

**No. 143**

**FRANCE**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Sept. 1918**

My dear Father, Mother & Frank,

You will no doubt have received the long un-numbered letter which I wrote to you the night I visited the hospital. I got a bicycle & went out to the 47<sup>th</sup> Battery this afternoon. They are still in the line but I was fortunate enough to see the very man who was there at the time & could tell me more than anyone else – Lieut. J.L. Edwards. I sent you the following cable home by deferred rates today:-

“Snape, Essendon. Gas from enemy shells blown down MORCOURT Valley where Harold asleep tired after gallant work at the guns. He believed case mild therefore not telegraphing anyone.

Ask Madge to cable 25 pounds – Snape.”

I hope you got this safely & within a reasonable time.

Lieut. Edwards was sleeping in a little shallow dugout with 3 other officers (including Harold). They were half way up one bank of a long gully. The enemy had been sending over a lot of gas shells round then & they had had their gas helmets on for three hours. The shelling then stopped & about midnight (15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> August) the air had cleared sufficiently for them to take off their helmets, & as they were all very tired they went into their dugouts & went to sleep. The wind changed then & a mist came up carrying the gas along to their dugout & all the occupants were badly gassed except Lieut. Edwards who was only affected with a slight cough. He had fallen asleep with his mask still on & this saved him. He got two or three mouthfuls of gas by taking off his mask when he awoke. The others did not seem so bad when they were first awakened at 3 a.m. & Harold said he would stick at the battery & not go away but, after an hour or so, they all started to cough a lot & got worse & were sent away in an ambulance car. As all the fellows were sleeping scattered about in different little dugouts it was impossible to awaken them all in time & it was such an unexpected thing for the gas to blow back like that.

Lieut. Edwards spoke in the highest terms of Harold. He was Harold's particular pal in the battery. I gave him your address as he expressed a wish to write to you. He said that when Harold first came over from England to the battery, he & Edwards had to go on O.P. (Observation Post) duty together. This was the first time Edwards met Harold & Edwards was struck by Harold's coolness & pluck as they happened to be in an exceptionally hot spot at the time. Harold was cool as a cucumber & never turned a hair. Edwards went on to say that as he always preferred going about with the bravest fellows in the battery he chummed up with Harold straight away. He seemed to have thought a lot of him. He said Harold spoke quite a lot of me. In fact I used to talk about Harold here so much that sometimes our

fellows used to say "anyone would think your brother was the only one who had ever gone to Officers' School.

I was also talking to one of the gunners at the 47<sup>th</sup> Battery & he said that only the night before Harold was gassed Harold had told him to put his helmet on if he was at all doubtful about gas & not to be afraid of being thought "windy" so this shows that Harold was not careless at all.

I also gave Lt. Edwards Florrie's address as he is going to England shortly & may possibly be somewhere near Cardiff.

Edwards didn't even know that Harold had passed on till I told him this afternoon.

I wrote asking the O.C. 47<sup>th</sup> Battery for information when I first heard Harold had been gassed, as I told you in my previous letter, & I am enclosing the reply got today. It contains nothing new.

I forgot to mention in my last letter that the Chaplain of the Hospital went to see Harold, but the orderly told me that Harold asked him to tell the Chaplain not to bother coming again & said practically nothing to him. Of course Harold didn't dream he was so bad. Anyhow, his little book was better to him than a dozen chaplains

Of course, what the nurse said about Harold saying something about having his helmet taken away from him was all a mistake. He was rather delirious when he said it or thinking about when they were taking him away in the field ambulance as he, being an officer, would see that everybody had gas helmets. Besides a man up the line wouldn't dream of letting his helmet out of his hands any more than he would his boots off his feet.

One more thing remains for me to do & that is to go & see the place where he was gassed. I have full particulars of the locality from Edwards & will endeavour to get out there tomorrow.

The enclosed letter came from Aunt Maggie today. Am sorry to say it got wet but it is still quite legible. It came with another from them addressed to me so I think they addressed it to me by mistake.

I did not see Sgt. Moylan as he is not in the 47<sup>th</sup> Battery & would not know much. I am writing to him though.

How are you taking all this news Mother? You will be able to bear it better I am sure when you realise that he gave his all in this War for Principle against Wrong. Though he didn't see peace on this earth I am sure that he has now found a "higher & more permanent peace." I am comforted by keeping as far as possible all thoughts of a material Harold out of my mind & trying to see him only as the spiritual son of God, Principle, Love. It is the best consoler for grief that I know & also the only one.

You have no doubt told Mrs Hayes all about it & shown her the cables. Don't think anything the less of Science on the account. You must remember that one is up against so much over here when one is in the firing line. Error is always waiting for a chance one sometimes gets tired. It is not possible to be always a wake either physically or mentally.

Oh what a consolation it is to me that I told Harold what I knew of science and did not try to keep it to myself. What a glorious start he will have in the next world – progressing, progressing, from glory to glory. We've all got to do it sometime or other. Jesus died. The knowledge of Paul and John even was not sufficient to save them from the belief of a material, so-called death at the hands of soldiers who, like the Germans today – knew no better.

