

**2 Square Raymond,
PARIS**

April 2, 1916.

My dear Mr. Snape,

Your letter received last evening – I take pleasure in forwarding you my (Christian Science) Quarterly at once, as by waiting, I may miss a mail – and thereby you may miss receiving it. I hope you will not mind the scratching I have made in the first - lesson – Please don't think of paying for it - and I should esteem it a favour to help a (Christian) Scientist in any way. - I also send a (Christian Science) Journal – which you may have time to look at. It has just come. I shall have great pleasure in seeing you in Paris. You can always reach me by phone – Passay 27 – 82. Should it happen I am not there – leave message with concierge. I try to be home mornings – except Saturdays when I am at the Christian Science Reading Room – 194 rue de Rivole. How grateful we are for (Christian) Science – now as always – Man's thought protected by Principle implies the protection of his whole experience which is purely mental - A card letting me know you have received the quarterly & Journal – will be appreciated.

Very Truly,

Caroline A. Vincent.

From: C.O. 6th Fld. Amb.

6/4/16

To: Pte. Snape, R.O.

Re: application for your brother's transfer to this unit, please let me know if you can where the 1st R.A.N. Bridging Train is stationed. Under K.R.s (King's Regulations) 333 (iv) you are entitled to the transfer but as we are over-strength at present I must postpone applying unless you can find a man in this unit willing to exchange with your brother.

**J. C. A. Stuart
Lt. Col.**

Letter No. 23

(Letterhead: The Young Men's Christian Association with HM Force in Egypt.)

Somewhere in **FRANCE**

April 22nd, 1916

Dear All,

You will no doubt be very much surprised to receive a letter from me written on the typewriter. I know how hard it is to decipher letters in lead pencil, yet ink is out of the question here.

They required the services of a shorthand-writer and typist in our headquarters' office, so I have taken the job. Our office is situated in a fair-sized room and, in spite of the bumps it has received through repeated moving, our Monarch typewriter is in very good running order. I used to think Tasmanians were slow and took things easily but the natives here are the dizzy limit. Nobody ever dreams of hurrying under any circumstances. I have just had a haircut from a French barber for the magnificent sum of twopence. It took him half an hour to do the deed.

At the coffee houses, we can get fried eggs and chips if we feel inclined for a change from the usual Army rations. Arthur Porter and I had one of these blow-outs for tea last Sunday night and they actually kept us waiting a full hour while they prepared the meal. The French keep their houses beautifully clean and are most courteous in their manner toward us.

It has rained here nearly every day this month and there is 'beaucoup' mud everywhere. It is just as well the roads are paved with pitchers. What the weather is like here in winter I can't imagine.

I haven't been able to locate the whereabouts of the Bridging Train yet but am told that they are over here somewhere. I hope to have Harold's transfer through very shortly now. Will send you a cable when the event comes off so you can address his letters to the 6th as well as mine.

We are being very well looked after here so I hope you are not worrying at all. (By the way - they don't give us melon jam now - we get marmalade).

I met W. Roberts from the Otis* the other day and had a chat with him. He is a 2nd Lieut. ("the Otis" was the abbreviated name for Bob's father's employer (Austral Otis Engineering).

There is a quaint old church about a hundred yards from where I am billeted. It is very beautiful inside and has a small pipe organ. There are some very musical bells in the tower which chime every quarter-hour.

Our men are behaving excellently in France: I haven't heard of a single disturbance here yet. I read of a rather serious riot in Sydney recently.

They don't keep dogs here for pleasure. You see them harnessed to carts (big dogs, of course) and working treadmills to turn butter churns.

April 23rd

I was please to receive your letter No. 6 (6/3/16) today and to hear that you had such an enjoyable time at Belgrave. I not Father's remarks about my name on the "Demosthenes" programme but am unable to decide whether they are sarcastic or not. I hope that the strike at the Otis is now adjusted satisfactorily.

As there is now a vacancy in our Corps, they have sent a letter to his Commanding Officer, applying for his transfer to the 6th Fld. Amb. If he hasn't had the bad luck to have been left behind in Egypt, his transfer should shortly go through. I have heard rumours that his Unit has been disbanded but have no reliable news about it nor any word from Harold himself for about three weeks. He is probably waiting to receive a letter from me.

Thanks for sending the pansies. I have fixed them to the wall in front of me to remind me of where they came from.

Hoping you are keeping well and cheery,

Your loving son

Bob.

No. 30
(Erquingham)
France
June 11th 1916

My Dear Father, Your letters Nos 10 & 11 came to hand yesterday & the day before – datted 3/4/16 & 6/4/16. I don't remember whether I received No 9 or not perhaps you made a mistake in the numbering – anyhow, will have referred to it in a previous letter if it did come to hand. I hope it didn't go astray. By this mail I also received Frank's letter & letters from Arthur L. & Bob Callander, also a long letter from Florrie saying she would make me very welcome if I went over to England.

By the way, several of our chaps who cabled home on arrival in France have received letters which show their people are under the impression that they went to England. It appears that the cablegrams from here are first sent to London & despatched from there., so when they arrive in Australia they show "Cable from London" instead of "Cable from France." I hope my cable didn't give you this false impression. I included the word "France" in my second cable so as to avoid misunderstanding.

Bob Callander tells me he has been given a position as clerk at Royal Park Camp & that he can get around splendidly with the artificial limb. I am pleased to hear this.

There are rumours that we are to be moved to a quieter part of France for a rest at the end of the month & I hope they turn out to be true. I haven't seen Harold over here yet but expect he will be just about in France now. I received a letter from him this morning dated 21st May, from Egypt. He says he has a pretty good job at present, assisting the O.C. with an

instrument for measuring angles. He says he has heard nothing official about our transfer application & thinks it had better wait till he sees me again. Of course, seeing he has such a good job now, it will perhaps be advisable for him to stay in the Artillery. However, I know everything is turning out for the best and that we are in our right places. Harold sent me a most amusing letter which he had received from Frank. Indeed I had to laugh out loud when reading the one Frank sent to me. Indeed, they are most cheering. I was pleased to get a letter from Miss Bush this morning; she seems to have had a splendid time in Sydney.

Am glad the photos from Egypt turned up safely & that you liked them. I rec'd a card from Mrs Zulici today & she says they have closed No 1 Hospital in Egypt (Palace Hotel, Heliopolis).

Am still working in the Orderly Room & consider this one of the best positions to hold in the Corps. Most of our officers are fine fellows & my present position brings me into so much personal contact with them that I am treated as a gentleman & not as a machine. There are also numerous little privileges & conveniences connected with the job which make it much more congenial than the ordinary soldier's life. Of course it has some drawbacks, one of which is that I don't not finish up till about 8.30 p.m. & have to work Saturdays & Sundays just the same as any other day. However, I get a number of opportunities for a little quiet reading & this suits me very well. I suppose Bess & Mill are assisting at Queren's Park.

So, the trouble at 'the Otis' has ended. I daresay you are pleased to be going properly once more. You mention seeing Mr Gillies at the Fete. Please remember me to him next time you see him.

It was nice for you to have little Bel Miers staying with you. I got her letters & will send her a postcard by this mail. Was sorry to hear of Jack Miers' illness & glad he has now recovered. I see that you have just received my letter which told of my transfer to 2nd D.A.C. I really was not sorry to get away from that job to the 6th Fld Amb as dealing out pills & potions isn't quite my line you know.

Glad to hear you have been spending more happy hours at Belgrave. I expect to hear that you have bought a piece of land there soon.

It would have been very nice if you had been in Egypt while I was there but of course we were not to know how long I would stay or what part I would be in.

The thing you refer to as a purple silk centre cover which was wrapped around the brooch I sent to Madge was really only "packing." I was bluffed into buying it one night in the street & wouldn't have sent it had I not been short of packing. I hope Madge spent her Easter holidays with you. Is Auntie Lil in good health again?

I trust the war will soon be over & we will be able to come back again to dear old Essendon & Home again.

