

12 FEB 1915 — 16 MAR 1915

... THE ...

'Zanetic' Pen Carbon

✿ ORDER ✿

AND

MEMORANDUM BOOK

— ● —
Letter Copied while Writing

— ● —
CLEAN, SHARP DUPLICATES

Friday 12th Feb 1915

Back at Claremont in dear little Yassy, your husband said "I'll keep a diary going, when on the Troopships + post on to you, Dear later on I have words forsooth + how has that cocksure promise been kept? Very, very poorly so far; in fact till this blessed minute not one word has been penned. Man proposes etc, but in this case it has been the C.O. on the food ship "Clan Macgillivray" who has done all the disposing + your "hubbykins" has had not a vestige of a show to get busy on his much talked of Diary.

By dint of much hard work + harder swearing, coupled with tact + not a little patience, the writer has contrived at last, to secure at least an undisturbed hour or so between 2 and 4 p.m. of this lovely summer day to write a bit. Now that he is actually faced with the work of diary writing, he finds it is not by half, such an easy task as he fondly imagined. His literary work will not amount to very much.

Foreword.

On no account must any of the writings of this poor scribe, creep into the press, and if, at some distant date it might appear advisable for portions of this Diary to see the light of day. Then must all names of persons be shown thus e.g. Capt. — or Lieut. —
Opinions expressed are purely the ideas & criticisms of your humble narrator

Indian Ocean Rurf. Sampson.
26 - 2 - 1915

he knows + its English, diction + phrasing leaving much to be desired.

But as its sole object + only real excuse for ever being written, is to give pleasure + perhaps some amusement to the dearest girl the writer has ever met + in the years to be, perhaps afford two boys, named Joe + Dick some fun, (said boys being two very fine fellows) notwithstanding its halting lines + at times poor sense. Still if ^{it} does the foregoing + attains the object of its writer, it will have justified its existence + any hardwork in making time for its writing on board this old tub, will be repaid ~~by~~ a hundred times, if they say truly that they liked it.

Though the Almanac says 12th Feb + the Clan Mac (we will call her that for short in future) has been at sea since Tuesday Feb 2nd having sailed from Port Melbourne pier at 4 p.m. that day, it seems much longer. + it is going to cause the writer of this poor screed much painful brain racking to go back over the occurrences of the days just past + give you all

a fairly accurate account of the
 Entrainment from Broadmeadows, the
 Embarkation & our voyage up to this
 present time of writing. Once this is
 safely achieved it will be easy going
 from day to day until we sight the
 land of Pharaoh & Disembark. After
 that, What? Who knows, it may be
 possible dear chaps to continue this,
 But I doubt it. There is much to be
 done, did I say much - rather let us
 put it stronger, there is everything to be
 done, before the one thousand and
 seventy nine men aboard are made
 into a first class fighting machine &
 each individual into a real good
 fighting man. But of that more anon
 plenty of that, bye & bye, it will resemble
 Kipling's "Pharaoh & the Sergeant," only
 the men will in our case be white
 whereas the Sergeants were black, the
 hard toil, sweat, swearing, sand & the
 patience, unking patience, with the
 same result. Let us trust, when we
 emerge at last trained & fit to take
 our place alongside Mr. Thomas Atkins
 at the front. Funny it does seem to us

aboard here, for all the news we get of the outside world is ~~not~~ likely to be so until we reach Colombo sometime next week, to-day at noon we were 2310 miles distant, our days run 275 miles a record run so far.

But I digress & keep running off at a tangent & really must go back to the time I wrote you my last hurried scrawl from Broadmeadows Camp on the eve of sailing.

The morning of departure from camp broke dull & heavy, insufferably close & sweaty & when the sun appeared he was in a sullen red humour & seemed to say "Wait awhile you soldier men, when you are safely packed aboard ship, I'll show you what I really can do" & he kept his word. Reveille at 5 am. all stir & bustle. Kits to be packed & loaded on to waggons. waterproof sheets & blankets to be rolled. Breakfast consisting of Coffee & biscuits to be cooked, eaten & then cooking gear to be dismantled & thrown away. Tents to be struck & packed & tent pegs pulled up & also packed. Removies of Africa, but the dust storm that swept ^{over} the

camp as we formed up to march to the
 Station $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles away was just awful.
 Clouds + clouds of inky black dust,
 carried along by a wind, full cousin
 to a hurricane; sweating red faces were
 quickly transformed into black ones;
 eyes, ears + mouths soon full of it, but
 tongues could still work + form words
 Oh such naughty, naughty wicked
 words. So half blinded + half choked
 the 2nd Reinforcements made their pain-
 ful + fearful way in the teeth of a head
 wind to the Station; with a half blind
 Brass Band at the head of the Column
 blowing away valiantly in defiance of
 the wind + dust. Arriving at the Station
 two things were at once apparent to
 the Tammians they were that their
 Victorian Comrades of the 5th 6th 7th 8th
 + 14th Battalions were as yet an armed
 mob + absolutely without discipline, which
 is (to quote Napier, the historian) "The life
 blood of an Army" + Secondly, that the
 Military Authorities are poor Calculators
 as to the Capacity of trains. Over 800
 men marched from Camp to the Railway
 Station + arrived there at 7-45 am sharp

with all their personal baggage. Two trains timed to start at 8 am. & 8-30 am were scheduled to take us to Port Melbourne direct. Now, to estimate required number of Carriages for so many men, one would not think is a very intricate problem. Given so many men, so many in a compartment, so many compartments in a carriage, surely is not too big a task for a highly paid staff. What happened was almost absolute chaos, not nearly enough carriages were sent out & so though men were packed in like Mummy packs her own & the boys bags into her dress basket, the whole could not be entrained & the two "puffer trains" puffed away & the Tasmanian unit of 116 men & 2 officers found itself left on the Station to wait 45 minutes for the next ordinary passenger train.

What pretty sights they were, one hundred and eighteen dirty black faces, streaked with muddy channels caused by sweat & tears from dust impregnated eyes & uniforms & rifles filthy with dust. So all hands squatted on their kit bags & grumbled cheerfully & dreamt of great long beers & lemon squashes & smoked their

dirty pipes. An unspeakably filthy little company it was their blonde Lieutenant for once in his life turned into a brunette, save for his eyes, which though firmly round the lids, still remained blue & your Dad, my lads, looking quite clean in comparison. Beer & Baths were the chief topics of conversation, both seeming as far off as the other. But the Band, the jolly cheerful band, stuck to us & made life worth while & supportable by remaining on the platform & playing to us till our Hardy train arrived & such music they gave us, it was a genuine treat. Some Waltzes that Mummy's nimble feet would have loved, and Strauss's "War March of the Priests" which your Dad has always loved ever since quite a little boy, it thro' his blood more than "The Marseillaise" "I was in Trafalgar's Bay" & a march "National Emblems" which is also very fine. "Tepperrary" too, of course & "Wake up, Australia" & some of us wonder to ourselves if Australia is waking up. Then all aboard & "Auld Lang Syne" & we are off on the first stage of our long "trip" to Egypt, England, France

Gladders or wherever we may be sent to.
 By their stupidity, the Entraining Staff
 have let Lieut. Litter and Sampson
 into a nice job. Boarding a suburban
 train when it is in a hurry is no joke,
 add to this the shepherding on board of
 a flock of men in full marching order,
 hampered with sea kit bags & blanket
 rolls & you have no easy task. However
 all were entrained safely; but on the
 Station at Essendon being reached, it
 was necessary to change into another
 train waiting on the other side platform.
 Therefore all the "Yassies" had to hop out
 smartly & pass under the line by means
 of the Subway; this operation took some
 time, over one hundred men having to
 file through. This safely accomplished,
 the other train had to be boarded & being
 an ordinary passenger train, our boys
 had to get in where they could, folk's
 already on the train were very good
 in assisting them to get in, & "Sammy"
 who was on the look out for stragglers
 was relieved when he saw all on
 board at last. Anyone familiar
 with Gladders Street Railway Station

about 9-50 am. on a week day can easily imagine the task before the two Gas. Officers on arrival there & trains had to be changed again. Our train from Essendon landed us at No. 2 platform & the train for Port Melbourne (our destination) was to leave No. 10 platform at 10 am. Reminded this scribe of a night long ago, when he in company with his girl endeavored to get a seat at "The Dandies" oh! but it was lovely. Litter at their head, butting his way through the crowd, Sampson at the rear urging them forward & so the little procession went down the stairs, along the subway, up the stairs & No. 10 platform was reached. In the wake of the march, were many cursing & grumbling citizens, enraged & ruffled at being bumped, pushed & luted by the Soldier men, who had neither the time or inclination for any "Beg your pardons" or "Pardon the's". One idiot of course must perforce drop his rifle down between train & platform & there it lay to be seen by all and touched by none. The footboards on the Vic. Carriages being so constructed that

it is impossible to reach down between
 platform & train. There was a pretty mess,
 all our men struggling for seats, save
 the writer & the owner of the rifle & the
 train due to leave in four minutes. Did
 the bold Lieutenant swear? Oh dear no.
 By the judicious expenditure of a humble
 shilling, a venturesome porter was induced
 to imperil life & limb by crawling under
 the carriage & so the rifle was restored
 to its owner, who was promptly bundled
 on board by your Daddy, lads. He
 (your Dad) bundled himself in & found
 standing room only, but a very courteous
 old gentleman wanted, very badly, to
 give up his seat to him, which of course
 he did not accept, old gentleman said it
 would be an honour & reckoned that
 nothing was too good for the men off to
 have a talk with Wilhelm's janters.
 Wished he could do more himself,
 said one of his son's was already in
 Egypt & another at Broadmeadows. The
 train was packed with women & girls,
 off to get a look at their men folk off
 to the War.

