

Robert Vernon Armstrong (Vern) - Correspondence – Transcriptions

Son of George Armstrong 1852-1932

Born: 2nd August 1892

Died: 12th December 1915 (Aged 24)

Canterbury Mounted Rifles 7/1328 (1st Battalion)

Correspondence Aug 1915- Nov 1915

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.

Transcription:

Item no:	To:	Description:	Date:
AK:2025.20.30	Ida (sister)	Trentham. Dear Ida I feel ashamed of myself for not writing to you before, I have been going to nearly every day since I have been in here, but something has happened and I have kept putting it off. As you know I suppose I am at Trentham, we came up as the seventh but we have been put into the Sixth and leave New Zealand some time about the tenth of August. I think they will keep us in Egypt for awhile, worst luck. By jove this camp was deadly the first week we were in here, we were dash near up to our boot tops in mud, a terrible lot of our chaps are in hospital, and I don't think there is one in this hut that hasn't been to the doctor with a cold or something. I went the other morning, with a sore throat, but it is alright now. Page 2 There are nearly thirty Peninsula chaps in camp here now, we are all having our photo taken next Sunday; Link & I are having ours taken together before we leave New Zealand. You know it seems ages since I last saw you and Ted, if I hadn't been away from home so long, I would have gone over and	10 August 1915

		looked you up, but I had a lot to do fixing things up at home before I left; I never felt leaving home as I did this trip, if Link or Lorna had of been home I wouldn't have minded so much, for I felt mean somehow leaving mother & father home on their own; young Lorna is the limit staying away just now, both Link & I have written to her to tell her to go home, but it doesn't seem any use; the kid ought to know her place is home at a time like this. There is one thing about this camp you always find plenty to do in the evenings, for there are picture shows, and concerts on nearly every night, and then there are shooting galleries and a billiard room. Page 3 I have two or three good mates, but I don't think you would know any of them, except perhaps Walter Birdling; I was coming in the first place with Justin, Tommie McGuire & Owie Ferris, but they could get in for something or other; but they were sent up here yesterday with a special to hundred men to look after the horses in Egypt; and they go away the same time as us. Well Ida I must ring off all the other chaps are going out for a walk, and I suppose I had better go to; Remember me to Ted and that youngster or yours; I will write again as soon as I get a chance. Your loving brother Vern	
AK:2025.20.31	Mother & Father	Trentham. Dear Mother & Father, Here I am back at Trentham again, we were roused out of bed at half-past one this morning, we left Tauherenikau at half-past two, we marched into Featherston and arrived here by train at about eight o'clock; Justin came around to see me as soon as I arrived, by jove he is getting fat, if he keeps on going at the rate he is, he will sweat some when he gets to Egypt. It is decent in these huts now, they only allow thirty-five in each end, and we all have stretchers to sleep on and they have the electric light going, it is not as good as the Akaroa light, but it does us alright, still better than the candles. Tonight, leave was given to all those who cared to go out. All the chaps have gone out of our hut but four of us. Fred Joblin and I thought we had had to quite a long enough today, so we decided to stay home	August 1915

		and write letters and go to bed early for tomorrow we have the first of our shooting test; I think we will get some pretty solid work during the next week, I don't think they will give us much night leave. Page 2 Link and Maurice don't come down here till Monday. I think they leave their horses up at Tauherenihau.. I received a box of cake today, it must have come from you, it was jolly decent, we had some of it for supper tonight. Arthur Irving came back with us today, they kept him down here till we came back. Well I must stop writing till tomorrow night, I will finish this letter then, and let you know how I get on at shooting. It is raining like mad this morning, I don't think we will be able to do our shooting this afternoon, we have just been given our last issue of clothing and a new uniform. I am afraid I will have to get rid of some of my gear for there is no chance of me getting it all in my bag. We were issued a small bag as well to carry the things we needed aboard the ship in, and a pair of shoes. Justin & Tom have just been in, they said they saw Eric Julius in camp yesterday. He is coming round to see them again this afternoon, I told them to bring him along here if I am in, for I would like to see him. I forgot to tell you before that I have my number now it is 7/1328, we also had to allot our money to someone to look after while we are away; I told them to send mine to Dad, Page 3 it will come to about twenty-one shillings a week, you can do whatever you think best with it, it will be a good while before it amounts to anything like a decent sum. I don't see much of Walter Birdling now, he is away in another hut, Arthur Irving, Fred Joblin, Percy Humm, and I are going to stick together as one section, two married & two single chaps; I am younger than any of the others by three years, but I don't suppose that matters much. I suppose the old gramophone doesn't get much use now, I wish it were here now I would give something to hear those old marches I used to put on, all the chaps seem so quiet now, once there used to be a violin and mouth-organs going, but I haven't heard them yet, since I came back from leave.	
--	--	--	--