If I don't finish off you'll think I'm wound up..... So will close & remain your loving son,

Bob.

P.S. I'm keeping very well & hope you are the same Bob.

(Un-numbered)

(Albert)
FRANCE,
Aug. 5th 1916.

Dear All,

I have been receiving quite a number of letters during the last few days I am pleased to say and have 3 of yours to answer now.

No. 18. 2/6/16 It was very good of you to make the shirt for my birthday - You can send it any time however, as our letters are sent on after us wherever we go.

Am glad you liked the postcards I sent. I thought the colouring rather good myself. I received the address of Mr Muir's son and am sorry to say that on making inquiries, I found that he was wounded (not seriously) on 3rd July, so I will not have the opportunity of seeing him as he will be in one of the many hospitals. (Excuse the faulty typing as I want to get my letters done as quickly as possible while I have the chance. I am type writing them as you said that some of the pencilled ones arrived in a very faded condition).

Am pleased to hear that things are going so well at the Otis and that you have plenty of work there. I hope Father took the two months off for a rest. It ought to set him up again alright.

No. 19 11/6/16 I see by this letter that you have received my letter telling you that I was given a job in the 6th Field Amb. Orderly Room doing shorthand and type-writing. In a letter received from Tol today she says that Uncle Charlie has just told her that I have a position in a London Military Office. Wherever they got this false information from I don't know.

Am pleased to know that Frank is getting on so well at the Office and hope he likes the work. Will be expecting his account of the Grand Opera performances shortly.

So the handkerchief turned up alright. I hope the rule hasn't been lost in transit. Will be very glad to receive a can of "Kiwit" (boot polish) over here. It is unobtainable in France or almost unobtainable, and therefore very precious.

No. 19 11/6/16 I see by this epistle that the daisy turned out well. Am afraid some of the other flowers I have sent won't be so good.

Glad you got my cable alright - it only took 5 days to get there so that was not so bad considering.

I have received two letters from Esca (Farell) lately, also a letter from Harold dated 26/7/16 wherein he said that he had received mine of the 18th July. He said he was back from the line again having a spell. (I saw their battery before and it was in a splendid hidden position and had never been seen by enemy aircraft it was so well concealed.) Harold was receiving his letters regularly again. He says things are on the "improve".

I have recently received letters from Auntie Flo. & Ruby, which I must answer today.

It was very nice of Madge to make the cushion for Mother, I will look forward to seeing it. You can't beat her much on the needle. I am on the lookout for the "big parcel" Mother mentions in this letter. I think they have all come to hand so far.

I got a letter from Bob Callander today and he says he has been promoted to Sergeant. Was very pleased to hear this. He has also got another girl and says he is going to stick to her !! Have you seen him lately?

No. 20. 18/6/16

Very sorry to hear of Mother's neuralgia but hope it has been alright long before this letter reaches you. So Mother has been sewing for the Red Cross: there is certainly a big demand for this stuff in the hospitals. So Frank has bought "Where My Caravan has Rested". Yes! It was at The St. Paul's Rest Tent that I heard it sung so well.

I note your remarks about wishing to know the place in France where we are but even if I could tell you it would be of no use as we would have shifted somewhere else long before you got the letter.

Things are going so well with the Allies at present that I am sure we will all be home again shortly. I will be disappointed if I do not get a chance of seeing England before coming Home though. If we are lucky we will be sent home via England.

Last Monday (Mother's Birthday) I got another change of job and have now left the 6th and have a position at the Divisional Headquarters Staff Office. I'm amongst the "Heads" alright now I can tell you – Generals, colonels & majors always in and out the place. My old Commanding Officer, the Colonel of the 6th got me the position. It was very decent of him. He was at Div. Hqrs. One daylast week and heard of this vacancy and gave them my name and when he came back he asked me if I would like to take the job on. I accepted with pleasure and think it was very good of him considering that I was the only man in the 6th who could do shorthand. Please address my letters as usual as we are always in communication with the 6th and it only means a day's delay for my letters. It is also possible that my job here may only be temporary.

I think I have written quite enough for one letter (this is equal to about 4 pages of handwriting you know). So will now close, wishing you all the best of everything etc., etc.

From your loving son & brother,

Bob.

Telephone
MUSEUM 3400

Telegrams
RUSIMP WESTCENT LONDON

IMPERIAL HOTEL

1000 Rooms
Turkish Baths

Central for Business
or Pleasure

Russell Square London

23rd August 1917

My dear All

Am now back in London again after careering all round the country. As the £20 I wrote for has not arrived yet I arranged to borrow £15 from Miah & I am arranging with the Commonwealth Bank to send the money on to him when it does arrive.

I have had a most delightful time, not a single wet day all the time over here.

A parcel from Mother arrived just before I left France, containing the shirt, sweets etc. The shirt fits alright & will come in very handy. Thanks for sending it.

I will close up now & write you a detailed account of my trip when I get back to France.

Tons of love

Your lvg. son & br.

Bob.

Am sending 2 bundles of postcards today.

390

France
Aug 13th 1916.

(Camples)

My Dear Father,

It is now sometime since you received a letter from me written in ink. On the face of it I dare say it looks as though we were in a fairly decent office at present, but the fact is that we now have one of the funnest makeshifts I have ever seen - even for a military office. - We are located in an old barn.

The ink doesn't seem to take kindly to the paper somehow & I've almost forgotten how to use a pen.

I must tell you about the village we are in at present. I have never been in such a beautiful place. There are crystal springs everywhere & consequently little brooks or creeks everywhere you turn. But the magnificent trees are the best of all.

A week after I joined Headquarters Staff our Division was taken away from the firing line for a rest. - Consequently we have all shifted back into quiet villages.

Our particular branch possessed three fine Sunbeam touring cars, & "yours truly" was fortunate enough to get a ride in one of these this

(Camples)

time, instead of the usual dreary marching. A car ride through this part of France is delightful. It is very hilly; the roads twist round & round, & in some places the trees overhead are so thick that you would almost think you were going through a sort of glorified tunnel.

We have been having beautiful weather lately - just like Australian summer days.

I will now close this chapter as it's about time I stopped writing this sort of stuff. Hoping you are in good health & having a good time during your two month's spell.

I am
 your loving son
 Bob

P.S. Do you remember that Mr. Gould I told you about when I was at the Continental? (He used to tell me about rubber etc) Well he is a Major in charge of the Signal Office & has an office next to us wherever we go. I was very pleased to meet him again.

Bob

Letter No. 40

France
August 20th, 1916

My dear All,

The latest letter have received from you is Frank's, which is dated 13th, 15th & 19th June in different places. I have received no other Home letters for about a fortnight.

Frank says that "I seem to be having a good time at French's." Hm! Peut-être! Anyhow I'll go into details of this so-called "good" time when I get back.

Since writing last we have shifted to another village, which is at present just a mass of mud on account of the continual rainy weather we have been having lately. The water has to be hauled up from wells about 300 feet deep.

I received a parcel of cakes and coffee tablets from Florrie Hughes yesterday. It was very good of her to send it wasn't it. They seem to be very anxious to see us - but I seem to be just as far off from England as though I was back in Victoria. Harold will probably get an opportunity of visiting them and I mentioned this in my letter to them.

There is a gigantic windmill near here. I paid a visit to it the other day and the miller was good enough to show me over it. The sails are a tremendous size and are painted red, white and blue and the machinery inside is all made of wood. I asked the miller what he thought of the taxes on sugar and flour and I think I must have touched on his favourite subject as he started on a discourse of about ten minutes' duration. I could only stand there and say "Oui, oui!" at intervals, feeling an awful hypocrite as he was going so fast that I could only get about one word in every thirty.

The Australians have been figuring rather largely in the newspapers lately; you will probably be able to see by the papers just exactly where we are. (However, in accordance with my usual policy, I will refrain from discussing the War in my letters.)

As there is nothing else in the way of news I will close up, hoping that you are well and cheery.