Sunday Feb 14th How this ship does

roll, making legible writing difficult. Two days have elapsed since commencing this & what a lot of a leeway a fellow has got to make up, before setting up to date. I was busy telling you about our departure when called away on Friday afternoon & so will carry on again from the break.

Arriving at Port Melbourne, we detained anyhow mixed up with hundreds of excited, anxious, & distressed womenfolk (poor beggars, how I pitied them) who kept asking "Is Harry here?" or "Have you seen Dick Russell?" or "Do you know if Jack Kearney is going in this boat?" "No, our boys said were 'Jassies' only been here a few days, we don't know." At last we managed to get them sorted out & marched along the Esplanade to our pier, where the "Clan Macgillivray" lay. At the shore end of the pier which is a very long one, barricades had been erected to keep the people back there were many police & hundreds of girls & women clamouring to be let through. A more pitiful sight, I never saw; such anxious, eager faces the heat, hot, it was

scorching. Our chaps pushed their way steadily through the throng, & so through the big gate onto the Pier; their troubles, they were, not their womenfolk. Some six hundred yards down the pier, we came on the seven hundred or so Victorians sailing with us & spent our time for the next five weeks or so. No one seemed very much impressed with her & our first impression was a correct one, she is no passenger ship, as you will learn later. Here were we then, some 800 men grouped about the ships on the wharf under a sky of brass with a fiery sun beaming down, this was at 10-30 am. Rolls had to be called, baggage & arms checked & many other details which all took time, so that it was past noon ere the first man passed up the gangplank. About 10' clock the South Australian Reinforcements arrived looking very tired, dirty & worn after their long, dusty & hot train ride from Adelaide. The ladies were interested in them for they go to the same Barracks as our chaps. The embarkation was a

long & tedious business & is not to be wondered at when you consider the "modus operandi". All the embarking troops had to file up singly along a narrow gangplank only admitting the passage of one man, this is done so that numbers can be checked most accurately. On reaching the ship's deck they pass on & down the stairway to their respective Troop Decks to their mess tables where they sit without removing any kit or accoutrements & so it goes on until all are aboard & seated quietly at their Messes. Each Company officer then reads out to his unit Orders re "Fire, Smoking, Spitting & Stations in Case of Collision" etc. Then comes the inspection by the Embarkation Staff who consist of a Naval Officer, a Military Officer & a Medical Man. They come round & see that the accommodation is adequate etc. By the time all this had been gone through it was 3-15 pm. & faint & weary in many cases. Crabs we were. Breakfast consisting of Bread & Jam washed down with Coffee minus

Milk had been eaten at 6 am. with all rush, bustle, heat & excitement from that on, till late afternoon, no wonder some of the lads were done up. The inspection over all hands were allowed on deck & mighty glad we were to get there. If it was hot while waiting on the pier, the hoop decks with hundreds of hot sweating men crowded together were simply stifling. At this stage of the show, now all troops were on board, the long suffering mothers, sisters, wives, sweethearts & lady friends of the men, were rewarded for their patience after their weary, long suffering wait in the cruel sun. The barricades were at last removed & up the pier they surged, running like mad things. I can see one girl now, about twenty yards in front of everybody, her skirt tucked up to her knees, how she could run, shouting "Jin, Jin". Poor beggars! they only had about five minutes for we started to move almost at once & slowly backed out; saying down on a dense sea of feminine faces & waving handkerchiefs. My! but they

were brave. War is a tough proposition whichever way you look at it, but we men do have a run for our money, spirit, action & excitement, but the women, ah me, it is all passive waiting for them & hoping. Poor Mrs. Little I was awfully sorry for her; with her son Geoff she had been waiting from half past eight to get sight & speech with her husband & at the finish hardly so much as a glimpse, a very similar experience to Meg's at Burnie. Little was, for once, very subdued & they both felt the parting keenly. With this exception, there was not a living soul on the Pier I knew & I was glad, I hate farewells at Boat or Train; you have your job to do & see to your fellows & folks around pestering you all the time, so that there is absolutely no time for a talk; it is much better to get it over & done with beforehand.

Now dear chaps you will want to know something about this Craft of ~~ours~~ ours, known when following her usual calling as "Clan Macgillivray" but now she is doing the King's work, her name or rather title is Troopship A46.

Built in 1911 in Scotland for a firm
 noted for its meanness, she was designed
 for cargo carrying in the East & also
 for the transport of pilgrims from India
 to Arabia & to this end she has several
 decks, fitted with portholes. Constructed
 of steel with iron decks, naturally
 enough in hot weather, she is not a little
 sultry as we know to our cost. This is
 her first trip with Troops & in my humble
 opinion, should be her last. Prior to taking
 us aboard, she was in Cockatoo Dock Sydney
 for two months being fitted out by the Com-
 monwealth Naval Authorities & she bears
 evidences of hurry right through. Both
 accomodation is far too scant for such a
 crowd as we, four showers forward &
 four aft for nearly 1100 men. To overcome
 this difficulty, we suggested to the Captain
 that large Canvas plunge baths be
 rigged up to accomodate about 40
 men at a time & he agreed, but our
 little medical officer Capt. Ed. White (an
 awfully good sort) intervened, saying "It
 was too risky on account of infection amongst
 such a big mob." Our method now is this, at
 certain times in the day, parties of twenty

men parade on the forward well deck, "mit nodings on" + great hoses are played on them, much to their delight. Fun, well I should say, they are just like big Newfoundland dogs, revelling in the water. It's a great sight. When in full swing for we have some magnificent specimens of well developed manhood on board + a well built ^{man} looks best out of clothes to be absolutely truthful, so does a lady, notwithstanding. It's Walling to the contrary, but this has nothing whatever to do with the "Blair Mae". She has three Troop Decks "A" "B" + "C", the first has seating + hammocks to sleep in, for 400, the second takes 330 + the third has mess + sleeping gear for 352. These decks intended for pilgrims primarily + now converted into troop decks, are provided with portholes, but of course in bad weather have to be kept closed + then the air gets very thick + close. The only ventilation then being obtained by means of waide sails which drive fresh air down to the poor sweating fellows below. Please God, we do not strike a succession of bad weather for if we do I foresee serious trouble up till now it has been fine, but very hot.

Tuesday, Feb 16th

Two whole days have slipped away without a possible chance of overtaking the heavy leeway to be made up before we are right up to date with our narrative of events. We have now been at sea a full fortnight & are to-day just abreast of Looe Islands where the "Endeavour" met her fate; all hands much disappointed that we cannot see the battered hulk of the Cruiser. To return to the "Clan Mac". Her engine room & engines are very fine & she can do 12 knots, but of course her speed is regulated by the top speed of the slowest boat in our convoy, which is the "Hessen" (a German prize) now known as "A 45" & she can only do 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ or 11 knots. Along the poop decks on each side of the ship are rows of tables, long & narrow, on each side of which are forms, both tables & forms being bolted into the deck. Each table seats 16 men, eight on each side; at the end of each table nearest the ship's side are racks containing the mugs, plates & feeding utensils of the mess. Above each table is painted its number & seating capacity, like the houses in

Launceston's streets they are numbered even
 numbers on one side & odd the other. At each
 end of the poop deck are the arm racks
 for each man's rifle, which have to be kept
 well oiled on account of the salt in the
 air, rust forming very quickly if they are
 left dry. In the ceiling above the poop
 deck are rows & rows of iron hooks, all
 ranged symmetrically & from these the men's
 hammocks are hung. The hammocks are
 rolled up each morning & stowed away
 in large bins erected at either end for
 that purpose. Every inch of space has
 to be economized & even then with such a
 large number on board things are very
 much cramped. The "Clan Mac" is fitted
 to carry 1082 men & 16 officers & the
 rolls show 1079 on board, so she has
 not much room up her sleeve, has she?
 It is a weird sight at night when down
 on a poop deck just before "Lights
 Out" hundreds of hammocks swinging
 in unison with the motion of the ship
 & each with its sleeping occupant. They
 keep such beautiful time, first to the
 right & then to the left, would that
 their time in marching were as good.

Our ship is a very fine sea boat & after class one of the best, but through lack of space on her upper deck most unsuitable for carrying troops. Exercise & training is to any extent quite out of the question & try as we will, we cannot improvise anything to overcome this. Rifle climbing, boxing & small squads at a time for physical drill is the best we can do. To-day it is blowing half a gale with rough head sea & ports are closed in consequence, twelve decks his shifting & many are sick. The writer has yet to learn what sea sickness is like, never having suffered the agonies of "mal de mer" in his life. The first two days out men lay about like sick fools all over the ship & were a beastly nuisance both to themselves & everybody else. Many lazy beggars who were not sick at all took advantage of this fine opportunity & feigned sickness & so escaped work of any kind; however after three days all had to do their bit, sea sick or not & seasick. At each table or as we call them mess, two men are appointed permanent mess orderlies

Writing just now, is almost out of my power, the ship is rolling so badly, the wind now approaches a gale. (In River till (D.V.) tomorrow (Ash Wednesday))

Wednesday 17-2-15

The weather is still far from good, strong head wind & rough sea & is taking a good two knots per hour off our speed. Last 24 hours run was only 210 miles & the next will possibly be less, so our expected arrival at Colombo on Saturday, will be delayed possibly until Monday or even Tuesday. Our Skipper (Captain Ridgway) says he could do very much better than this, but the ex-German ship, "Kessen" keeps us back.

