap on the shell he had found up the line and was going to make a souvenir of it. They had just been up to the gun position to take a new gun into position as the old one had been blown out and two gunners Killed. I can remember it as well as though it was yesterday. I was the Lead Driver Fred the centre & Clarry Bell the Wheel	24 Sept 1931

		Page 2 Driver of the Fr. Sub-section in the 9th Battery 2nd Brigade. and I can tell you we had some pretty rough times while we were together. I think Clarry Bell is still in Nelson. I am a native of Nelson but since the war I have married and have 3 Sons & a Daughter and made North to carve a home out in the Bush & Back country. in concluding I would like to say that the Wife & I send you our most hearty congratulations as we believe you have been the Mayor of your town for 28 years and trust you will be able to hold the Office for many years to come and enjoy the best of health. “ Yours very Faithfully James. A. Brewerton	
AK:2025.20.150		Receipt for Victory Medal	No date
AK:2025.20.151		Buckingham Palace - Statement from King [sent with medal]	No date
AK:2025.20.152		Commemorative Scroll - Driver Lincoln Frederick Armstrong, NZ Field Artillery	No date
AK:2025.20.153		Handwritten note re St Sever Cemetery. Author unknown: L.F.Armstrong = St Sever Cemetery, Rouen In each central cemetery a large memorial is to be erected which will be known as the Cross of Sacrifice, & over the graves a headstone of a uniform pattern are to be xx, no distinction being shown between officers and men. When the graves are completed photographs will be taken and forwarded to the next of kin.	No date
AK:2025.20.154	Mr George Armstrong	Base Records Branch, NZ Military Forces Letter accompanying 6 copies of photographs of his grace	17th Jan 1919