Your loving son & brother,

Bob

No 44

Somewhere in----- (Reninghelst)

8th Sept 1916

Dear All,

We have arrived in a new town again - myself & two others getting here 3 days before the rest, as an advance party. As our cooks had not arrived, we lived on fried eggs for those three days.--- Eggs for breakfast - eggs for dinner - & eggs for tea for a change.

This is not a bad little town at all - it possesses a British Expeditionary Force Canteen & a YMCA Tent, where one can buy a decent cup of tea or weak lemonade for a penny & nice little cakes & small packets of biscuits. We can get almost everything we require here & taking things all round - are pretty comfortable. I hope we will stay for some time.

The windmills dotted around (a la Dutch pictures) give this place a very quaint appearance. The local church has some fine stained glass windows & wood carving, but the pipe organ doesn't seem to possess any pipes at present & they have fallen back to an ordinary reed organ. The church is a fairly decent design - most of the village churches I have seen lately have looked more like glorified stables than anything else.

It strikes me that I had better stop talking about this place or I'll be getting into trouble with the Censor again. (I might here mention that this is the second attempt at this letter - I was writing about certain forbidden subjects in the first letter & at a hint from the Censor, had to tear it up & start again).

There seems according to the London papers, to be great rejoicing in England at present over the Zeppelin brought down by Lieut. Robinson. Our aeroplanes over here are doing magnificent work. Sometimes they swoop down low over our heads & drop messages. A little while ago one was dropped just near where I was standing. I made a rush for it but was forestalled by another fellow - who happened to be nearer. The message box has long coloured ribbons attached & looks very pretty as it descends to earth. The devices we have for signalling to our aeroplanes are splendid too.

Was pleased to receive a letter from Les. Kennedy the other day. He is in the 15th Machine Gun Co., now. He said he was a clerk for a long time but (to use his own words) "owing to a bit of bad luck, had to resign." I fancy he is not far from us just now so will have a look out for him.

Do you ever send any Melbourne papers over? I haven't seen one for ages. I don't think the postal officials are very newspapers over here. I would very much like to have a Leader or Australasian now & then.

Sept. 11th 1916 I have just received a letter from Harold, thanking me for sending him a Quarterly. He has received Australian mail dated 10th July. I expect to get a chance of seeing him shortly.

Tell Frank if he enlists to go for either the A.M.C. or the Artillery & to try to get a chance to pick up typewriting. You can't beat the clerical jobs over here - nothing else comes anywhere near them. I would like him to benefit from my experience. Engineers etc.

are all very well in Camp but it's what happens over her that counts. Above all, stick to (Christian) Science - it shifts mountains of opposition. If conscription comes into force - when you are returning from Final Leave take plenty of tucker on to the Boat with you also something to study or your brain will go to sleep on the journey over. Don't accuse me of preaching - this is just a little friendly advice from one "who has been to see."

Love & happy Guy Fox to all

Yr loving son & brother

Bob

I hope the little book I sent for Father last mail arrived alright - I registered it

----- Bob.

No. 45

("Cut," is written in ink, at the side of this letter)

Somewhere in -----
14th September 1916.

Dear All,

My mails have become a little bit mixed lately. I received letters from Home & Madge dated only 22nd June yesterday. (Other fellows are receiving letters July 29th).

Harold came on horseback to see me yesterday and we had three hours together. He is looking very well and is at present only four miles from us. He has received Home letters up to about July 22nd, including some postcards of Melbourne which he couldn't make head or tail of. I told him that I had asked for them to be sent to me. There are probably some on the way to me I suppose. I received a "Punch" from Auntie Ada yesterday with a couple of Victorian views enclosed.

I hope Father has had a good holiday and is now quite alright again. You ought to have gone away together.

We are pretty comfortably fixed up here just now, several of us having managed to secure sleeping quarters in portion of a house instead of the cold huts which the majority have to put up with. This room has a coal stove (the French style - standing in the middle of the room with a long piece of chimney pipe running to the chimney). We possess a small methylated spirit stove and are about to purchase a "Primus." Harold also has a little spirit stove.

Our office accommodation here is not so bad either - although the floors are of stone flags and will be ccccccold. Before we came here however, we had some queer makeshifts. In one place we were anchored in an open field - trying to work the typewriter in small tents with the wind blowing the papers everywhere and consequently plenty of sulphurous language flying around. We were afraid to show lights at night and had to move our things

into dug-outs. I also had the amusing experience of having to sleep in an old French dug-out for six nights. Food wasn't too plentiful there either but several of us were so thoughtful (for ourselves) that we brought a box of eatables with us - much to the envy and chagrin of the outsiders.

One of the batmen here has picked up a pretty little long-haired brown dog. We call it "Ginger" and it follows me about all over the place. It is not a bad little dog and beastly affectionate.

One meets with some rather quaint ideas over here. - There is a swallow's nest built in the hall of the house where our Headquarters is located and they have fixed a piece of board underneath it so the floor below will be kept clean. The birds evidently return each year to use the nest. The room which I am working in has apparently once been the kitchen - or possibly the breakfast room. The walls are plastered and painted - not papered, and are decorated with large cardboard pictures of children, cut out and pasted on. A fancy coloured background has then been painted round these cuttings and, voilà - you behold quite elaborate "mural paintings." There is a very pretty little girl holding a dove (almost life-size) on the wall just near where I sit, and it often reminds me of Bel Miers (maternal cousin). There is a rather extraordinary picture near the fireplace: it has a flight of stone steps painted in the background and they have cut out the figure of a dog and stuck it on to the steps and it is supposed to be running down the steps. There are also three pheasants etc. hanging on a string which are fairly good but happen to be all put up-side-down. While I'm about it I might just as well mention our famous "dog" picture. It is in a black and gold frame and represents a dog sitting on a red cushion (or red something) in a position which no dog ever sat in or ever will sit in. After this little description you ought to be able to form an idea of the place in your mind's eye.

The loaves of bread around here are round flat things like small cart-wheels and as they don't seem to put any salt in them it tastes rather strange to us.

I was very sorry to hear about Rupert Hewitt: he was such a nice fellow, too. They presented ones with a medal but I don't know what he did to deserve it.

Thanks for offering to send money over, but I think I'll be able to manage alright without. It was very good of Father to pay the Insurance. I'll square up with him when I get back.

You'll no doubt think I'm changeable in what I ask for but, if you are ever sending anything, please send clothing now - not eatables. (Of course you know that what we want all depends on the sort of place we happen to be in).

I was pleased to hear about your conversation with Mr. Stone. I was sure you would like him.

Father's suggestions about the way to get a grip of the French language are very good. It is not needed from a military standpoint, however, as we have Frenchmen and Belgians, who are unfit for military duties, attached as interpreters.

I got a surprise this morning - one of the postal orderlies handed me no less than 14 letters. It was my long delayed mail, and included three from Home, three from Madge, one

from Barry, two from Harold, and one from Auntie Flo., A. Ada, Miss Busch, Bob C., and Miss Lilly (you don't know her).

My letters have come to hand right up to date now. I think the trouble lay with the postal orderly at the 6th Field Amb., whom I know to be very careless. However I am pleased to hear that they have appointed another chap to the job and think he will be steadier and more reliable. I would have particularly liked to have received Uncle Robert's letter earlier as it contained rather bad news of Leslie. (I am enclosing this letter so it will speak for itself).

Thankyou very much for sending the Melbourne views, also the photos: the one of Frank is not bad at all - but why is the head cut out? I am glad to know that you are not worrying and hope Father's health has now improved. I could not advise one way or the other about moving to Parkville. If it is the best thing to do the way should open up.

Pleased to hear that you liked the postcards. Strange to say Father's surmises are all correct. I think he must do a bit of thought-reading.

In your letter of the 24th July Father says, "Sorry you do not get all our letters". I don't think I meant to say that I didn't get them - they all turned up sooner or later. For the last two or three months yours and Madge's have been coming together. You had no need to worry about my eyes as they are quite alright and I think it was only a mistake that I was sent to ----- (You weren't far out in your guess).