To return to our Mess Orderlies, of whom we spoke yesterday, theirs is a very important job as you can easily see. When the Bugle Call "Kahoro" is sounded, they are marched to the Bread Issue Room, one on each Troop Deck & draw Bread for each mess, also jam, butter, salt, pepper etc & lime juice (10g per man per day). Then when that cheery old Call "Come to the Cookhouse door boys" rings out, they troop along to the Cooks Galley, one at each

end of the ship. Here they draw the cooked meal, falling in according to the number of their mess, two orderlies from each mess.

They are armed with big cans, one for soup, one for tea or coffee, fitted into the top of each is a large dish, into one of which is placed the meat, the other one taking the vegetables. These orderly men are responsible that each man at the mess gets his fair whack of whatever is going, they also must keep all utensils clean, scrub tables, forms & deck each morning & sweep up after each meal.

Owing to lack of discipline & proper control on the part of nearly all the officers, (taken all round a very weak lot) the first two days were just awful & made Litter & I feel ill. Impossible to describe the unseemly wranglings & squabbles over the issue of food, the lack of law & order, the absolute letting out of hand of nearly all the units, with the Tasmanians excepted, who suffered with swelled head in consequence, that is, those of them who were not sea sick. Seeing, that one unit on board had at least a semblance of discipline

+ officers who were not sick, lazy or
 weak. The Commanding Officer, Colonel
 W. M. McVea V.D. paid them the compliment
 of putting one in complete charge of
 the forward troop decks "A" + "B" + the
 other (the writer) the after decks "C" +
 instructed all the other unit commanders
 to take orders from his Tasmanian deputies.
 Some of them were inclined to back at
 first, but soon fell into line + now things
 are done in something like a soldierly
 manner, with "something like" emphasized, for
 your disciplined Tommy would still look
 upon our raw troops + officers with good
 natured contempt. The Colonel who is a
 strong man withal was good enough to
 say to Capt. Abbott, the 2nd in Command
 + about the only real live wire amongst
 the other officers "That he did not know
 what he would have done without the
 two Tasmanians + won't forget to push
~~for~~ them for promotion when the time
 comes" This is very nice, but of course
 means much work, time + not a little
 worry + also means difficulty in
 running this halting yarn. This is being
 between 7 + 8 am while men are halting

their breakfast + we are waiting for ours.
Thursday Feb 18th 9am.

Having managed to snatch a few minutes will continue his. Daily routine on A 46 goes like this:—

6 am.	Reveille.	Turn out + stow hammocks
6-45 am	Rations	Orderlies draw Bread
7 am.	"	" " " cooked food
7-15 am	Breakfast	Breakfast for men
8 am.	Guard fall in	New Guard Mount
		Officers breakfast
8-30 am.	Sick Call	Sick Parade
10 am	Assembly	General Parade + Inspection of Troop decks by C.O.
10-30 am.	Orderly Room	Orderly Room. Bedding for airing to be brought on deck
11-30 am	Rations	Orderlies draw Bread
11-45 am	"	" " " cooked food
12 Noon	Dinner	Dinner for men
1 pm.	Four "G's"	Sweepers parade + sweep upper decks
	Officer's Mess	Lunch for Officers
4-30 pm	Rations	Orderlies draw bread jam etc
4-45 pm.	"	" " " cooked food
5 pm.	Cook house	Tea
5-45 pm.	Sick Call	Sick Parade

6-30 p.m.	Retreat	Draw hammocks
7 p.m.	Officers Mess	Dinner
8 p.m.	Assembly	Lecture or Concert
9-30 p.m.	Last Post	Men go to bed
9-45 "	Lights Out	Rolls. Every man to be in bed

& so day succeeds day. Officers of units
 carrying on with small squads on the
 very limited deck space at their command
 with physical exercises, semaphore &
 bayonet fighting. By the time we reach
 our destination, wherever that may be, our
 men won't be worth a hang & as for
 marching, they will just waddle along.
 Good food, little exercise, loafing and
 larking the day away has a most pernicious
 effect & bad habits & blackness become almost
 ingrained. Discipline suffers in consequence,
 discontent breeds rapidly & by the signs
 around & scraps of conversation one hears
 unofficially, it is going to be a hard task
 at first to get them in hand again &
 mould the individual into one concrete
 efficient whole. The Gas. pair, L & S, are
 the hardest worked men aboard the
 ship & the most unpopular of course
 amongst the shirkers, a sure sign that

they (L & S) are doing their job. In addition
 to the fourteen combatant officers on this
 ship, there is the Doctor Capt. White &
 the Chaplain Capt. Pitt-Croen, C of E.
 The former is one of the best & most lovable
 fellow & very hard worked. Every man
 having to be Vaccinated against Small-
 pox & Inoculated against Enteric, he
 has been doing them in batches of 150
 or so a day, commencing on the third
 day out. The parson is also censor
 & all letters pass through his hands & are
 read by him. He is unfortunately like
 a fish out of water & totally unsuited
 to be a troopship "sky pilot." Fighting
 men wanted strong meat & not pap &
 he doles out pap to them, much to their
 disgust & boredom. This censoring of letters
 is an irksome, but I suppose, is a
 necessary restriction. The following must
 not be embodied in letters from Troopship
 A46: Dates, places, information regarding
 numbers & disposition of troops, other ships or
 escort accompanying us, criticism of any
 sort, destination, in fact news of any sort.
 So that a letter becomes a poor, colourless
 thing, hardly worth the paper it is.

written on. We cleared the Heads about
 9 pm on Tuesday evening Feb 2nd, a most
 perfect night, bright & clear. Facing our
 little deck that evening, thoughts turned
 homeward & a fellow wished that Mummy
 was by his side & little Joe & Dick safely
 snuggled in their bunks. Someday we
 will have a trip & it will be all the
 nicer, because Joe & Dick will be bigger
 & will appreciate it all so much more.
 Turning out of our poky little cabins,
 miserable little affairs (3 in each) built
 on the upper deck, we found a calm
 sea smiling at us, bathed in a glorious
 gold by the rays of a mild & good humor-
 ed sun & the ship travelling at half speed.
 The reason for this was soon apparent
 as we descried two faint trails of smoke
 astern which soon grew into two big
 ships. These turned out to be the Troop
 ships "Hessen" and "Chilka" with troops
 & horses on board; they are to accompany
 the "Clan Mac" in case of accidents, for
 we only have boats for 300 & in the
 event of trouble on our lonesome voyage
 be on a bad wicket; having on board
 nearly one thousand one hundred troops,

some forty white officers & crew and 69
 Lascars. The voyage from starting date
 until off the West Australian Coast was
 without incident, warm, sunny days.
 Troops getting their sea legs & recovering from
 sea sickness, & the Doctor busy Vaccinating
 & Inoculating & the Parson, persuading
 people to sign the pledge, which in this
 instance seems rather futile, taking into
 consideration the fact, that in the Conteen
 only Schweppes' & lime juice cordial is
 obtainable.

On Tuesday 9th Feb about 2 pm. we
 were off Rosses Island in company
 with the other two ships. After waiting
 for about an hour we were joined by
 the "Marshobra" (A47) with W.A. men & horses
 on board & the voyage was resumed. As
 the red sun sank in the West, we gazed
 eastern & could dimly discern a faint
 hazy outline of the Coast. "Goodbye
 Australia" said the fellows quietly to
 themselves & doubtless the more thoughtful
 added "shall I ever see you again"
 wondered. That evening I sent my
 wireless message home, the first I have
 ever sent, "Well happy Au Revoir Love

Chummy" The censor pondered over the expression. An Revier in the message & talked about eliminating it, but eventually let it go. Sitting on deck in his pyjamas that night, Dad wondered when it was received by his dear trio. Kipling is right when he sings

"The Bachelor he fights for one as happy as can be,
But the Married Man don't call it fun,
because he fights for Three"

& its truth has been brought home of so very much of late to this child. All the same I would not be out of this fight for all the sea in China. It is up to us everyone to do our bit, those of us who can fight, to fight, those who have wealth, to give freely, those who can help by personal service, even if only in some small way, to do so. And our dear womenfolk, who have the hardest part of all to play, are they not all praying for us & hoping for us with that knowledge how can any decent self respecting man, do anything else, but play the game to the best of his ability. Now I love all you dear chaps, wish I could gather you up in my arms & kiss & hug you. Mamma, Grannie, Meg, Joe & Dick give you a hug.

Disappointment writ large on every face
 that sunny afternoon, as we lay to off
 the entrance to Fremantle, when it was
 found that no mail was being sent
 off. Over 3000 letters lying in the Censor's
 office & to be there till Colombo reached,
 it did seem a bit hard & a little too
 soon to start the hardships of service. Every-
 one did so want to send his farewell
 letter off on its way to little Tasmania, of
 course wireless was open to all, but
 elevenpence plus $1\frac{1}{2}$ (land charge) per word
 is somewhat stiff. Ten days have slipped
 away since then, almost without incident,
 one day much the same as another, the
 daily routine, interspersed by lively boxing
 contests (the parson objects to these brutal
 exhibitions) on the upper deck, abaft the
 funnel & music by our scratch band,
 which is improvised daily. Fortunately
 there is no dearth of reading matter.
 Books, periodicals & magazines being sent
 aboard by kind friends in cart loads &
 what matters it if they are back numbers,
 some of them are all the more interesting
 on that account. So save all your
 papers & magazines, kind people &

Send them along, they will be appreciated.
 This inoculation against Enteric Typhoid
 is a very fine thing indeed, I remember
 reading about the experiences of the Medical
 Staff in India & their statistics concerning
 the British Army in India are almost
 startling. Compulsory inoculation of the
 Tommies in India was instituted in 1905
 & the figures ran like this:-

Cases of Enteric 19.8 per 1000 Deaths 267
 that was for the year 1904; last year
 they were Cases 17 per 1000 Deaths 26.