		Well, I must ring off now, I have just about run out of news. Remember me to Frank & Joe and all, I suppose I will be seeing you this week. I am not going to try for leave till you come, so I will have more chance of getting it. Your loving son, Vern	
AK:2025.20.32	Mother, Father and all	NZ Expeditionary Force [letterhead] [At Sea] Dear Mother, Father & all. Well here it is, we have been a week out and haven't reached our first port of call yet, we have had a dandy trip so far, I was only sea-sick once, not bad for me. I feel real decent today, Justin, Cyril and I have been on mess orderly work for a week in the same mess room. We finished up this morning and we weren't sorry either, it wasn't the best of jobs at times it used to get too stuffy down there. I think I wouldn't have been sea-sick at all if it wasn't for that job. They wanted us Page 2 to take on the mess job for the voyage, but it was no good to us, it would be a beggar of a job going through the tropics. So far all the Akaroa chaps have been doing first-rate bar Chum he has been pretty crook I believe. I saw Link and Maurice a while ago, they were busy writing, so you might get plenty of news. I had crook luck with that other fountain pen when Justin gave it to me, it was broken. It must have been the throw that broke it. If I get a chance, I will try my luck with another one at the next port of call. Tell Elsie Page 3 and Evelyn & Joe that the box of cake was decent. I still have some of it left, I am keeping it as long as I can; we get well treated aboard this ship, plenty of tucker of the best sort, and fruit about once a day. I still have a bit of a cold, but hope to shake it off soon, I have been to the doctor once with it. We have to be careful what we put in these letters, for they have to be censored. We are not allowed to mention any port we call at or ship we pass or is keeping company with us. I expect to strike our first port	22 August 1915

		Page 4 of call about Tuesday. We expect to stay there about two days, it will be alright to be able to stretch our legs on firm ground again. I think we will be going on a route march, I hope to get leave for a while for there are several things I want. Well I must stop now, wishing you all good luck. I hope you are all well. I will write again as soon as I get a chance. It might not be for a while for there is some talk of us making a pretty straight trip. Your loving son, Vern.	
AK:2025.20.33	Dear Mother, Father and all.	NZ Expeditionary Force [letterhead] [At Sea] We hear Chum is sent to England sick Mother Sunday 27th 1915 Dear Mother, Father and all. Here we are about three days out from our first port of call, and all is doing first class bar poor old chum, he is pretty crook, I thought he would be a good sailor being used to the sea, I don't think he has had a proper feed since he has been aboard. We have had it pretty rough the last day or two the water has been dashing nearly all over the ship nearly every one has been wet through, the water has even got down into our sleeping room, all sorted of things have been washed under my bunk, rifles & boots, and Page 2 bottles, it takes some time looking after your rifle with the salt water flying about like this, mine was in a terrible mess this morning when I got hold of it, and I gave it a good cleaning yesterday, we have been unable to do any drill for a couple of days, we have been kicking around reading and sleeping, I see Link & Maurice and all the other Akaroa chaps nearly every other day, they seem happy enough. I have been a better sailor than I expected, I have only been sea sick twice so far, and then I only felt crook for about half an hour; some of the poor beggars are still unable to go down to the	27 th [August] 1915