When I suggested above that you send something in the clothing line of course I don't wish you to go to any expense in buying such things as singlets or underpants - but just such things as you might happen to have.

It was unfortunate that the Mildura boat turned out to be such an old tub. Harold told me about it before I got your letter. We couldn't help laughing about it though.

Was sorry to hear about Claudia Farrell: they will miss her a lot - especially her mother.

You are quite wrong, Mother, in saying that your letters are not interesting. They are quite the reverse. On the other hand you must have received some very tin-pot letters from me from time to time - if you get a good letter things are looking up - if you get an indifferent one, things are looking "umpty-doo".

It was very good of Frank to stay at home under our circumstances. We understand and our debt of gratitude to him is a big one. I note your remarks in connection with "pay" but it is worth working for half pay to have the privilege of a job at Headquarters. However, after working here three months, several fellows have just been promoted to Corporal, 9/- (nine shillings) per day. But this side of the question doesn't interest me much. It was nice of Father to bring back the brooch & knife with him. He is always very thoughtful in that way.....

[The above letter was evidently "cut," or edited, by Bob Snape at some stage].

Un-numbered

**Somewhere in "Umpty-Doo"*
29th September 1916**

My dear Frank,

Your most interesting missive came duly to hand the other day. It was indeed humorous – yea! even unto laughter and I smole many smiles during the perusal thereof.

In reply to your biscuity inquiry it gives me a little of pleasure to say, state, and otherwise make known to your good self, the fact that I have "come across" numerous "Petit Beurres" in the country which the geographists and atlas-bangers call France. They have "Petit Beurre," "Petit Beurre Gamin," "Petit Beurre Bebe" and so forth and so forth. Indeed I am afraid to say that this is the favourite biscuit of the country which calls Paris its capital.

No! I have not yet visited Paris or London, but I have hopes of honouring the latter place with my austere presence when this bloody war finishes, terminates, or ends. Bob Callander was a --- --- when he said that he had seen Harold in England. (Or when he said that his cousin or grandma or some other relative had seen Harold in England). Harold is still in this delightful (?) place. I put in an application for him to be transferred here as a draftsman when a vacancy occurred and they sent for him the same night. The transfer has gone right through and I expect Harold here any day. I was very pleased to hear that you had witnessed the performance of several operas. Your description of 'Aida' etc. was very interesting. I feel that I don't care a Dunlop for music at present. What's the use of it anyway. There is a decent piano in our colonel's office and I used to nick in and play it while he was at lunch but as our w/o (Warrant Officer) has now caught me twice, either in the middle of "Ah! Fors e Lui" or "You're my baby", and threatened me with several rather interesting things, I've decided to turn it up altogether.

Our surroundings at present are fairly pretty: the people grow tobacco, hops and beet sugar. It is a great improvement on the place we put in a couple of months at when I was in the ambulance and had only been a few weeks in France. It was the most monotonous, flat place imaginable and if I'd been offered a job in a similar Victorian village at £20 a week I wouldn't have taken it. We were so close to the enemy lines that a guy in one of their big sausage balloons could see every blessed thing we did. If anyone attempted to dig a hole or anything like that the cove in the balloon would telephone to his mob and they'd pitch a few shells at us. As if this wasn't nice enough, the anti-aircraft guns used to be firing over our heads at aeroplanes all the time and nice little "duds" would fall on our "Uncle Neds" every now and then. – But enough of this paltry flip-trap, it is but a story of trouble that is past, as that balmy old recitation "trooper Campbell" used to go. "It was on an old bush racecourse at the back of no man's land, and Lasca was dead, dead as mutton."

Here! I say I think I'd better shut up and say goodnight as I'm getting a little buit mixed.

(You will start writing me these funny letters so perhaps this'll be a lesson to you.)

Brrrrrrrrrrrrrrr.

Your loving brother,

Bob.

* "Umpty Doo" was a family code word for things NOT going too well.

Letter No. 48

Somewhere in.....

11 October 1916

My Dear All,

Pleased to receive your letters right up to August 21st & to know that the cable of 30-7-16 reached you alright. The delay was caused this end as we were moving about at the time & postal arrangements more or less confused. The parcel from Mother cont'g. h'chiefs, soap etc. reached me also, a couple of days ago. I was badly in need to h'chiefs at the time & might say that they are very sensible things to send. Another parcel came to hand from Uncle Robert today, also one from Madge. The night Harold arrived here a parcel from Florrie came containing a nice cake so he was able to assist in "the eating thereof." The cake arrived in good condition owing to the fact that it had such a short sea journey.

I rec'd a letter from Florrie saying that Aunt Lizzie had been good enough to offer to knit socks or mittens for us & I accepted the offer.

Letters from Aunt Ada & Douglas have arrived but I'm afraid I have been neglecting my correspondence of late owing to the long hours I have had to work. Although the hours are long the work is not strenuous, but is very interesting & my eyes are excellent. Mother has asked for news of Frank Spencer. I was told that he was sent into hospital with a "skin rash" a few days ago nothing serious though. If you think of it, please send me a dozen Dawson pen nibs over. Strange to say, they are absolutely unobtainable here. (I seem to be always asking for something). I was extra specially pleased to get the Theatre & Stage magazines & it was very decent of Frank to send them. The Argus got here about the same time as the letter of same date & was very interesting. I was amused & somewhat disgusted with the article therein, complaining about an issue of 5/- notes. If they had to put up with ½ franc (4d) notes like we do here they might have something to complain of. One of our soldier's papers was also "hitting to the leg" one Reverend G Ruth (who I believe is the Baptist wowsier general) for preaching sermons on "Gambling - Australia's chief Vice" while Australians were engaged in slightly bigger subjects over here.

I ceased to think about the end of the War now - Lloyd George says that the criers of "Peace, Peace" are enemies to their country & I must say that I have now come to the conclusion that he is quite right. Fritz will have to be properly squashed before we can think about going home again.

Much love to you all & sundry
Glad Father is well

Yr lvg son & brthr.

Bob.

Letter No. 57

**Somewhere in FRANCE
21st December, 1916.**

My dear All,

As I now have a good opportunity of answering your letters, I will proceed to make the best use of it. Am pleased to say that all the parcels you refer to have safely come to hand and also the papers sent by Frank. Thank you all muchly! The parcel of socks and mittens arrived yesterday and I am sending some of the things on to Harold as I still have the pair I brought from Australia. (It is about the only original thing I still have).

It is Father's birthday today so I will wish him "Very many happy returns of the day!" Although the years may come and go, it is well to remember that we "live in thoughts, not years: in feelings, not in figures on a dial." Glad to hear you have so many beautiful roses.

Madge told me about that procession* in one of her letters. You seem to have been having some little mild excitement over there.

Yes, my letters have been arriving amongst the very first lot lately, but it is too much trouble for you to post them in town. Am delighted to hear you intend buying a camera and am eagerly looking forward to receiving some snapshots of you all. Send some of Madge too if you get time. Did you get the letter wherein I asked for some Dawson pen nibs? I would be glad to get some if you get a chance. They are unobtainable in France. I am sending Frank one of the editions of Bairnsfather's 'Fragments of France,' although I daresay you can get them over there also. Over here, we all think they are splendid – not exaggerated but quite realistic – and they appeal to soldiers and ought to give you some idea of things over here. I am pleased to get another letter from that Practitioner I told you about who lives in Paris. The following is an extract:-
"It is good to know that we are not reeling off time. We are
"only revealing ideas - no matter what the conditions seem to be.
"The words 'Courage Soldier!' must encourage us at every step
"of the way.....with the God-given power and law to enforce the
"highest sense of universal Right. If in any little way I can be of some service to you, practically speaking, you have only to command me." These words need no comment - but speak for themselves.