When we remember that in Bloemfontein
 in March - June 1900 we buried over
 4000 of our best troops who died of this
 beastly enteric, we can see what this
 same inoculation means, even so we
 have poor, ignorant, fools objecting to
 being done. They may object as much as
 they please, but obne they will be, in
 irons if necessary. The Tasmanians
 came up for their inoculation last Wed-
 nesday week, the day after we bade
 Australia Farewell. Rather amusing
 scene it must have been to the casual
 onlooker, a long line of men with their
 right arms bared filing into the alley way

First part of the performance, a hospital orderly
 paints a little patch on your arm with
 iodyne, then you pass on to the Doctor, who
 inserts a syringe under the skin & injects
 ever so many millions of germs into your
 blood. It is practically painless, just a
 slight prick & later on a little numbness,
 some fellows complain of a feeling of sickness
 headache, I experienced none of this & was
 done again to-day, a stronger dose than the
 last & feel very fit. Littler & I were done
 first in view of the mob, with a view to
 showing some of the objectors that there was
 really nothing in it. My little party of
 36 were done without a murmur, but out
 of Littler's 80, nine refused to be done &
 so disgraced "little Tassy" for they were done
 by force & made a pitiful exhibition of
 themselves. Probably when reflecting over their
 stupidity in the cells (we gave them 48 hours
 each on bread & water) they realized what
 idiots they had been & on completion of
 their punishment, what a tone they received
 at the hands of the remainder. Some of
 them talked very big & spouted about
 writing to the papers, getting members of
 Parliament busy etc. Poor deluded fools.

they little realize what Active Service means;
 a fig for your M.P.'s why our dear old
 C. O. on this ship, can have a man shot
 if necessary. As a matter of fact the whole
 thing was a clear case of "Cold feet" & these
 rascals thought by refusing inoculation & also
 vaccination, they would get their discharges &
 be sent back at Colombo. We will carry
 them on with us & God help any of them
 in my vicinity in the firing line if I see
 them "funking", they will get a bullet from
 me. In a case like that, one would have no
 more scruples in shooting them, than he would
 in putting his foot on a shellback in the
 garden at home. The pity is that they were
 ever enlisted, they are an absolute disgrace
 to their country. "Evil communications
 corrupt good manners", is an old & true
 saying, & in the case of the Tasmanians
 aboard the "Clan Mac" it is exemplified.
 Our fellows having been going back
 steadily in discipline & everything else that
 is worth while & this last week several
 have seen the inside of the cells, much
 to my disgust. At the same time when
 sentencing a man to cells & a diet of
 bread & water, I cannot help smiling

it brings back memories of boyhood, and numerous like sentences imposed on the writer by his dear old mother; one thing I do notice, these chaps don't have the nerve to ask for more bread like he used to just ask Meg, Chummy.

The general health is good, a few cases of influenza rather minor cases & of course the inevitable venereal disease, five men suffering from it are being sent back to Australia when we reach Colombo.

Sorry to say one of my boys is being sent back, discharged medically unfit, suffering from hernia (rupture) Wing, is his name, his mother travelled up with us from Claremont as far as Doverstone, he feels very sick about it & so do I.

To-day we cross the equator & great have been the preparations for old Father Neptune's visit; they are rigging up his bath now & I must away to see the Ration's drawn. Will tell you all about crossing the line when I resume.

Saturday February 20th

Yesterday about 1-25 pm. the "Clan Mac" crossed the equator & at 2-30 pm. sharp Father Neptune & his

merry band appeared to hold their
 court on the large space by No 3 hatch.
 Father Neptune's get up was excellent,
 his costume consisted of a bright
 green waist cloth, long hair & flowing
 beard made from frayed strands of
 rope about three feet in length. A crown
 made of tin, trident & shield emblazoned
 with his coat of arms, (the principal
 emblem in it being a huge black octopus,
 beautifully done), a statue of nature made
 up the rest of his attire. Britannia
 accompanied him & was just it, the
 3rd Officer taking the part, he is very fair
 with fine blue eyes & fair skin & in his
 make up made quite a splendid figure.
 Great regret was expressed that no
 cameras were on board, they like many
 other things are "Verboden" & here not
 a day passes but dozens of most
 excellent snapshots are obtainable. The
 rest of Neptune's staff were well got
 up. The Barber with huge paint pot
 filled with soft soap, tar & other mucky
 stuff for lathering, large tar brush
 for lathering & an enormous wooden
 razor for the shaving, with him, two

barly assistants, dressed as policemen, with
 huge stomachs made by pillows under
 their tunics. Davy Jones of course, was there,
 dressed like a 17th Century lawyer & the
 lawyer, adorned with a top hat
 bearing on it the legend "LIES 6/8 a
 time", his job being to defend the victims,
 of course with no avail. Some dozen other
 characters, mermaids & sailors, completed
 Father Neptune's staff. In the rear of the
 barber's chair & the dias, a huge sail
 full of salt water, about the size of the
 dining room here at "Almondbury" was
 ready, in which the victims were dipped
 after shaving. Discipline was cast
 aside for a couple of merry hours &
 the fun ~~was~~ waxed fast & furious.
 After introducing his Staff to the assembled
 company, which he did in very neat &
 witty, little speeches, Father Neptune said,
 "Once more am I upon the deck of my
 old acquaintance the "Claw Mac" & I see
 around me in this sea of faces, many whom
 I have not yet met & these I will now
 indicate", and he then pointed some
 unfortunate wight out, who was promptly
 seized, lathered (much of which went in his

mouth) face scraped by the huge razor of wood & then flung into the bath. Useless was it for a victim once pointed out, to try to escape by flight or by resisting, for every man's hand was turned against him, he was quickly seized & placed in the chair, operated on & flung into the salt water dip, where mermaids (very barly ladies, to be sure) ducked & soured, till the poor beggar was nearly half drowned.

Everyone laughed till his sides ached & some venturesome "birds" up aloft on spar & rigging were in grave danger of breaking their necks by a fall through overmuch laughter. The climax came about 4 p.m. when some thirty victims, all wet and dripping, rushed the court, seized poor Father Neptune & all his crew & flung them in the pond; all except Britannia, who was unmolested, save in that one dirty, soap & star lathered wreth, attempted to snatch a kiss from that stately lady & was promptly hurled to his doom in the pit by her & nearly drowned by Neptune this outraged retinue. Some say that it was her sex that saved Britannia, others that it was her costly

raiment; whatever the reason she alone
 escaped. After this the proceedings degenerated
 into a free easy ducking match, & many
 an old score was paid off. The the Bugle,
 & twenty minutes later the only outward
 signs of Father Reppine's visit was sundry
 garments hanging out to dry & a freshly
 hosed deck. That night the members of
 the 6th Battr. gave a very enjoyable concert
 & afterwards there was no difficulty after
 "Lights Out" sounded, all the boys were
 tired & more or less happy & so soon to sleep.
 The mail will close to-morrow & we
 hope will be posted in Colombo without
 mishap. It would be quite impossible
 to get this chatter through the post from
 here to Tasmania, so my plan is
 this. The Chief Officer will take this
 back to Melbourne with him on the
 return journey & post it to you from
 there, you should get it in seven
 weeks from date of writing this.
 The rest of my Diary will come into
 your dear hands in a similar
 manner. Au Revoir, Honey.

Sunday Feb 21st 7.15 am.

Such a glorious sunrise, what a lovely world this is to be sure. Calm blue sea, all four ships ploughing their way steadily & away on the starboard quarter is the faint outline of "The Island of Dreams", Ceylon with its wonderful wealth & fertility & its teeming population. Good intentions on this ship, to a poor unfortunate beggar on the Staff, are a perpetual snare & delusion; your humble scribe was peacefully seated on deck with half an hour to spare before ~~the~~ breakfast & intended making up arrears in writing. Vain hope, along comes an Orderly "C.O.'s compliments, Sir & he wishes to see you at once" & so full stop Same day 8 p.m.

The voyage all this day has been most enjoyable & interesting, constant change of scene. Here we are in Colombo harbour safely moored inside the breakwater, arriving at 6 p.m. Shortly after breakfast this morning we were some six miles off the Ceylonese Coast & for the rest of the day steamed past this most beautiful

land. Now a fellow wished that Manning was seated beside him to share his pleasure. With the aid of glasses, quite small details could be picked up & occasionally quaint catamarans & samrans, clustered together in little fleets were passed, their occupants, fairly attired in bright waistcloths & headgear, busily engaged fishing. Such picturesque little sketches they would have made for dear old Hance, quaint boats of a dull reddish brown, with ridiculous outriggers attached to their sides, bright hued crew & the bluest sea you ever did see, with occasional splashes of white, where it broke on some hidden reef or rock. Background a dappled white beach, palms growing almost to its edge & then a series of wooded hills, a beautiful green & away in the distance bold mountain peaks. The poor parson had but a scant congregation that am. the attraction of the distant land, holding too big an inducement to this mob of land sick Australians, who crowded the rails & gazed inshore. Many of them put me down as a liar, when I happened to mention that the population

of this island, was about half as much again as that of Australia, but so it is, although in size it is not so very much bigger than Tasmania. Early in the day we were abreast of Port du Gallé & a quaint, beautiful settlement it struck one as being through the glasses. Old fashioned white houses with red roofs showing out from amongst luxuriant tropical foliage. A queer old solid block of a Fort, built by the French, 300 years ago & now much overgrown with vegetation. Two immense modern hotels, built of white stone in excellent taste, being designed to harmonize with the surrounding buildings, a mosque & a most fantastic looking temple, a long row of whitewashed barracks, with their parade ground in front. Oh for a Camera, but they are barred on Troopships. I fear my pen pictures are poor, but will do my best to give you some idea, if a faint one, of our brief sojourn here.