		Page 3 mess room to have their tucker, they get their mates to bring them some up on the deck when they come back. Well I will have to make this do for one day I will write a few lines again when I get some more news, and post this letter at the next port of call; this is my third fountain pen I hope I will have better luck with it. Well every one is busy writing this afternoon, the mail closes tomorrow, for our next port of call; I just left Link on his way to write; by jove it is dash hot now we crossed the equator yesterday, we had a great day, we held sports, Justin Page 4 had hard luck in not winning one or two of the events; I made sure he would win the boot race; to finish up the days sport, they started turning the hose on every one, and ducking them in tubs of water; I thought I was going to get out of it pretty lucky; but Vic, Fergus, Owie Ferris & young Rhodes saw I was pretty dry, so they got hold of me, carried me down and threw a bucket of water over me; Vic said they couldn't my silk shirt go dry. It is a great game this washing your own clothes, I manage to get mine something like clean after a lot Page 5 of scrubbing, I had a deuce of a job getting my silk shirt clean this morning, all the dye had got into it off my blue's. I am sending you a programme they got up for fun, of the sports, it might be worth keeping, it will help us to remember our trip. We have seen hundreds of flying fish, they are not as big as I expected to see them, some times we used to see them in shoals, by jove they can so some for about thirty yards. We were inoculated again today this is the third time the last couple of stabs weren't so bad as the first, thank goodness. Page 6 The last week the sea has been dandy and smooth; a lot of the chaps have been sleeping out on the deck, last night we had a heavy shower of rain, and they had to get out of it pretty sudden. By jove mother did the right thing by making me take my silk shirt, it has been just the thing, I wish I had another one. Well I must close now I have just about run out of news, Link & all the other Akaroa chaps are doing well; the only trouble with me is I	
--	--	--	--

		always seem to be hungry, something new for me. Hoping you are all well. Your loving son Vern	
AK:2025.20.34	Dear Uncle and Auntie	NZ Expeditionary Force [letterhead] [At sea] Addressed to: Mr J Armstong % Mr Dodds Akaroa Dear Uncle and Auntie Well here we are about a month out from New Zealand, we crossed the equator yesterday so they say; they had sports to celebrate it, the obstacle race was was great sport they had the hose turned on the chaps as they were getting over the obstacles; then to finish up they started ducking every one, officers and all, three chaps got hold of me and carries me down and threw a bucket of water over me; it was no use changing till it was all over Page 2 for if they saw you with dry clothes on they would say you hadn't been ducked and away you would go before you could say anything. It has been dash hot the last day or two, the sweat has been running out of me; some of the chaps have been sleeping up on the deck, the last three or four night; last night we had a heavy shower of rain about two, and they had to get out of it pretty sudden. I have turned out a better sailor than I expected, I was a bit sea sick for start but the last fortnight Page 3 I have been tip top; the only trouble I always seem to be hungry. We have seen a good many whales, and a terrible lot of flying fish; the fly-fish are not as big as I expected to see them, they seem to be only about the size of a herring. All the Akaroa chaps are doing first class, Hammond was pretty cross with sea-sickness for awhile, he was in the hospital for a few days, but he seems alright now. The mail closes tomorrow, we expect to reach our second port of call about Sunday, we have to post all our letters Page 4	27 August 1915

		open so the censor can see them, we are not allowed to name any ship that is with us or the name of any port we call at. We stayed at our last port two days, the first night we were there I was on guard in the town, we had to see that all the chaps got aboard, about twenty stayed ashore all night but they were all raked up next day; they wouldn't give us any leave the next night. Well I must stop now, I have just about run out of news, I hope you are all well, Link and I are both doing well, Vern.	
AK:2025.20.35	Mother, Father & all	<i>Note: Includes envelope:</i> <i>Address to: Mrs G Armstrong</i> <i>Blythcliffe</i> <i>Akaroa</i> [At sea] Thursday 1915 Dear Mother & Father and all Well here we are within two or three days of our destination, it will be decent to be on land again, we haven't been off this ship since we left our first port of call, we were at the second port of call last Monday but we didn't stay there long, we arrived there at eight o'clock, and left at nine next morning, no-one was allowed ashore; The Darkies cam along-side early in the morning, and sold us tinned pine-apple, cigars; cigarettes and all sorts of things, we had some of them diving for pennies Page 2 and it is very seldom they miss them. This is a great place this Red Sea, it is full of sharks and all of sorts of big fish, by jove some of the sharks are a size it would be pretty crook with any of us that happened to go over board. The heat is deadly here at times, I hope it is better in Egypt. We were all busy sharpening our bayonets on the grindstone this morning, it sounds a bit like the real thing now, I think we will be into it in about six weeks, I hope so at any rate. Link & all the Akaroa chaps are doing first class. Tom is on Page 3 mess orderly this week, it is a beggar of a job this weather, we all sweat like mad just going down there for our meals, but when you have to stay down there for three sittings it is the limit. Maurice, Link & young Brown are up here on the deck tonight with their writing gear, there will be some letters for Akaroa this	9 Sept 1915