The cutting showing the "intrepid Darge" was interesting. No! none of your letters has been censored. Do any of mine have things crossed out in them? I try to avoid referring to things which might be crossed out, especially in green envelopes, and if I am writing about France, travel, etc. I generally take the letter to the censoring officer personally to see if it will pass. I won't be able to bring "Ginger" home with me as someone pinched him some weeks ago, or else he went a-roaming. Anyhow we haven't seen him for a long time now. What a fuss the French people make over their dogs and more especially their cats. They seem to be able to do anything with them. I received a very nice mince-pie from Aunt Maggie. A big parcel also came to hand from the Hughes people, containing two pipes, tobacco, a cake and a pudding. I have sent most of this on to Harold, but kept one of the pipes myself as I broke my own the other day. Miah. Has kindly offered (in answer to your letter) to let me have any money I might want, so I am back, thanking him for his offer. Things seem rather dear in

England at present so I may possibly need a little extra money from them if I go on leave.

Yes! I am sure Madge would have made a pretty postcard in her new dress. She described it in her letter. The broken in "Jewell" says that ugliness in women he never could forgive" and I think I might alter it to read - "Dowdiness in women I never could forgive."

I suppose you are all excited over Aunt Isobel's baby boy.

Sorry you couldn't read what we said about "Jones' medal." The words were run in to one another. Anyhow, don't bother about it. I must wind this up now - if it had been hand-written it would have filled goodness knows how many pages - but it is easier and quicker to type it.

With the best of wishes for Father, Mother and Frank,

I remain
Your loving son & brother,

Bob.

*Was the procession alluded to in one of Madge's letters an Anti-Conscription march or demonstration?

**2 Square Raymond,
PARIS**

April 2, 1916.

My dear Mr. Snape,

Your letter received last evening - I take pleasure in forwarding you my (Christian Science) Quarterly at once, as by waiting, I may miss a mail - and thereby you may miss receiving it. I hope you will not mind the scratching I have made in the first - lesson - Please don't think of paying for it - and I should esteem it a favour to help a (Christian) Scientist in any way. - I also send a (Christian Science) Journal - which you may have time to look at. It has just come. I shall have great pleasure in seeing you in Paris. You can always reach me by phone - Passay 27 - 82. Should it happen I am not there - leave message with concierge. I try to be home mornings - except Saturdays when I am at the Christian Science Reading Room - 194 rue de Rivole. How grateful we are for (Christian) Science - now as always - Man's though protected by Principle implies the protection of his whole experience which is purely mental - A card letting me know you have received the quarterly & Journal - will be appreciated.

Very Truly,

Caroline A. Vincent.

From: C.O. 6th Fld. Amb.

6/4/16

To: Pte. Snape, R.O.

Re: application for your brother's transfer to this unit. Please let me know if you can where the 1st R.A.N. Bridging Train is stationed. Under K.R.s (King's Regulations) 333 (iv) you are entitled to the transfer but as we are over-strength at present I must postpone applying unless you can find a man in this unit willing to exchange with your brother.

J. C. A. Stuart
Lt. Col.

Letter No. 23

(Letterhead: The Young Men's Christian Association with HM Force in Egypt.)

Somewhere in FRANCE
April 22nd, 1916

Dear All,

You will no doubt be very much surprised to receive a letter from me written on the typewriter. I know how hard it is to decipher letters in lead pencil, yet ink is out of the question here.

They required the services of a shorthand-writer and typist in our headquarters' office, so I have taken the job. Our office is situated in a fair-sized room and, in spite of the bumps it has received through repeated moving, our Monarch typewriter is in very good running order. I used to think Tasmanians were slow and took things easily but the natives here are the dizzy limit. Nobody ever dreams of hurrying under any circumstances. I have just had a haircut from a French barber for the magnificent sum of twopence. It took him half an hour to do the deed.

At the coffee houses, we can get fried eggs and chips if we feel inclined for a change from the usual Army rations. Arthur Porter and I had one of these blow-outs for tea last Sunday night and they actually kept us waiting a full hour while they prepared the meal. The French keep their houses beautifully clean and are most courteous in their manner toward us.

It has rained here nearly every day this month and there is 'beaucoup' mud everywhere. It is just as well the roads are paved with pitchers. What the weather is like here in winter I can't imagine.

I haven't been able to locate the whereabouts of the Bridging Train yet but am told that they are over here somewhere. I hope to have Harold's transfer through very shortly now. Will send you a cable when the event comes off so you can address his letters to the 6th as well as mine.

We are being very well looked after here so I hope you are not worrying at all. (By the way - they don't give us melon jam now - we get marmalade).

I met W. Roberts from the Otis* the other day and had a chat with him. He is a 2nd Lieut. ("the Otis" was the abbreviated name for Bob's father's employer (Austral Otis Engineering).

There is a quaint old church about a hundred yards from where I am billeted. It is very beautiful inside and has a small pipe organ. There are some very musical bells in the tower which chime every quarter-hour.

Our men are behaving excellently in France: I haven't heard of a single disturbance here yet. I read of a rather serious riot in Sydney recently.

They don't keep dogs here for pleasure. You see them harnessed to carts (big dogs, of course) and working treadmills to turn butter churns.

April 23rd

I was please to receive your letter No. 6 (6/3/16) today and to hear that you had such an enjoyable time at Belgrave. I not Father's remarks about my name on the "Demosthenes" programme but am unable to decide whether they are sarcastic or not. I hope that the strike at the Otis is now adjusted satisfactorily.

As there is now a vacancy in our Corps, they have sent a letter to his Commanding Officer, applying for his transfer to the 6th Fld. Amb. If he hasn't had the bad luck to have been left behind in Egypt, his transfer should shortly go through. I have heard rumours that his Unit has been disbanded but have no reliable news about it nor any word from Harold himself for about three weeks. He is probably waiting to receive a letter from me.

Thanks for sending the pansies. I have fixed them to the wall in front of me to remind me of where they came from.

Hoping you are keeping well and cheery,
Your loving son

Bob.

No. 30

**(Erquingham)
FRANCE
June 11th 1916**

My Dear Father, Your letters Nos 10 & 11 came to hand yesterday & the day before – dated 3/4/16 & 6/4/16. I don't remember whether I received No 9 or not perhaps you made a mistake in the numbering – anyhow, will have referred to it in a previous letter if it did come to hand. I hope it didn't go astray. By this mail I also received Frank's letter & letters from Arthur L. & Bob Callander, also a long letter from Florrie saying she would make me very welcome if I went over to England.

By the way, several of our chaps who cabled home on arrival in France have received letters which show their people are under the impression that they went to England. It appears that the cablegrams from here are first sent to London & despatched from there, so when they arrive in Australia they show "Cable from London" instead of "Cable from France." I hope my cable didn't give you this false impression. I included the word "France" in my second cable so as to avoid misunderstanding.

Bob Callander tells me he has been given a position as clerk at Royal Park Camp & that he can get around splendidly with the artificial limb. I am pleased to hear this.

There are rumours that we are to be moved to a quieter part of France for a rest at the end of the month & I hope they turn out to be true. I haven't seen Harold over here yet but expect he will be just about in France now. I received a letter from him this morning dated 21st May, from Egypt. He says he has a pretty good job at present, assisting the O.C. with an instrument for measuring angles. He says he has heard nothing official about our transfer application & thinks it had better wait till he sees me again. Of course, seeing he has such a good job now, it will perhaps be advisable for him to stay in the Artillery. However, I know everything is turning out for the best and that we are in our right places. Harold sent me a most amusing letter which he had received from Frank. Indeed I had to laugh out loud when reading the one Frank sent to me. Indeed, they are most cheering. I was pleased to get a letter from Miss Bush this morning; she seems to have had a splendid time in Sydney.

Am glad the photos from Egypt turned up safely & that you liked them. I rec'd a card from Mrs Zuilici today & she says they have closed No 1 Hospital in Egypt (Palace Hotel, Heliopolis).

Am still working in the Orderly Room & consider this one of the best positions to hold in the Corps. Most of our officers are fine fellows & my present position brings me into so much personal contact with them that I am treated as a gentleman & not as a machine. There are also numerous little privileges & conveniences connected with the job which make it much more congenial than the ordinary soldier's life. Of course it has some drawbacks, one of which is that I don't not finish up till about 8.30 p.m. & have to work Saturdays & Sundays just the same as any other day. However, I get a number of opportunities for a little quiet reading & this suits me very well. I suppose Bess & Mill are assisting at Queren's Park.