Monday Feb 22nd

The most striking thing, as one steams into Colombo Harbour, is the Breakwater; it is a wonderful piece of work & the cost must have

run into millions. Great blocks of stone & concrete, with on sea bed some 96 feet, & at top about 30 feet; it encloses the harbour, save for two narrow openings, through one of which we slipped last night. When the S.W. monsoon blows, the waves sweep right over it & have on more occasions than one, actually breached it. There are no wharves here, all ships being moored out in the harbour & everything taken from or to them by huge flat bottomed lighters towed by jussy little Augs. The lighters ~~at present~~ were all constructed of teak & the workman ship put into them most excellent.

This is one of the busiest ports in the Middle East; ships of all nationalities calling for water & meat & of course coal & the Mail Boats all make this a port of call. I am not going to give you a long & detailed account of the town; because we will see it together someday. The European business portion is comparatively small, a few fine hotels & business places & then the native section seems endless & like all such places is smelly & just swarms

with life. Don't like nigger quarters & never did; they may be picturesque, but are so beastly dirty.

Our Colonel on landing this morning & paying an official call on the General Officer Commanding in Ceylon, received a very frigid welcome; & was informed that no leave must be granted to the Troops. It seems that the last contingent to call here, have made the name of Australian Troops so fairly stink in the nostrils of all decent folks here & they don't want us at any price & you cannot blame them in the least for their attitude. Our predecessors had leave almost indiscriminately & behaved in a truly disgusting manner. Just picture whole droves of booze maddened Australian larrikins, masquerading in uniform (please, don't call them Soldiers) using of course most filthy language & insulting all & sundry. They scattered all over the place & it took two days to round them up, with the assistance of the Military. When the ship sailed, there were over forty men missing. These wretches were found eventually

in the Native quarter & were only located
 there, owing to having spent their money,
 & the natives wanting to be quit of their
 guests in consequence. The military here
 placed them in jail (pity, they couldn't shoot
 the lot) & on the arrival of the next trans-
 port got rid of them. What will they do
 with such white trash in Egypt?
 To leave for any of the men on the
 "Claw Mac" was absolutely taboo. Our
 mob or rabble were quite incensed that
 it behaved like a lot of little spoilt boys,
 eventually crowding aft & demanding to
 see the Colonel, a most unheard of thing
 for soldiers (but I forget these men are not
 soldiers & half of them never will be) - ~~let~~
 to do. Eight hundred or so, excited, sullen
 bulky, scum clamouring & yelling all at
 once. The Colonel (rather unwise, I think)
 came out & spoke to them & heard what
 their spokesmen had to say & promised
 that if it could possibly be arranged
 to have a Route March through
 the town to-morrow morning prior
 to our departure at Midday. Now
 we are going to get about 1000 men ashore
 remains to be seen, if permission is

given. It will be a long tedious job getting them down a light ladderway singly into the lighters & the wisdom of it remains to be seen, notwithstanding their fervent protestations as to good behaviour etc. when on the march. At time of writing this am consumed with a claps & burning sense of anger at the mens lack of decency & discipline. Would have tried handling the situation in a totally different manner & very probably would have cowed them or lost the number of my mess. Perhaps after all the Colonel's way is the best, let us hope so, but it is open to grave doubt. Now to bed, doubt if sleep will come, am so awfully mad & fed up about it all.

Thursday, February 25th

Here we are again, once more ploughing our way Westward, through a calm sea of the loveliest blue & gradually setting our unruly mob back to a state of more or less law & order. The Route March took place & one laughs about it sometimes, curses at other times & then again, feels like weeping, it was an extraordinary affair anyway.

Here comes a break again, must be away
 see ration issued & dinner served, will
 be with you deary chaps after lunch
 So long till then.

Same day 5-30 p.m.

The "Blau Mage" was humming with
 life long before "Recaille" sounded on the
 morning of the never to be forgotten march
 through Colombo. Many men were up
 & moving round an hour or more before
 looking for articles of dress & hunting out their
 boots, which had not been worn since they
 left Melbourne. All was hustle & excitement
 & many fellows could hardly eat their
 breakfast. The Colonel having made up
 his mind to hold the Route March, was
 much concerned how to get them all ashore.
 He picked the right man however to go
 & make arrangements for transporting the
 mob to land & no other could have
 fixed things so quickly, cheaply & well
 as Litter did. My but he was quick.
 The Captain of our ship laughed when he
 heard overnight about the proposed march
 & said "You'll never do it, I know the East
 & you can't get people to hustle." Litter
 however knows the East too & anyhow he

had a tug & six large barges alongside within an hour of his leaving in a boat from the ship long before we were ready to embark. It was a most lovely morning but very hot; didn't they sweat, as each man had to file down a narrow gangplank it took over an hour before the 1025 who went over the ~~side~~ side were packed into the barges, which were just jam, bang, pack full "Standing Room Only." Even so the blooming fools would not keep still & kept rolling the unwieldy tubs, so that there was grave danger of a capsizing. Just picture several hundred fully clothed men struggling in the shark infested water. Slowly the little tug pressed her way amongst the shipping to the landing stage & from the sides of the ships curious faced sailor men gazed down & grinned. The folks on a French mail ship gave us a very flattering reception as we passed, cheering, waving & gesticulating in very Frenchified fashion. On arrival at the waterfront the disembarkation was carried out in a scramble manner & it is a wonder there were no accidents, the beggars were in such a terrific hurry to get on land

that some of the tubs were within an ace of turning turtle. Once ashore we formed up in pretty good style + marched off with the Band (which is not half bad now) up the main street. Kitter met us + informed the Colonel that the G.O.C. had refused permission for the march, but seeing that we were already on the way, would allow us to proceed, but if there was any misbehaviour he would hold Colonel McVea personally responsible. Poor old Colonel, he will never hear the last of it, if he ever gets back to Australia. The less said about the actual march the better, for the first mile or so, the men kept their formation + did look like soldiers, but very soon straggling commenced. It was a pitiful want of determination, grit + water discipline that brought about such a rout for rout it was. Certainly it was hot, + they were green, but that is no excuse for the wretched way they lay down to it, just flopped out. Drink, they simply gulped down any liquid they could get, the very worst thing they could possibly do. vast hordes of natives accompanied the column on its slow + painful way; selling poor class cordials

to the passing men, who snatched greedily & paid all sorts of ridiculous sums for the stuff. Men fell out all along the line of march & the indefatigable second in command with the M.P. at the rear of the column, had a tough time of it. At one time there were in the rear over 70 White Australians knocked clean out, who swore they were done & couldn't move any further, a pretty sight. These poor distressed things were placed in Rickshaws & brought along to the waterfront in that manner; the contemptuous faces & derisive smiles of the European onlookers spoke volumes for their high opinion of Australian Troops. The distance covered was about equal to a walk out to St. Leonard's from Laurenceston & the time - Dead slow. Vain were the efforts of the officers to buck them up, as we passed through the business centre of the town adjacent to the place of embarkation. Words of encouragement, sarcasm & abuse alike fell on deaf ears; self respect, Ye Gods - they're none, a more cowed crowd I've never seen or want to see. Quite a few owing to the crowd, succeeded in sneaking off unobserved while we were

passing through the "Pellah" or Native part
 of the town & some of these managed to get
 drunk & were brought aboard by the
 Police. The embarkation on to the lighters
 was a weariness of the flesh, but at
 last it was done, arriving at the "Clam
 Mac" the process of getting them aboard
 one at a time had to be gone through
 & it was 3 p.m. before the last man
 climbed up the side. Notwithstanding
 their promises the previous night to the
 Colonel some fifty men were missing
 (the scum) & these were rounded up by
 two & three by our own Military Police.
 At 4-30 p.m. we sailed, leaving six men
 behind who could not be found. These
 blackguards will be arrested, charged
 with desertion & given a term of imprison-
 ment & dismissed with ignominy.
 The other three transports had already
 sailed some hours before. Recollections
 of Colombo are not pleasant & I would
 we had never gone into the place.
 However laundrymen came aboard &
 the huge accumulation of dirty toys were
 washed, normally they charge one rupee
 per dozen, but the thieves asked us two

rupees equal to two + eightpence our money.
 The season was a bad one for fruit. &
 bananas, coconuts, mangoes + melons
 were poor + dear. It is a beautiful
 country however + a stay of a few months
 at the right time of the year would be very
 pleasant. But don't skate about being an
 Australen, the white folks there have no
 time for us + I don't blame them. Our
 men have behaved disgracefully + many
 of our officers must have been "bawlers".
 At the same time some of our chaps are
 of the best, but so long as they keep on
 recruiting "Scum" from the big Ciskei towns
 our name will be absolute MUD. The
 majority have to pay for the lawlessness
 of the minority. Bad luck to them.
 The weather at night is fearfully close +
 pyjamas are sufficient covering in bed +
 more than enough. Then should be
 reached about Tuesday next, where
 we call for orders. Such gorgeous sun
 sets then the dark shuts down like a
 pall; we are now traversing the
 Arabian Sea, flying fish abound, the
 sea a most exquisite blue + dead calm,
 the Southern Cross can just be made out, very

low down on the horizon. Last night a great liner went flashing past, one bright gleaming mass of electric lights on her way to Colombo + Australia. The Tasmanians behaved well in Colombo, with two exceptions + Litter gave them a most awful dressing down. My little family played the game much to my gratification.