		mail. Percy Humm, Fred Joblin, Arthur Irving and I are sworn mates now, we go every where together, the are three as fine chaps as any one could wish to have as mates. Hummer is full of fun, keeps us alive I can tell you; Freb Joblin is as straight a chap as there is, a chap couldn't Page 4 help going straight as long as he kept with him. Arthur is a dandy chap, he is very good natured; we have spend most of our evenings playing five-hundred; we will all be great maters when we come back from this war. Well I must stop now I have just about run out of news, I will be able to write a long letter when we get settled down in Egypt. Your loving son, Vern.	
AK:2025.20.36	Mother, Father & all	<i>Note: Includes envelope:</i> <i>Address to: Miss L Armstrong</i> <i>Akaroa</i> <i>Canterbury</i> <i>New Zealand</i> Cairo Sept 23rd 1915 Dear Mother, Father & All Well we arrived at Suez early Sunday morning, and all the mounted chaps went on to Cairo, but four of us, we were left to guard ammution, we had a good time for it wasn't landed till Tuesday, we had a good look around Suez, went a little way up the canal in a boat and saw all there was to see; we arrived here at two o'clock on Wednesday morning. By jove it is deadly the way the Peninsula chaps have suffered lately; I can hardly realize Peg Birdling, Morrie Moore & Lieu Priest being killed. I have seen Jackie Moore & one of the Waghorns; they are going home in the Willochra, they told us all their experiences, there were well worth listening too. We leave here next week for some where, we don't know where we are going, some say we go to the front, others say we go to an Island close to the fighting line, to finish our trainings; I don't think it will be long before we are in the firing line. Page 2	23rd Sept 1915

		It is pretty warn here in the middle of the day, but the nights are cool. We get up at half past five, do two hours drill before breakfast, then we don't do anymore till four o'clock in the afternoon. I went into Cairo on Wednesday night to have a look round, it isn't a bad town, but I was dash glad to get back to camp again I was dash tired for I hadn't had any sleep the night before. Link and I had our photo taken yesterday, they didn't turn out much good; I was called away suddenly to have my photo taken with the rest of the Akaroa chaps, and when I came back I couldn't find my pencil so I am finishing this in the YMCA tent. We will send all the photos to mother; so will you give Ethel Le Lievre one of each for me; I am not very proud of the photo of Link and I, Link comes our alright, the only thing he has his hat turned up a bit in front, I seem to be half asleep. They are taking the names of all the chaps under twenty-one, I think they will have to stay behind; Link is a bit worried for he is down in the books as twenty, so I will	
--	--	---	--

Page 3

beat him to the firing line yet with a bit of luck. All the Akaroa chaps seem to be doing first class; I have seen Percy Birdling & Cyril Dierch, they look pretty well; Walter felt losing his brother a good bit, it must be dash hard on a chap a think like that; Walter has been coming back to his old self again lately, he is getting over the excitement of being a Lance Corporal. I haven't heard any thing about Frank or Ray Robinson, I often wonder they are, we don't get much news here; no way near as much as we used to hear in New Zealand. I am going to have a hard try to get out to the Pyramids, some of out chaps have been out there, they don't seem to think much of them, but it will be alright to be able to say you have seen them. Well I must ring off, I will write every chance I get after we leave here; be sure and put some writing paper in the letters you send for it will be pretty scare on the Peninsula. I suppose by the time you get this letter I will know what it is like to be under fire. I hope you are all well.

Your loving son,
Vern.