So, the trouble at 'the Otis' has ended. I daresay you are pleased to be going properly once more. You mention seeing Mr Gillies at the Fete. Please remember me to him next time you see him.

It was nice for you to have little Bel Miers staying with you. I got her letters & will send her a postcard by this mail. Was sorry to hear of Jack Miers' illness & glad he has now recovered. I see that you have just received my letter which told of my transfer to 2nd D.A.C. I really was not sorry to get away from that job to the 6th Fld Amb as dealing out pills & potions isn't quite my line you know.

Glad to hear you have been spending more happy hours at Belgrave. I expect to hear that you have bought a piece of land there soon.

It would have been very nice if you had been in Egypt while I was there but of course we were not to know how long I would stay or what part I would be in.

The thing you refer to as a purple silk centre cover which was wrapped around the brooch I sent to Madge was really only "packing." I was bluffed into buying it one night in the street & wouldn't have sent it had I not been short of packing. I hope Madge spent her Easter holidays with you. Is Auntie Lil in good health again?

I trust the war will soon be over & we will be able to come back again to dear old Essendon & Home again.

If I don't finish off you'll think I'm wound up..... So will close & remain your loving son,

Bob.

P.S. I'm keeping very well & hope you are the same Bob.

(Un-numbered)

**(Albert)
FRANCE,
Aug. 5th 1916.**

Dear All,

I have been receiving quite a number of letters during the last few days I am pleased to say and have 3 of yours to answer now.

No. 18. 2/6/16 It was very good of you to make the shirt for my birthday - You can send it any time however, as our letters are sent on after us wherever we go.

Am glad you liked the postcards I sent. I thought the colouring rather good myself. I received the address of Mr Muir's son and am sorry to say that on making inquiries, I found that he was wounded (not seriously) on 3rd July, so I will not have the opportunity of seeing him as he will be in one of the many hospitals. (Excuse the faulty typing as I want to get my letters done as quickly as possible while I have the chance. I am

type writing them as you said that some of the pencilled ones arrived in a very faded condition).

Am pleased to hear that things are going so well at the Otis and that you have plenty of work there. I hope Father took the two months off for a rest. It ought to set him up again alright.

No. 19 11/6/16 I see by this letter that you have received my letter telling you that I was given a job in the 6th Field Amb. Orderly Room doing shorthand and type-writing. In a letter received from Tol today she says that Uncle Charlie has just told her that I have a position in a London Military Office. Wherever they got this false information from I don't know.

Am pleased to know that Frank is getting on so well at the Office and hope he likes the work. Will be expecting his account of the Grand Opera performances shortly.

So the handkerchief turned up alright. I hope the rule hasn't been lost in transit. Will be very glad to receive a can of "Kiwi" (boot polish) over here. It is unobtainable in France or almost unobtainable, and therefore very precious.

No. 19 11/6/16 I see by this epistle that the daisy turned out well. Am afraid some of the other flowers I have sent won't be so good.

Glad you got my cable alright – it only took 5 days to get there so that was not so bad considering.

I have received two letters from Esca (Farell) lately, also a letter from Harold dated 26/7/16 wherein he said that he had received mine of the 18th July. He said he was back from the line again having a spell. (I saw their battery before and it was in a splendid hidden position and had never been seen by enemy aircraft it was so well concealed.) Harold was receiving his letters regularly again. He says things are on the "improve".

I have recently received letters from Auntie Flo. & Ruby, which I must answer today.

It was very nice of Madge to make the cushion for Mother, I will look forward to seeing it. You can't beat her much on the needle. I am on the lookout for the "big parcel" Mother mentions in this letter. I think they have all come to hand so far.

I got a letter from Bob Callander today and he says he has been promoted to Sergeant. Was very pleased to hear this. He has also got another girl and says he is going to stick to her !! Have you seen him lately?

No. 20. 18/6/16 Very sorry to hear of Mother's neuralgia but hope it has been alright long before this letter reaches you. So Mother has been sewing for the Red Cross: there is certainly a big demand for this stuff in the hospitals. So Frank has bought "Where My Caravan has Rested." Yes! It was at The St. Paul's Rest Tent that I heard it sung so well.

I note your remarks about wishing to know the place in France where we are but even if I could tell you it would be of no use as we would have shifted somewhere else long before you got the letter.

Things are going so well with the Allies at present that I am sure we will all be home again shortly. I will be disappointed if I do not get a chance of seeing England before coming Home though. If we are lucky we will be sent home via England.

Last Monday (Mother's Birthday) I got another change of job and have now left the 6th and have a position at the Divisional Headquarters Staff Office. I'm amongst the "Heads" alright now I can tell you – Generals, colonels & majors always in and out the place. My old Commanding Officer, the Colonel of the 6th got me the position. It was very decent

of him. He was at Div. Hqrs. One day last week and heard of this vacancy and gave them my name and when he came back he asked me if I would like to take the job on. I accepted with pleasure and think it was very good of him considering that I was the only man in the 6th who could do shorthand. Please address my letters as usual as we are always in communication with the 6th and it only means a day's delay for my letters. It is also possible that my job here may only be temporary.

I think I have written quite enough for one letter (this is equal to about 4 pages of handwriting you know). So will now close, wishing you all the best of everything etc., etc.

From your loving son & brother, Bob.

Telephone
MUSEUM 3400

Telegrams
RUSIMP WESTCENT LONDON

IMPERIAL HOTEL

1000 Rooms
Turkish Baths

Central for Business
or Pleasure

Russell Square London

23rd August 1917

My dear All

Am now back in London again after careering all round the country. As the £20 I wrote for has not arrived yet I arranged to borrow £15 from Miah & I am arranging with the Commonwealth Bank to send the money on to him when it does arrive.

I have had a most delightful time, not a single wet day all the time over here.

A parcel from Mother arrived just before I left France, containing the shirt, sweets etc. The shirt fits alright & will come in very handy. Thanks for sending it.

I will close up now & write you a detailed account of my trip when I get back to France.

Tons of love

Your lvg. son & br.

Bob.

Am sending 2 bundles of postcards today.

390

France
Aug 13th 1916.

(Camples)

My Dear Father,

It is now sometime since you received a letter from me written in ink. On the face of it I dare say it looks as though we were in a fairly decent office at present, but the fact is that we now have one of the funnest makeshifts I have ever seen - even for a military office. - We are located in an old barn.

The ink doesn't seem to take kindly to the paper somehow & I've almost forgotten how to use a pen.

I must tell you about the village we are in at present. I have never been in such a beautiful place. There are crystal springs everywhere & consequently little brooks or creeks everywhere you turn. But the magnificent trees are the best of all.

A week after I joined Headquarters Staff our Division was taken away from the firing line for a rest. - Consequently we have all shifted back into quiet villages.

Our particular branch possessed three fine Sunbeam touring cars, & "yours truly" was fortunate enough to get a ride in one of these this

(Camples)

time, instead of the usual dreary marching. A car ride through this part of France is delightful. It is very hilly; the roads twist round & round, & in some places the trees overhead are so thick that you would almost think you were going through a sort of glorified tunnel.

We have been having beautiful weather lately - just like Australian summer days.

I will now close this chapter as it's about time I stopped writing this sort of stuff. Hoping you are in good health & having a good time during your two month's spell.

I am
 your loving son
 Bob

P.S. Do you remember that Mr. Gould I told you about when I was at the Continental? (He used to tell me about rubber etc) Well he is a Major in charge of the Signal Office & has an office next to us wherever we go. I was very pleased to meet him again.

Bob

Letter No. 40

**France
August 20th, 1916**

My dear All,

The latest letter have received from you is Frank's, which is dated 13th, 15th & 19th June in different places. I have received no other Home letters for about a fortnight.