Friday February 26th

So much for our brief + disastrous run ashore, will now ring off from that unpleasant subject. Our Padre is a hard worker + in addition to attending to the spiritual needs of his flock, is also the official censor of all correspondence leaving Troopship A46. The latter must be an awfully monotonous duty, just fancy wading through hundreds & thousands of letters all more or less very similar in style + stamping out all forbidden matter such as dates, places etc. Thank Heaven such a joyful job did not fall to my lot. Besides all this work, he runs our newspaper, a very modest little affair it is to be sure. It is the official organ of A46 + is called "The Clan News"; of news it invariably

contains none. Doubtless owing to the Paris church training he cannot get out of a somewhat narrow groove & deletes quite a lot of good stuff submitted to him on the ground that it is too much like "Bulletin" pars. Enclosed with this I am sending you some numbers. At Colombo we were able to secure back numbers of newspapers from the 2nd February up to time of departure & everyone has been greedily reading up news which to most folks is so old. There appear to be no fresh developments in the West, but Russia on the Eastern side is undoubtedly getting licked. As we said long ago, "Dear General John Bull" will be the deciding factor in the Prussian downfall, as he has nearly always been these last three hundred years or so in European Wars the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 excepted. By the signs around & state of the Troop decks, the men are coming back to the normal again & the "Colombo fever" has spent itself. To-night the members of the 7th Batta reinforcements with the assistance of the Brass & Pipe Bands gave a most enjoyable concert. One

chaps, Collins by name, says "Take a pair of Sparkling eyes" + "Mary of Argyll" he had a most beautiful voice & well trained; his items were treasfs. We have no piano on board, but we have such a fine array of talent & our band that we do not miss its absence so very much; but of course would like one very much.

Sunday 28th February

Another calm & beautiful sunny day, just pleasantly warm with nice cool breeze. To-day our ship as far as the eye can see is quite alone, none of our consorts are to be seen, but are not so very far away the wireless men say. All his speculation on board our floating home as to our future movements; where we shall disembark etc. Imaginations are being given full play and all sorts of wild rumours are in course of circulation. No one really knows anything definite; so every "Andreas" manufactures some tall story for the benefit of the credulous & it is really amazing the gullibility of some of our Chaps; never looked upon the average Australian as an easily fooled person. Aden should be reached somewhere

about Tuesday night or next morning & possibly orders will be received there. Many things are of course possible, but to start puzzling one's head over mere suppositions is more than foolish; far better get busy studying the new "Infantry Training" manual which we are to adopt. Some say "we are sure to land at Suez," which is situated at this end of the Canal & do the rest of the journey by rail; others again say "we will go through the Canal to Port Said" others again affirm that "we are going to the South of France" What does it matter where we go. One thing is certain, at least four months, longer still if possible, of steady, patient, hard work is absolutely necessary before the raw article on the "Clan Mac" will be fit for the severe strain of actual campaigning.

In going over the pros & cons of the present situation, our C.O. & head officers are inclined to think that it is possible that the troops on this ship will form a Regiment & not be drafted off to the Battalions already in Egypt. The idea seems to be perfectly sound too, when reasoned out. The first Expeditionary Force has had

no severe fighting, its wastage from sickness should not have been great & the first Reinforcements for it have already arrived. so that it follows that the Force must be up to strength, if not over strength. Thus the question arises, What will be done with us, the 2nd Reinforcements? If there are no gaps for us to fill, what more likely that we will form new regiments. To meet this possibility the ready, our C.O. is busy working out a provisional scheme for such a formation. Under the New Organization of an Infantry Battalion, the Battalion consists of Headquarters & 4 Companies (not 8 as heretofore) each company being about 240 strong, divided into 4 platoons, each platoon being commanded by a Subaltern & the Coy. commanded by a Major (who is mounted) with a Captain as Second in command. Should this come to pass, your Dad, Joe, will soon be wearing *** instead of * as Second in Command of No. 4 Company consisting of Tasmanians & men of English birth or descent. No. 1. Coy. Scotch & Irish & Victorians of that descent, No. 2, Victorians No. 3 South Australians. Names of men are being provisionally allotted & everything

organized, so that if the dream comes to pass, Colonel McVea can say to the authorities "Very good, here's my scheme & recommendation for promotion" - Litter is sure of Captain, with acting rank of Major & Dad is a certainty for 1st Lieutenant & very probably Captain.

That is provided of course, that the Colonel has the power or influence to swing it. He is very keen on the two Gas. officers & with two exceptions considers that they are the only men on board worth a hang as officers. All this is extremely pleasant to think upon, but there is many a slip, don't you know & Burford builds no castles in Spain nowadays. "We shall see what we shall see" is his motto from now on.

This morning Church Parade, voluntary of course, noticeable that the Padre's congregations are steadily dwindling; the beggars prefer to wash their dirty clothes, that is the industrious & the lazy, of course prefer to bask in the sun & dream the time away. Oh for a really strong parson, a hard hitting, fearless man with a personality, he could do such great work. Our little chap is hard working, sincere enough, no doubt, but lacks that subtle something, call it what

you will, in a nutshell "he has no grip"; has never rubbed shoulders with real men & so fails to hold this extraordinary conglomeration of all sorts & conditions of men herded together on Troopship "A46". Give him his due, he means well & I don't blame him at all, he is really to be pitied; but the writer would very much like to meet the Bishop who appointed him & just have a little talk with that same high dignitary. He (the aforesaid Bishop) would be told some of the things that he ought to know & in no uncertain or timid manner. Probably our friend the Padre & his august chief, the Bishop, would both put me down as an irreligious person & of not much moral worth; & they would be wrong.

God knows I'm no saint, but a poor weak beggar, who stumbles along in a blind sort of fashion; but I do believe in Religion; most certainly I do. Each & every one must have some sort of belief, without belief of some kind, all is fable & the outlook dark & dreadful. I believe in a God, greater & juster & in his loving care. To doubt the creator, is to much to ask; one must have faith in such a God;

look around at the wonderful mind displayed in Creation, the beauty, the order, the intelligence & the majestic power exhibited to our gaze in Nature. Isn't it all wonderful & beautiful, as I sit at night up on deck & look on his wonderful sea & these wondrous sunsets & cloud effects that baffle the brush of an artist or the pen of a writer; it is borne in on me what a truly mighty & wonderful Mind evolved it all. Then think of the wonderful & beautiful character of Jesus, there is nothing like it & what an imperfluence it is for man, to formulate set rigid dogmas, you cannot compress Christianity into a set formula, as so many of our churches do unfortunately. It is one thing to one man, a different thing to another & something entirely different to another man. Religion is not a cut & dried creed, it is life & a man shows his Religion in how he lives his life. Just that. It is not going to Church that shows a man's Christianity; it is how he plays his innings. Now Mummy Dear, don't run away with the idea that your boy is feeling sick or depressed or anything like that, he is not, he is just having a little talk with you &

sitting here alone faring on the sea, a fellow's thoughts turn on many things. If I shouldn't come back (I hope to, oh so much) bring our little chaps up to be straight goers, clean, fearless, manly boys, scorning lies & teach them to endure hardships. Teach them to say their prayers, old chap. I believe in prayer, as a source of inspiration & aspiration; as a request for not certain about it. God knows what is good for us, far better than we ourselves & we are awfully selfish. I know I am, praying for what I want just myself & not thinking about other fellow's needs & that is where we nearly all fall down.

The part of each twenty four hours that I like most on board this ship, is when the days round of duty is done, clad in pyjamas, seated in a deck chair, pipe in mouth outside my cabin, I drink in the clear cool air, look out over the beautiful starlit sea. Then I fly off in thought to you all, in far away little Tasmania & you seem so near. Little Joe with his bright, honest little mug & Richard with his cheery smiles, Kitty, with her sweet patience, Granny, dear & selfish Granny, never too tired to take her little grandson on.

her flaccid, notwithstanding his increasing weight
 & Meg, who is like a tonic to me, she is so jolly
 wholesome, so to speak, once, long ago I used to
 wish she were a boy. Come back all I said,
 she's just right, & had she been a boy, I'd have
 had to punch her head now again & years
 went by an increasingly difficult task.
 That last hour or night, my mind is just
 full of you all & it is a very sweet time
 to me. Started out to call this a diary,
 it is more like a letter now. Beloved,
 the cause being the censor, cannot bring
 myself to let thoughts in my mind flow
 out, with the knowledge that a third
 person is going to read them. So you will
 understand why letters perhaps seem
 poor & unnatural. Another little tip with
 regard to our sons. Teach them to look
 upon all women chivalrously; men, nine
 times out of ten, do not give women a
 fair deal. Depend upon it, a fellow
 who does not treat women in the spirit
 of chivalry, is not much good. Make
 chums of them, old girl, real chums they
 will then always come to you with their
 troubles & you can help them win out,
 but mind, no "namby-pamby" Honey Dear.

Monday March 1st 11 a.m.

This morning at dawn we were off the island of Bocotra, which could be dimly seen off our ~~starboard~~^{port} quarter some 30 miles away. The general health continues good, just a few minor cases, colds etc; not one case of pneumonia so far. Day succeeds day, one very similar to the one before, my life has been something like this day in, day out.