AK:2025.20.37	Mother, Father & all	The Young Men's Christian Association with H.M Mediterranean Expeditionary Force in Egypt [letterhead] [Cairo] Sunday Sept 26th 1915 Dear Mother, Father & All Well very likely tomorrow we will be leaving Egypt. C. Squadron doesn't go, thank goodness, so Les & I will be staying here in Egypt; they reckon they have a good job & very little to do and all day to do it in. Justin's Squadron goes I think. We are all fit and well, I think I will stand the trench work well; I feel fit enough for anything, and any rate I will do my best. Yesterday we all went out to the Pyramids and Sphinx. Page 2: They were well worth seeing; they are much bigger than they look in pictures. We went right in under the big Pyramid, I don't think I would do it again, it was terribly hot and stuffy crawling along those narrow passageways; I was glad to get out in the open air again; four of us had a ride on the camels, Owie & Justin on one and Tom and I on the other, by jove they are clumsy looking brutes, nothing like a good horse, after the style of old Lucy. The New Zealand horses out here couldn't look better. I was surprised when I first saw them; we have been out drilling on them two or three Page 3: times. For goodness sake don't judge me by that photo of Link and I, I look terribly worried in them, but I am as happy as ever I was you can't help being happy with Percy Humm. I haven't seen the photo of the Peninsula chaps yet, I don't think it will come out till tomorrow, so most likely we will miss it, but Link will send them all on. Well I think I have given you all the news, so good by for the present it might be a little while before I get a chance to write again. I hope you are all well, and don't worry about me for I will go through alright.	26 Sept 2015
---------------	-------------------------	---	-----------------

		Your Loving Son Vern.	
AK:2025.20.38	Mother, Father & all	Lemnos [Greece] 10th Oct 1915 Dear Mother, Father & all Well, we have been here a week and likely to stay here a few weeks yet. I think we have to do a good bit of drill. The first four nights we were here we had to sleep out in the open, it was alright to, the only trouble was there is such a heavy dew, I haven't been too well the last week, but I am alright again now, Percy Humm looks after me alright. Justin and young Rhodes are in the same troop as us now, it is decent having them with us; we are mixed up with the fourth and fifth, we are well named the galloping sixth I reckon; Link didn't like me coming away before him, I have just written a few lines to him. There are some of the main body chaps here so I was able to find out about Frank & Roy. It is deadly Frank being missing. I am hoping it is not Page 2: true; if it is, it will just about break his people up. Mick Bruce is wounded so I hear. I like this place better for a camp than Egypt, it is not so hot, and there is not the sand to get over everything; and we do see a bit of green grass here in places. We had a thunderstorm here the other night, and by jove I never saw lightning like it before, it lit up every thing, that was our first nigh under canvas here, just in time too, some of the chaps were sleeping out side and they had to move pretty sudden I can tell you. They say that when it rains here there is no half stakes about, it comes down properly. We don't get much war news here now, we heard that the French are giving the Germans a shake up & so are the Russians; you hear such a lot of rumors here that you hardly know what to believe, we never hear anything about the Dardanelles. We have lost news of Tom McGuire altogether, he was taken off the ship when we arrived	10 Oct 1915

		here, I think he must be at the hospital, he took crook on the way over, but he was Page 3: much better when we arrived here. I hope he turns up soon, he is a dandy chap Tommie. How are things going in Akaroa now pretty quiet I suppose, I have only had one letter yet, and that one I got while I was in Egypt, it was given to me early one morning, while we were lying in bunk; all the chaps sat up and called me a lucky dog, for I was the only one in the tent that got a letter, and it is still the only letter that has come from the Peninsula, I suppose we will get all our letters in a heap. When we left Egypt I only had a pound on me, I thought that to much, I gave all the loose Egyptian money I had to Link, I was sorry for it a few days ago, for I ran out altogether. We didn't get to good a tucker here for a start, so every morning we buy a dozen eggs, they are two shillings, about a couple of mornings we were all out of cash so we had to go without, we were paid a pound each the other day so we are alright again, we will take care we don't run out again. We have been doing a good bit of our own cooking. Hummer's master-piece is stews, some of them are not bad either, they all go at any rate. Page 4: You will have to put up with me writing on both sides of the paper, for this is the only pad I have and if I am not careful I will run out, and there doesn't seem much chance of getting any more on this Island. The Greek people that live on here seem better people than the Egyptians; I couldn't stand them at any price they were always hanging round you yelling out, we nearly always carried a stick with us. Well, I think I have given you all the news I am allowed to, there's a lot of news I would like to give you but it wouldn't pass the censor. I hope you are all well, I will write again as soon as I get some news. Your Loving Son	
--	--	--	--