Frank says that "I seem to be having a good time at French's." Hm! Peut-être! Anyhow I'll go into details of this so-called "good" time when I get back.

Since writing last we have shifted to another village, which is at present just a mass of mud on account of the continual rainy weather we have been having lately. The water has to be hauled up from wells about 300 feet deep.

I received as parcel of cakes and coffee tablets from Florrie Hughes yesterday. It was very good of her to send it wasn't it. They seem to be very anxious to see us - but I seem to be just as far off from England as though I was back in Victoria. Harold will probably get an opportunity of visiting them and I mentioned this in my letter to them.

There is a gigantic windmill near here. I paid a visit to it the other day and the miller was good enough to show me over it. The sails are a tremendous size and are painted red, white and blue and the machinery inside is all made of wood. I asked the miller what he thought of the taxes on sugar and flour and I think I must have touched on his favourite subject as he started on a discourse of about ten minutes' duration. I could only stand there and say "Oui, oui!" at intervals, feeling an awful hypocrite as he was going so fast that I could only get about one word in every thirty.

The Australians have been figuring rather largely in the newspapers lately; you will probably be able to see by the papers just exactly where we are. (However, in accordance with my usual policy, I will refrain from discussing the War in my letters.)

As there is nothing else in the way of news I will close up, hoping that you are well and cheery.

Your loving son & brother,

Bob

**No 44
Somewhere in----- (Reninghelst)
8th Sept 1916**

Dear All,

We have arrived in a new town again - myself & two others getting here 3 days

before the rest, as an advance party. As our cooks had not arrived, we lived on fried eggs for those three days.--- Eggs for breakfast - eggs for dinner - & eggs for tea for a change.

This is not a bad little town at all - it possesses a British Expeditionary Force Canteen & a YMCA Tent, where one can buy a decent cup of tea or weak lemonade for a penny & nice little cakes & small packets of biscuits. We can get almost everything we require here & taking things all round - are pretty comfortable. I hope we will stay for some time.

The windmills dotted around (a la Dutch pictures) give this place a very quaint appearance. The local church has some fine stained glass windows & wood carving, but the pipe organ doesn't seem to possess any pipes at present & they have fallen back to an ordinary reed organ. The church is a fairly decent design - most of the village churches I have seen lately have looked more like glorified stables than anything else.

It strikes me that I had better stop talking about this place or I'll be getting into trouble with the Censor again. (I might here mention that this is the second attempt at this letter - I was writing about certain forbidden subjects in the first letter & at a hint from the Censor, had to tear it up & start again).

There seems according to the London papers, to be great rejoicing in England at present over the Zeppelin brought down by Lieut. Robinson. Our aeroplanes over here are doing magnificent work. Sometimes they swoop down low over our heads & drop messages. A little while ago one was dropped just near where I was standing. I made a rush for it but was forestalled by another fellow - who happened to be nearer. The message box has long coloured ribbons attached & looks very pretty as it descends to earth. The devices we have for signalling to our aeroplanes are splendid too.

Was pleased to receive a letter from Les. Kennedy the other day. He is in the 15th Machine Gun Co., now. He said he was a clerk for a long time but (to use his own words) "owing to a bit of bad luck, had to resign." I fancy he is not far from us just now so will have a look out for him.

Do you ever send any Melbourne papers over? I haven't seen one for ages. I don't think the postal officials are very newspapers over here. I would very much like to have a Leader or Australasian now & then.

Sept. 11th 1916 I have just received a letter from Harold, thanking me for sending him a Quarterly. He has received Australian mail dated 10th July. I expect to get a chance of seeing him shortly.

Tell Frank if he enlists to go for either the A.M.C. or the Artillery & to try to get a chance to pick up typewriting. You can't beat the clerical jobs over here - nothing else comes anywhere near them. I would like him to benefit from my experience. Engineers etc. are all very well in Camp but it's what happens over her that counts. Above all, stick to (Christian) Science - it shifts mountains of opposition. If conscription comes into force - when you are returning from Final Leave take plenty of tucker on to the Boat with you also something to study or your brain will go to sleep on the journey over. Don't accuse me of preaching - this is just a little friendly advice from one "who has been to see."

Love & happy Guy Fox to all

Yr loving son & brother
Bob

I hope the little book I sent for Father last mail arrived alright - I registered it
----- Bob.

No. 45

("Cut," is written in ink, at the side of this letter)

**Some where in -----
14th September 1916.**

Dear All,

My mails have become a little bit mixed lately. I received letters from Home & Madge dated only 22nd June yesterday. (Other fellows are receiving letters July 29th).

Harold came on horseback to see me yesterday and we had three hours together. He is looking very well and is at present only four miles from us. He has received Home letters up to about July 22nd, including some postcards of Melbourne which he couldn't make head or tail of. I told him that I had asked for them to be sent to me. There are probably some on the way to me I suppose. I received a "Punch" from Auntie Ada yesterday with a couple of Victorian views enclosed.

I hope Father has had a good holiday and is now quite alright again. You ought to have gone away together.

We are pretty comfortably fixed up here just now, several of us having managed to secure sleeping quarters in portion of a house instead of the cold huts which the majority have to put up with. This room has a coal stove (the French style - standing in the middle of the room with a long piece of chimney pipe running to the chimney). We possess a small methylated spirit stove and are about to purchase a "Primus." Harold also has a little spirit stove.

Our office accommodation here is not so bad either - although the floors are of stone flags and will be ccccccold. Before we came here however, we had some queer makeshifts. In one place we were anchored in an open field - trying to work the typewriter in small tents with the wind blowing the papers everywhere and consequently plenty of sulphurous language flying around. We were afraid to show lights at night and had to move our things into dug-outs. I also had the amusing experience of having to sleep in an old French dug-out for six nights. Food wasn't too plentiful there either but several of us were so thoughtful (for ourselves) that we brought a box of eatables with us - much to the envy and chagrin of the outsiders.

One of the batmen here has picked up a pretty little long-haired brown dog. We call it "Ginger" and it follows me about all over the place. It is not a bad little dog and beastly affectionate.

One meets with some rather quaint ideas over here. - There is a swallow's nest built in the hall of the house where our Headquarters is located and they have fixed a piece of board underneath it so the floor below will be kept clean. The birds evidently return each year to use the nest. The room which I am working in has apparently once been the kitchen - or possibly the breakfast room. The walls are plastered and painted - not papered, and are decorated with large cardboard pictures of children, cut out and pasted on. A fancy coloured background has then been painted round these cuttings and, voilà - you behold quite elaborate "mural paintings." There is a very pretty little girl holding a dove (almost life-size) on the wall just near where I sit, and it often reminds me of Bel Miers (maternal cousin). There is a rather extraordinary picture near the fireplace: it has a flight of stone steps painted in the background and they have cut out the figure of a dog and stuck it on to the steps and it is supposed to be running down the steps. There are also three pheasants etc. hanging on a string which are fairly good but happen to be all put up-side-down. While I'm about it I might just as well mention our famous "dog" picture. It is in a black and gold frame and represents a dog sitting on a red cushion (or red something) in a position which no dog ever sat in or ever will sit in. After this little description you ought to be able to form an idea of the place in your mind's eye.

The loaves of bread around here are round flat things like small cart-wheels and as they don't seem to put any salt in them it tastes rather strange to us.

I was very sorry to hear about Rupert Hewitt: he was such a nice fellow, too. They presented ones with a medal but I don't know what he did to deserve it.

Thanks for offering to send money over, but I think I'll be able to manage alright without. It was very good of Father to pay the Insurance. I'll square up with him when I get back.

You'll no doubt think I'm changeable in what I ask for but, if you are ever sending anything, please send clothing now - not eatables. (Of course you know that what we want all depends on the sort of place we happen to be in).

I was pleased to hear about your conversation with Mr. Stone. I was sure you would like him.

Father's suggestions about the way to get a grip of the French language are very good. It is not needed from a military standpoint, however, as we have Frenchmen and Belgians, who are unfit for military duties, attached as interpreters.