Pass brings me tea & toast about 5-30 a.m. which is partaken of in my bunk, then up & food sluice to drive the sleep out of one's eyes. Visit the Troop deck at 6-30 a.m. & supervise stowing of hammocks. At a quarter to seven see Dry Rations issued & at 7 o'clock attend at Cook's Galley & see Breakfast drawn & fix up complaints if any. At eight bugler sounds "Officers' wives have puddens & pies, Soldier's wives have skilly" & in answer to it I move off to the Saloon for my breakfast. The Saloon just has seating room for us, two tables of eight each. Our table consists of the C.O. 2nd in command, Doctor, Parson, Quartermaster, Adjutant, Litter & self & many & varied are the topics of conversation. Our food

is excellent & well served. After breakfast & a smoke, I go below to Troop deck "C" & see that all is spick & span prior to the inspection at 10 am. by the Colonel & Ship's master, accompanied by the Doctor. Kahoris again at 11-30 am & Troops dinner at noon, own dinner at 1 pm. Kahoris again at 4-30 pm. & men's tea at 5 pm. Shave & bath comes next & how enjoyable these baths are, first a salt plunge & then finish with soap & sponge down in fresh. Attend drawing of men's hammocks at 6-30 pm. Then our Mess at 7 am. at end of which King's health is drunk, each officer, commencing with the junior, taking it in turns each night to propose the toast. 8 pm. Concert or lecture 10 pm. Rounds, that is, official visit to Troop deck "C" to see that all ~~men~~ are in their hammocks slight boat, with the exception of night lights which are kept burning all night (electric of course) to enable sentries to see by. Then about 11 pm. Bed. The foregoing is my daily routine & latter is practically of a similar nature. So you see my time is pretty fully taken up with the round of duty & so time flies swiftly.

Tuesday March 2nd

Last night, sitting on deck after rounds, was simply glorious. Full moon, so bright & clear that one could read by her light, if you wished; sea perfectly smooth & sky cloudless. My, but the ears of you fellows should burn sometimes, when I concentrate my thoughts on you this last hour or so, ere turning in. To-day have just scratched off a letter, which will D.V. be posted at Aden. Letterwriting, as I have said before is a difficult matter, owing to restrictions. It is now 10-45 am. & away to the North we can see the faint outline of a range of mountains looming up through the haze; this is our first glimpse of Arabia. At school, I remember one of our geography books likened Arabia to a poor quality shawl with a very rich border; funny how little things like that stick in a fellow's brain. The reason for the simile being that Arabia mountains are all close to the sea coast which is fairly fertile & the interior in consequence being dry & more or less barren. To-night about 8 p.m. we should reach Aden & hope of course to get some War News & papers.

My narrative of life on board "A46" is fast drawing to a close, another week should see us landed in the land of the Pharaoh's & Cleopatra. Just once more, Mummy, let me impress upon you the necessity of keeping the contents of this scribble to yourself & our own dear folks, on no account must any of it creep into the papers. The Colonel has our word of honour that not one of us will divulge any news of a forbidden nature likely to embarrass the Government, so my honour is in your keeping. It could not be in better hands, my Darling.

Wednesday March 3rd

Aden was reached last night about 8 p.m. & much to the satisfaction of all on board, the mail for Australia was sent ashore. Our stay off the port was brief, the examining steamer stopping us & a young Naval Officer came aboard with orders for us to proceed to Alexandria & await orders. So we shall go through the Canal after all & are much pleased in consequence, it will be interesting to those of us who have not been through. The Highland Pipers have a selection

entitled "The barren rocks of Aden" & by appearances from the ship, the name quite fits the place & surrounding country. Not a vestige of vegetation to be seen just bare, hungry looking rock, but at the same time very grand & wild looking. Several Arab Dhows were passed yesterday, quaint looking craft, with very high bows & sterns, with enormous triangular sails. Their crews through the glasses, were most sinister looking gentlemen, sort of officers who would cut one's throat most cheerfully for a shilling. Boytord's days came back to a fellow, when he revelled in W. H. Kingston's "Three Midshipmen" & similar boys yarns descriptive of gallant chases after Arab slave dhows. This morning just before sunrise Perim was passed, with its wonderfully clear & powerful light shining bright from the lonely lighthouse. A flatish looking island, mostly sand & coal dust, another of the Empire's many Coaling Stations. The African Coast is plainly visible at time of writing (9 am) wild & burnt, Abyssinia I suppose it is. Having now passed through the Straits of Bab-el-mandeb we are now fairly in the

Red Sea the ship's officers tell us it will now get much hotter, though this is a good time of the year, being comparatively much cooler than usual. We heard from the boarding officer last night, that the "Glan McNaughton" a sister ship to ours, had been sunk in the Bay of Biscay with all hands, by what means he did not know. The Admiralty had chartered her & converted her into an auxiliary cruiser for service out here in the Persian Gulf. Several of her officers were known to the officers of this ship & they feel it keenly. The Chief Officer here is a very fine fellow indeed & does all in his power to make our chaps comfortable; McKean is his name, & has spared no pains in helping to fix up climbing ropes, boxing rings etc for our chaps.

We are now abreast of Mocha celebrated for its excellent Coffee & can see the low lying town clustered near the lighthouse, somewhere NW. away inland is Mecca, the goal of all true believers. Last night the great Boxing Tournament was commenced & caused the intensest interest, men taking up points of vantage

fully two hours before the first bout started. The entrants are classed in four divisions according to weight & some fierce battles were fought. Bouts consist of four rounds, each of two minutes duration with one minute between rounds. The deck was well padded with bags & sailcloths, to prevent competitors from being hurt when falling from a knock out blow. It is all very well for cranks to prate about, "brutal contests" & "disgusting exhibitions" or "degrading sights;" as per usual they don't know what they are talking about. Boxing calls up many fine traits in a man's character; courage, grit & endurance, also controlling his temper, which is not so easy when being hammered. Physically, he must be fit & all his quickness of foot, hands & eye are called into play to the utmost. There is no bad blood engendered, for men who box soon develop a healthy respect for each other's good qualities & powers. The contests were conducted in an excellent manner, the arrangements thorough & everything went with a swing from start to finish. There was absolutely nothing to which the most exacting could take exception.

Our poor little Padre hid himself in his cabin, he condemns the whole thing out of hand & really knows nothing about the game. Yours truly was appointed Timekeeper, a very exacting billet & one in which you must not give too much attention to the fight, because the watch requires constant observation & time must be kept to the second. The contests will be continued to-night & to-morrow, then our last concert on Friday night & Monday morning should see us there (Alexandria)

It is now 4 p.m. & we are moving steadily along up the Red Sea, not a cloud to be seen & the sea dead calm. The land on either side has disappeared, our last glimpse of land or I should say rock, was the Island of Abou Ail, just a jagged & high mass of rock jutting sheer out of the sea some 300 feet, perched on its summit a lighthouse. One could not help wondering how the keepers passed the time away, under the control & management of the Turkish Government, now at night unlit owing to the war & its occupants gone. So close to it did we pass that an interesting & rather unique picture could have been taken

had a camera been handy. Not a blade of grass, just red brown rock, with a towering red lighthouse & white eastern looking house at its foot. It was the loneliest looking place I have ever seen in my life. Our consorts are once more in sight, the "Mashobra" about two miles ahead & the "Chilka" a like distance astern; the ex-German "Kessen" is a long way behind.

This morning about 1-30 am. a fire broke out in the Bakehouse & much food bread was spoiled; after about 30 minutes steady work it was under control & a little later out. Only the guard & a few officers knew anything about it, the rest of the big Company on board sleeping on in blissful ignorance of the threatened danger. Everything was done very quietly & quickly, largely owing to the coolness of the Chief Officer Mr. McLean who directed the fire fighting operations. Instead of being mighty thankful that it all ended so well, more than half the men of Australia on the "A46" are frowning & grumbling about the short issue of bread & the necessity of making up the deficiency with food biscuit, they should thank their stars they are

not at this present moment, squagging on the beach of an inhospitable Coast half naked & unfed. Ship's carpenters are now busy fixing things up, baking on board is a big undertaking, three hundred four pound loaves being baked every night. Did you say how indigestible such fresh bread must be? We store it in the bread rooms twenty four hours before issuing to mess orderlies, savvy. There is one link on board with Tasmania still & that is our "spuds", they are excellent & come from Detenhorst, grown by McKenna, at least that is the name on the bags. Am stuck up, all around blue sea & brazen sky, nothing to write about, will have a smoke. Au Revoir till bye & bye, my trio.
Monday March 8th 10 a.m.

Here we are moored at Port Said, having come through the Canal during the night. Yesterday at dawn we awoke to find ourselves steaming up the Gulf of Suez & some 60 miles from the entrance to De Lesseps's wonderful ditch. It was a wonderful & beautiful sight, on the left Africa, bold weather scarred hills & aching desert shimmering in the early morning sun, on the

right Asia, desert, bare, hungry &
 cruel, in the background ranges of
 barren mountains. One peak being
 pointed out to us as Mount Sinai;
 Moses must have had a stiff, rough,
 & thirsty climb, & one cannot blame
 the old chap, for being mad, on his
 return, to find the Israelites having
 high jinks. All the way up the Red
 Sea the British Navy had us under its
 protecting wing, although we never really
 had a close look at one ship, just
 faint grey shapes slipping past in
 the gloom, after satisfying themselves of
 our identity. Just after Church Service
 we came to anchor off Suez, close to
 H.M.S. Kent. There is something so inspiring
 in the sight of a British man-o-war.
 They look so thoroughly competent & efficient
 to do their job & the crews so wholesome,
 hearty & fit, you can't beat them any-
 where. Swarms of quaint boats were
 immediately around us, like vultures
 round a carcass, peddling oranges,
 chocolate, Turkish Delight, cigarettes &
 tobacco. Picture postcards, some food
 others unspeakably filthy tobacco. For