		Vern. P.S. I forgot to tell you that the Sixth infantry are camped on here to, I have seen Beatty & Chalkland several times, they look real tip-top.	
AK:2025.20.39	Lorna	Lemnos 13th Oct. 1915 Dear Lorna I received your welcome letter and photos today, they didn't turn out bad at all, nearly all the chaps have seen them and are well pleased with them; I have orders for several different ones; especially the one with the group at the door, so be sure and send me some as soon as you can and I will give them out to the chaps; I don't know if you have sent Link any or not at any rate I will send these on to him, as soon as all the chaps have seen them. It is a bit of a beggar in one way Link and I are separated, but there is one thing I am glad about, I will go to the front before him; that has always my wish, I don't know why. By jove it is decent to get a mail, I have had five letters today, all the chaps are busy reading or writing; a day or two ago you would see very few writing. Tom McGuire came back from the hospital yesterday, it is decent to have him among us again, he is looking much better than when he left us last. It is beginning to turn cold in this part of the world now Page 2: the nights especially are deadly cold. I think I like this place better than Egypt, the sand and heat in Egypt was no good to me. Beatty & Harry Chalkland are camped on this island to; I have seen them several times; Harry has lost his stripes now, a lot of the sergeants have to, old hands have the running of the ropes here. I suppose you find things pretty quiet in Akaroa after the wild time you had up north; but it will do you good to settle down till we come home again, it may be for awhile yet, but I think we will both go through alright. Last night we were each given a parcel from the	13 October 1915

		Lady Liverpool Fund, in mine was two pairs of socks and a piece of soap; I have plenty of clothing as yet, so don't let that worry you. Well I must ring off now, Justin wants me to go and see some of his letters; I wonder which ones he will show me; he had seven today so he did alright. Give my best wishes to all, and be sure and stick at home till we come back. Your loving Brother Vern.	
AK:2025.20.40	Mother, Father & all	Letter from: Not stated Oct. 17th 1915 Dear Mother, Father & all Another big mail has just come in, and my share, was seven letters, two Akaroa Mails & a Weekly Press, decent isn't it; tell Elsie the Busters are just the thing, every one is anxious to see them; I don't think the old Buster has ever got such a good hearing before. The Weekly Press came from Ida, it was decent of her to send it. The three old mates are here writing together, Justin, Tom and I, we see a bit of each other now. There is a store ship out in the harbour here where we can get stuff pretty cheap, Percy Humm has gone out to it today with five bob from each of us to buy stuff; think of the time we are in for when he comes back. I am not surprised to hear that young Jolly only sent those cards to his people; for the chaps here say that they are the only things you are sure of getting through I am going to keep on writing letters and chance the dusgies Page 2: at any rate, they are bound to reach New Zealand some time or other. They handed me some of Link's letters today, I got them sent on to Egypt, the mail always comes here first. I am beginning to feel dandy again now, I have quite got over my illness thank goodness; I have to go to the doctor three times yet to be inoculated, I go every other day. We had church parade this morning, I went, it was well worth going too. I don't know what	17 October 1915