I got a surprise this morning - one of the postal orderlies handed me no less than 14 letters. It was my long delayed mail, and included three from Home, three from Madge, one from Barry, two from Harold, and one from Auntie Flo., A. Ada, Miss Busch, Bob C., and Miss Lilly (you don't know her).

My letters have come to hand right up to date now. I think the trouble lay with the postal orderly at the 6th Field Amb., whom I know to be very careless. However I am

pleased to hear that they have appointed another chap to the job and think he will be steadier and more reliable. I would have particularly liked to have received Uncle Robert's letter earlier as it contained rather bad news of Leslie. (I am enclosing this letter so it will speak for itself).

Thankyou very much for sending the Melbourne views, also the photos: the one of Frank is not bad at all - but why is the head cut out?
I am glad to know that you are not worrying and hope Father's health has now improved. I could not advise one way or the other about moving to Parkville. If it is the best thing to do the way should open up.

Pleased to hear that you liked the postcards. Strange to say Father's surmises are all correct. I think he must do a bit of thought-reading.

In your letter of the 24th July Father says, "Sorry you do not get all our letters". I don't think I meant to say that I didn't get them - they all turned up sooner or later. For the last two or three months yours and Madge's have been coming together. You had no need to worry about my eyes as they are quite alright and I think it was only a mistake that I was sent to ----- (You weren't far out in your guess).

When I suggested above that you send something in the clothing line of course I don't wish you to go to any expense in buying such things as singlets or underpants - but just such things as you might happen to have.

It was unfortunate that the Mildura boat turned out to be such an old tub. Harold told me about it before I got your letter. We couldn't help laughing about it though.

Was sorry to hear about Claudia Farrell: they will miss her a lot - especially her mother.

You are quite wrong, Mother, in saying that your letters are not interesting. They are quite the reverse. On the other hand you must have received some very tin-pot letters from me from time to time - if you get a good letter things are looking up - if you get an indifferent one, things are looking "umpty-doo".

It was very good of Frank to stay at home under our circumstances. We understand and our debt of gratitude to him is a big one. I note your remarks in connection with "pay" but it is worth working for half pay to have the privilege of a job at Headquarters. However, after working here three months, several fellows have just been promoted to Corporal, 9/- (nine shillings) per day. But this side of the question doesn't interest me much. It was nice of Father to bring back the brooch & knife with him. He is always very thoughtful in that way.....

[The above letter was evidently "cut," or edited, by Bob Snape at some stage].

Letter No. 48

Somewhere in.....

11 October 1916

My Dear All,

Pleased to receive your letters right up to August 21st & to know that the cable of 30-7-16 reached you alright. The delay was caused this end as we were moving about at the time & postal arrangements more or less confused. The parcel from Mother cont'g. h'chiefs, soap etc. reached me also, a couple of days ago. I was badly in need to h'chiefs at the time & might say that they are very sensible things to send. Another parcel came to hand from Uncle Robert today, also one from Madge. The night Harold arrived here a parcel from Florrie came containing a nice cake so he was able to assist in "the eating thereof." The cake arrived in good condition owing to the fact that it had such a short sea journey.

I rec'd a letter from Florrie saying that Aunt Lizzie had been good enough to offer to knit socks or mittens for us & I accepted the offer.

Letters from Aunt Ada & Douglas have arrived but I'm afraid I have been neglecting my correspondence of late owing to the long hours I have had to work. Although the hours are long the work is not strenuous, but is very interesting & my eyes are excellent. Mother has asked for news of Frank Spencer. I was told that he was sent into hospital with a "skin rash" a few days ago nothing serious though. If you think of it, please send me a dozen Dawson pen nibs over. Strange to say, they are absolutely unobtainable here. (I seem to be always asking for something). I was extra specially pleased to get the Theatre & Stage magazines & it was very decent of Frank to send them. The Argus got here about the same time as the letter of same date & was very interesting. I was amused & somewhat disgusted with the article therein, complaining about an issue of 5/- notes. If they had to put up with ½ franc (4d) notes like we do here they might have something to complain of. One of our soldier's papers was also "hitting to the leg" one Reverend G Ruth (who I believe is the Baptist wowsar general) for preaching sermons on "Gambling - Australia's chief Vice" while Australians were engaged in slightly bigger subjects over here.

I ceased to think about the end of the War now - Lloyd George says that the criers of "Peace, Peace" are enemies to their country & I must say that I have now come to the conclusion that he is quite right. Fritz will have to be properly squashed before we can think about going home again.

Much love to you all & sundry
Glad Father is well

Yr lvg son & brthr.

Bob.

Letter No. 57

Somewhere in FRANCE
21st December, 1916.

My dear All,

As I now have a good opportunity of answering your letters, I will proceed to make the best use of it. Am pleased to say that all the parcels you refer to have safely come to hand and also the papers sent by Frank. Thank you all muchly! The parcel of socks and mittens arrived yesterday and I am sending some of the things on to Harold as I still have the pair I brought from Australia. (It is about the only original thing I still have).

It is Father's birthday today so I will wish him "Very many happy returns of the day!" Although the years may come and go, it is well to remember that we "live in thoughts, not years: in feelings, not in figures on a dial." Glad to hear you have so many beautiful roses.

Madge told me about that procession* in one of her letters. You seem to have been having some little mild excitement over there.

Yes, my letters have been arriving amongst the very first lot lately, but it is too much trouble for you to post them in town. Am delighted to hear you intend buying a camera and am eagerly looking forward to receiving some snapshots of you all. Send some of Madge too if you get time. Did you get the letter wherein I asked for some Dawson pen nibs? I would be glad to get some if you get a chance. They are unobtainable in France. I am sending Frank one of the editions of Bairnsfather's 'Fragments of France,' although I daresay you can get them over there also. Over here, we all think they are splendid – not exaggerated but quite realistic – and they appeal to soldiers and ought to give you some idea of things over here. I am pleased to get another letter from that Practitioner I told you about who lives in Paris. The following is an extract:-
"It is good to know that we are not reeling off time. We are
"only revealing ideas - no matter what the conditions seem to be.
"The words 'Courage Soldier!' must encourage us at every step
"of the way.....with the God-given power and law to enforce the
"highest sense of universal Right. If in any little way I can be of some service to you, practically speaking, you have only to command me." These words need no comment - but speak for themselves.

The cutting showing the "intrepid Darge" was interesting. No! none of your letters has been censored. Do any of mine have things crossed out in them? I try to avoid referring to things which might be crossed out, especially in green envelopes, and if I am writing about France, travel, etc. I generally take the letter to the censoring officer personally to see if it will pass. I won't be able to bring "Ginger" home with me as someone pinched him some weeks ago, or else he went a-roaming. Anyhow we haven't seen him for a long time now. What a fuss the French people make over their dogs and more especially their cats. They seem to be able to do anything with them. I received a very nice mince-pie from Aunt Maggie. A big parcel also came to hand from the Hughes people, containing two pipes, tobacco, a cake and a pudding. I have sent most of this on to Harold, but kept one of the pipes myself as I broke my own the other day. Miah. Has kindly offered (in answer to your letter) to let me have any money I might want, so I am back, thanking him for his offer. Things seem rather dear in

England at present so I may possibly need a little extra money from them if I go on leave.

Yes! I am sure Madge would have made a pretty postcard in her new dress. She described it in her letter. The broken in "Jewel" says that ugliness in women he never could forgive" and I think I might alter it to read - "Dowdiness in women I never could forgive."

I suppose you are all excited over Aunt Isobel's baby boy.

Sorry you couldn't read what we said about "Jones' medal." The words were run in to one another. Anyhow, don't bother about it. I must wind this up now - if it had been hand-written it would have filled goodness knows how many pages - but it is easier and quicker to type it.

With the best of wishes for Father, Mother and Frank,

I remain

Your loving son & brother,

Bob.

[*Was the procession alluded to in one of Madge's letters an Anti-Conscription march or demonstration?]