over five hours this jabbering swarm lay
 around us, hickering + jabbering flying
 their trade; then up anchor slowly one
 after the other our ships moved into the
 Canal. Moored just inside the mouth
 we passed the French cruiser "Desaix",
 our band struck up the "Marseillaise"
 + it was a great sight to see the tars
 line the side + stand to attention their
 guard present arms. Don't tell me
 after this that Frenchman cannot
 cheer, they can some. Our fellows yelled
 "Are we downhearted" + the Froggies
 screamed back "Non". On either side
 of the canal, Desert, just miles + miles
 of sand dancing in the heat. At intervals
 along the banks, fortified posts, fire
 trenches + lookout posts were passed, all
 garrisoned by troops mostly Rajputs
 + Punjabis from India. Fine fighting
 men they looked in their picturesque
 Khaki uniform + yellow turbans, stalwart
 + dignified dusky men, the brick red
 faces of their English Officers standing
 out sharply in contrast, there were
 thousands of them. Suddenly all
 was blotted out as the tropical night

shut down in inky blackness, save where
 our searchlight in the bow lit up the
 Canal ahead with a patch of vivid white
 light. Later in the evening English voices
 shouted out from the darkness "Who are
 you?" "Australians" our fellows roared "Who
 are you?" "Lancashires" came the reply; a
 little later the same dialogue, but with
 the answer to our query "Canterbury N.Z.
 Rifles," so we felt as if we were getting
 near home. One crowd of Tommies on
 getting "Australians" in answer to their
 query out of the dark, promptly yelled
 "God help the poor Egyptians" so we
 concluded that our forerunners had
 already made a name for themselves
 of a dubious character. Launches slipped
 by every now & again, with a quick
 firing gun in the bow & manned by
 jolly faced clean looking British Jack
 Tars. One occasionally caught glimpses
 of guns on the bank, showing that
 everything was in readiness for a Turkish
 attack. We awoke at dawn to find
 ourselves being moved at Port Said
 where I am writing this. We are
 busy coaling & you never heard such

a din in your lives it is deafening. Huge lighters filled with coal are towed alongside, simply swarming with the dirtiest & raggedest collection of human beings, low class Arabs. Two long & narrow planks are run up from the lighters & a continuous stream of men, loaded with a basket of coal each pour on board, dump the contents into the scute & trot down the other plank. Others on the barge are busy shovelling the coal into the baskets so it goes on unceasingly, a constant steady stream up & down, just like ants, barring the row. For all the time they shout & yell. Everything is enveloped in black dust, it creeps in everywhere, about five this afternoon, we should be off for Alexandria. & should reach there about daybreak & after that our disembarkation, barring accidents we should sleep in Egypt to-morrow night. There is much shipping, waiting their turn to go through the Canal & just opposite us is an auxiliary Cruiser, being painted & fixed up, she was somewhat badly mauled in the attack on the Canal last month. HMS Proserpine looking trim & neat is just ahead & the jacks in their white, duck look just the thing. All around us, boats

fairly swarm, vending fruit, sweets, cigars & rubbish of all sorts & of course the usual filthy postcards. Shall be heartily glad when we clear out of this, the place is neither interesting or wholesome & the folk hanging about the ship's side absolute scum, filthy alike in body & mind.

Just now we had a welcome little break, a French Aviator flew up from the Aviation Depot across the way & passed right over us, circling away out over the Desert, the rudder of his machine being painted Red, white & Blue. Too busy just now to write more, will continue when I get the opportunity in Egypt.

Tuesday, March 9th

Arrived at Alexandria 7 am.

Disembarked 10 am. Embarked noon.

Arrived Aboussia Camp at 8-30 pm.

Wednesday, March 10th

Aboussia Camp. Detail Intermediate Camp Near 3rd Inf. Brigade has already left Egypt for an unknown destination & that the other troops forming the 1st Ex. Force are under orders to leave at short notice. In Alexandria there are 24 Transports waiting for the troops & our old ship amongst them.

so when you will receive the first sixty one pages of my diary is problematical. One of the ship's officers, Mr. Rowlandson was going to post it in Australia on her return there, but she may not see Australia for many weeks or months, do hope it comes to land safely.

Tuesday, March 16th at Abassia Camp.

This afternoon, if Fate is kind I intend giving you some account of our doings from our arrival at Alexandria a week ago, up to this present moment 1-30 p.m. of this blistering, dazzling day. Here we are then, camped in burning sand, sweat pouring off one, though sheltered by a double bell tent. The nights however are cold & about dawn bitter, generally wake up then & stick in more closely under the blankets. At reveille teeth fairly chattering, clothes are pulled on with speed & as Samuel Pepys, so naively puts it in his diary "No prayers, the morn being cold", then within an hour or so it starts to heat up & about 10 o'clock is sweltering.

We steamed into Alexandria Harbour early in the morning & a wonderful sight it was, transport ships all over the place & craft of all descriptions. We disembarked & entrained about noon in two long trains

Some 500 odd men in each. The journey took
 five hours & was a most interesting one, not-
 withstanding the heat. The Egyptian State
 Railways are very fine, wide-gauge & very
 easy running. Carriages are well fitted
 up & of course corridor system. They cater
 especially to the thousands of wealthy tourists
 who flock here in the season. Nearly all
 of us spent our time, I think, gazing out of
 the windows & no wonder for it was just like
 a cinema picture only much finer. The
 country traversed was almost perfectly flat
 & a perfect picture in its vivid green &
 wonderful fertility. Miles & miles of rich
 fields intersected by Canals on which
 sailed quaint dhows & barges. From the
 Canals hundreds & hundreds of tiny
 irrigation channels ran, giving life to
 the otherwise bare & dry land. Funny old
 waterwheels driven by oxen, buffalo or in
 some instances by Camels pumped the
 water up from the main Canals to these
 little tributaries. In the fields, men &
 women were busy hoeing or driving most
 extraordinary teams of animals behind
 funny wooden ploughs or harrows.
 Some teams comprised donkeys, or old

worn out horses, some bullocks or water buffalo, others Camels. The garb of nearly all the women seemed to be long flowing robes of black, the men affected all the hues of the rainbow, a bright yellow preponderating. dirty looking folk for the most part & their horses most wretched hovels of mud. One can easily understand cholera, small-pox & fevers getting such a hold, when they do get a start. Cultivation is very intensive & not a foot of ground appears to be wasted & the villages are just huddled together as close as possible, the land they till is held by the community & they work it on socialistic lines as they did thousands of years ago in the old testament. In fact travelling through this Nile Delta country brought old Bible stories back to the writer very vividly. It all seemed so natural & Biblical descriptions would just fit the life of this part to the letter. The beautiful green of the cultivated land & the nodding date palms were very restful to the eye, standing out in bold relief now & again came glimpses of dazling white domes or minarets of some temple or mosque. Quite large towns with most appronounceable names

were passed & about 5 p.m. we ran into our station "Palais de Moukbat" a suburb of Cairo some five miles from that city. Here we detained & marched out to our camp in the Desert, some $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the station. The official title of this camp is, Abbassia Base Details Camp & it is a place for collecting all sundry flotsam & jetsam of Australian Army in Egypt. Odds & ends & leftovers of the same are rounded up & sent here for orders & as no one apparently knows what to do with us just yet, we are stranded here. Nothing was prepared for us & we just camped down & bivouaced in the sand; next morning we drew tents from Ordnance & made our camp, dreaming fond dreams of forming a Regiment out of ourselves. Vain hope, it was soon rudely shattered & our men have been going away in dribs & drabs to join other units; so that at time of penning this we have shrunk to some 430 men all told & 11 officers. Kitter, Capt. Seager & Lieut McDonald, two S. A. men, have gone to Grena to join the 3rd Brigade reserve Battalion. Gray was at parting, for Kitter & I have been good

comrades looked forward to going through it
 together, however orders are orders & it is no
 good squeaking. This Camp is a good place
 to be out of, work stacks of it & nigger
 work at that. We spend our time back
 & forth ~~from~~ between the Railway Station
 & Camp, unloading trucks, loading waggons
 & unloading them, detaining train loads
 of reynolds & leading them to this Camp.
 All the dirty, dusty, dry & unwholesome jobs
 come our way & of training our men in
 military work to fit them for the field, we
 get none. It is no joke taking a hundred
 or so discontented men down to the S. P.
 to supervise & see they don't bolt from the
 heavy toil. Day & night stacks of every
 sort & horses come pouring in & to get every
 other night in bed is looked upon as a
 luxury amongst us. Still it is all
 part of the game & must be done & gives
 our chaps some idea of what Active Service
 means, but as they need training so very
 badly, it seems such a waste of time &
 energy. Why not put niggers on to do it?
 So let us get on with Field work. Again
 discipline suffers & the men deteriorate, mine
 are going back rapidly & are not under my

own control so much; for officers have to relieve one another on this work & men are much mixed up. Hear that Col. Clark's Regiment left here a week ago for an unknown destination by ship, so I will not see Col. Hawley, Bill Royn & others in this country. Fether's is said to be in Hospital somewhere here, will try & visit him. Harry Murray's Regiment is here & will try & find him; there are so many camps around Cairo & over 4000 Australian Troops that to find folks is not so easy. Captain Abbott, who was 2nd in Command on the "Clan Macgillivray" has just come in to say Good Bye; he has just been ordered to take charge of a boat taking 150 Australian Troops back to Melbourne, mostly bad characters & a few medically unfit. Don't envy him his job, just fancy he has been a week here after five weeks sea-sickness, now another five weeks & then back here again. As he is off in firing him this to put in Australia & you should get it soon. The other ship sheet preceding this, in the hands of the ship's officer, will arrive later. Trust Good-bye Darling. My Dear Love.
Dad.

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