		we would do without the band we have here, it keeps the camp alive, they play some of my old favourites, and it reminds me of my Sunday mornings at home. By jove I would like to have a tune on the old Gramophone now, keep it in good order, for when I come back for it will get a good run. Well I have run out of news, we don't get much in this part of the world, I hope you are all well. I am putting a letter in for Joe, with this one, I am getting short of envelopes. Your loving son, Vern. Address: R V Armstrong 7/1328 1st C M R C Reinf's N.Z. Exp Force GPO Wellington	
AK:2025.20.41	Mother, Father & all	Letter from: Not stated Oct. 24th 1915 Dear Mother, Father & all, Mr Rhodes was out to see us today, I heard at dinner time he was inquiring about the two Armstrongs. This afternoon all the Banks Peninsula chaps were called out as he wanted to see us, it was decent of him, he wanted to know how we were getting on and if there was any thing we wanted; I told him the only thing I was short of was envelopes, so he is going to try and get us some, he is also sending me the last Akaroa mail he received before he left New Zealand, he said there was something about Dad's farewell in German Bay or some thing in it, I told him Link was still in Egypt so I suppose he will look him up. I haven't heard from Link yet, but I suppose he is doing alright. Captain Wray was asking how you were getting on the other day, by Jove it was a beggar losing him, he is a dandy Captain. We have had a pretty solid week of it	24 th October 1915

		this week, we have been at it night and day; it didn't mind it much for I am feeling Page 2 decent again now. I saw my first snake the other day, some of the chaps killed one while we were out drilling, it was only a small one about three feet long they said it was a Diamond snake, there are a good many about this Island so they say. It is getting pretty cold here now at times, we had a good shower of rain this morning, I suppose we will get plenty of that from now on. Nearly every Sunday afternoon we have a meeting of Akaroa chaps in this tent, it is decent to be able to get together and talk. Young Bunny promised to come across this afternoon but he didn't roll up, I have only seen him once since we have been here. I wrote to you last Sunday, but there was some talk of the letters being destroyed, it will be a beggar if they are, it doesn't encourage a chap to write when he hears news like that. Well, I must ring off now, it is getting too dark to write. I hope you are all well. Your Loving Son, Vern	
AK:2025.20.42	Mother, Father & all	<i>Note: Includes envelope</i> <i>Addressed to: Mrs G Armstrong</i> <i>Box 6</i> <i>Akaroa</i> <i>Canterbury New Zealand</i> <i>Note on front: On active service 7/1328</i> Lemnos Nov 7th, 1915 Dear Mother, Father & all, I am writing tonight to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, this is the second time that I will be away for Christmas, better luck next year. I am feeling decent now, never	7 th November 1915

		felt better, they have been putting some pretty solid work into us this week, but a chap doesn't mind that when he is feeling alright, I think we will be getting out of this before long. I am glad you went down to Foxton for a while, I hope you run across Roy, I would like to see him, Dick Black is here so they say, he said he was coming round to look the Akaroa chaps up, I wonder if he is the same as when he used to lead Mr Gray such a dance. Beatty comes over and looks me up nearly every other day, he Page 2 is still as lively as ever, I see a lot of Justin and Tom too. I believe Link is in a great way because he hasn't heard from me, I wrote to him twice, shurely one of the letters will reach him, Well, I have three minutes to go before I go on guard, so must get a move on. I hope you are all well and don't worry about me I am doing alright, spend a good Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, I will be with you next year. Your Loving Son, Vern	
--	--	---	--

Correspondence – To Armstrong family after death of Robert Vernon

Letters end of Robert Vernon Armstrong folder

Item No:	Addressed to:	Description:	
AK:2025.20.43		From: Office of Minister of Defence Typescript form letter from Minister of Defence J. Allen.	20th Dec 1915
AK:2025.20.44	Mrs Armstrong	Postcard from: Justin [Le Fievre] From: Serapeum West [Egypt] Dear Mrs. Armstrong, I received your most welcome letter two days ago & was delighted to hear from you & know that you are all keeping well. If there is anything a man looks forward to more than their xxx. some back yesterday, this what xx they had the time of their lives. Xx are all in the best of health and if you were to see Link and Maurice now you would hardly know them for they have got so fat. I have never seen either of them looking better in all my life. Back of the Postcard: I don't think we are here for long now by what we hear but but where we will to is a mystery to me. You may be rest your mind at ease about Link & if at any time he needs any help, I will do my best & so will all the other Akaroa boys & hope it will never come to that. The weather is very changeable, some days it is very hot & other days it is blowing hard & makes things very miserable. I hope Jessie gets in. We are anxiously waiting to hear how it all came off. Hoping this finds you all well, as it leaves all of us. Justin	1916
AK:2025.20.45	Mr Armstrong	Egypt 23/2/16 Dear Mr Armstrong, I have just heard of poor Vernon's death and hasten to offer you & Mrs Armstrong my sincere sympathies.	23 Feb 1916

		It is a great pity to see such a fine strapping young fellow laid low, but in your sorrow you have one splendid consolation. He gave his life for his country – died to protect that flag we all hold sacred – which is in itself the outward sign of the greatness of our Empire whose chief glory is that full measure of personal liberty accorded to each one of its citizens. Your family has done more than its fair share for the Empire in last wars and that knowledge must cause you lively satisfaction. Better to have died at the Front than to have stayed safely at home & been branded a coward. I am sure the whole of Akaroa sympathised with you Sir. I saw Linc about November at Gallipoli and he looked the picture of health. He was big & brown & looked very fit. I have seen nothing of him since then but have heard of him from Billy Chappell (Clara's boy). Last account Linc & the Lelievres were quite well & hearty. They are camped down the Canal in a good healthy site. Things are very slow here now. Reorganization of the Division is taking place and, when that is complete, everything points to our going to France. I hope so anyway. This garrison business is starting to be monotonous again & one feels we are doing nothing to help bring the war to a conclusion. Of course it will mean another big casualty list if we go, but the sooner things are brought to a climax the better, don't you think so? If we are to be killed we will be, and that's all about it. Again expressing my sincere sympathy. Believe me, dear Mr Armstrong, Yours faithfully,	
--	--	---	--

AK:2025.20.46	Geo. Armstrong Esqre. Akaroa	Letter from R Heaton Rhodes re death of Vernon and his burial. Wellington, 10th June, 1916 Geo. Armstrong, Esqr., AKAROA. Dear Mr Armstrong, In accordance with my promise, I now put in writing what I told you about your poor son, who died in Malta. It was on the 31st December last that I met at St. Andrew's Hospital there Lieut. Cooper, of the R.A.M.C., who told me that he had attended your boy, that he was a bright and cheerful patient and a great favourite with doctors and nurses. Lieut. Cooper informed me further that the case was serious from the first and never responded to treatment, though everything humanly possible was done for him. Our representative in Malta, Chaplain Tobin, also told me that he visited your son several times during his illness, and was much impressed by his courage and cheerfulness. The information I gave you with respect to the graves in the Pieta Cemetery was not quite correct, for, on looking again at Chaplain Tobin's letter, I see that according to the scheme of the Governor, Lord Methuen, the slabs that seal the graves are to be removed and each grave is to be mounded up and planted with flowers. The form the memorials were to take was still under consideration. According to Chaplain Tobin's letter, dated the 15th February, I find that he did forward a photograph of the cemetery to Colonel Esson, who was then Commandant at our Base in Cairo. As the latter officer is now in Wellington, I will ascertain from him if the photograph has been sent to the Defence Department here, and, if so, I will ask the Minister whether he	10th June 1916
---------------	---------------------------------------	---	-------------------

		will let one of our illustrated papers have it for reproduction. If it is a good one, copies could no doubt be obtained on application to Messrs Ellis & Co., Pieta Cemetery, Valetta, Malta. Yours sincerely, R Heaton Rhodes	
AK:2025.20.47	Lorna Armstrong	Letter from: Maurice James Le Lievre From: Serapeum West [Egypt]	4th April 1916
AK:2025.20.48	Lorna Armstrong	Letter from: Maurice James Le Lievre From: Selhia [Egypt]	9th April 1916
AK:2025.20.49	George Armstrong	From: New Zealand Expeditionary Forces - Distribution Deceased Soldiers Memo: 3600 Notification of canvas bag containing property of Trooper R V Armstrong 7/1328 being returned.	No date
AK:2025.20.50		Receipt for Victory Medal	No date
AK:2025.20.51		Receipt for British War Medal	No date
AK:2025.20.52		Commemorative Scroll - Trooper Robert Vernon Armstrong, Canterbury Mtd Rifles NZEF	No date
AK:2025.20.53		Buckingham Palace - Statement from King [sent with medal]	
AK:2025.20.54	Mr George Armstrong	Base Records Branch, NZ Military Forces Letter accompanying 6 copies of photographs of his grace	17th Jan 1919