Of course we are not fighting against men but against their thought – their false beliefs.

Your letters of July 2 arrived today. I am the first on the Corps to get this mail. I have received all your letters up to date & a lot of papers – thank you. I hope Father had a good trip to Sydney & Brisbane.

Very much Love --- Bob.

**(Un-numbered)**

**Copy of letter sent 1/9/18 in case first one is lost at sea**

----- **Bob.**

**FRANCE**

**5<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1918**

My dear All,

I am typing you a copy (as far as I can remember it) of the letter I wrote you the day I visited the hospital. This may include a couple of little things I may have omitted before. It is just a bare statement of facts, roughly set out.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> Aug. A clerk on H.Q. informed me that he had seen Harold's name in a casualty return as 'gassed 15/16<sup>th</sup> Aug. So I got a bicycle and went straight away to the 3 Casualty Clearing Stations which were receiving patients that day (these stations take patients in turns). I found that he had passed through No. 55 and had been sent away by Hospital Train on the 16<sup>th</sup> but they couldn't tell me how bad he was or his destination, saying he would probably go through to England. – They are received by whichever hospitals have room at the time. I tried all means but could find nothing more until I got your cable thro' Florrie saying he had been taken to No. 8 General Hospital. I then got three days special leave and got to No. 8 G.H. about 7 p.m. on Aug. 30. I saw everyone connected with Harold's case except a doctor who had been transferred to some distant place and one nurse who was on duty at night and was not with him when he passed away. The names of the people I saw

are: Sister Thompson, sister Ewen, Miss Ward (V.A.D.) and an orderly, Raynor. The doctor who attended him was Capt. E.E. BEAUMONT and as he had left full notes another doctor (a Major) explained everything to me. They said that the nurses would know most about the case. I did not bother with the Chaplain as the orderly said that Harold had nothing to say to him and preferred not to have him. You will probably receive letters from the Matron of the Hospital, the night nurse, Lieut. Edwards (Harold's Battery pal) and 2/Lt. Moylan (Harold's pal at St. John's Wood). Harold arrived at No. 8 Hospital on the 17<sup>th</sup> and passed away at 6.55 p.m. on Aug. 19<sup>th</sup>. Had they told him his case was serious I'm sure he would have telegraphed to me during this time but he never dreamed that he was so bad and they would not tell him for fear of depressing him although they told me they knew his case was hopeless from the first. They did everything they considered was the best for him though I would like to have seen him and either he or I could have telegraphed to a Christian Scientist although telegraphic communication and communication of very kind is slow during the war.

The major told me that Harold had vomited a good deal on the way to the hospital, had no burns on his body, but his skin had turned very blue and his eyes were inflamed and the sight affected. He was much inflamed inwardly and had acute bronchitis of both lungs and fluid on the lower part of both lungs. (They didn't consider a post-mortem examination was necessary). He was very, very cheerful all the time and never grumbled – never complained at all but bore up wonderfully. He was grateful for every little thing that was done for him and the orderly said he always said, "Oh, good-oh!" when he brought him anything or suggested anything. The nurses said that his nerves were probably to a certain extent deadened to a lot of his pain. Temp. on arrival at Hospital: 102° F. His breathing was the difficulty and they gave him a lot of oxygen. It was whilst giving him this that the mask just dropped and he passed peacefully away.

He never spoke much but asked them at different times to read from the book, Science & Health to him, which they were good enough to do frequently. One of them, Miss Ward (a voluntary nurse) was exceptionally kind in this respect and gave up practically her whole afternoon off on the last day to read to Harold. He was always very much soothed and comforted by the reading. They said it was wonderful the good effect the book had on him.

Lieut. Edwards told me that Harold had lost a lot of his kit at the Battery which he would send on to me when he could conveniently get hold of them. There were a lot of small personal things in his pockets, which were taken with him to the Hospital, but, unfortunately I was not able to see these as they were sent immediately in a sealed package to London and would be sent on to you as soon as possible. I was, however, (shown) a list of the things, which is as follows:- 96Francs 5 Centimes (paid into his account); 1 pay book; 3 letters; 6 photos; 1 pipe; 1 religious book; 1 compass; wrist watch; whistle; collar & tie; 3 keys; tobacco pouch; fountain pen; cigarette holder; wrist compass in case; large pr. Field

glasses in case; revolver; matchbox holder; leather wallet containing papers; 1 farthing; 1 silver coin.

His grave is No. 5490 in a civilian and military cemetery about two miles the opposite end of the town to that hospital. The military graves are beautifully kept – all planted with flowers, with grass cut level like a lawn in all the spaces between the graves. According to present regulations, all the crosses must be the same size for the duration of the war.

The crosses are all of wood, lightly built, of a brownish colour and about 3' 6" x 19". Harold's is inscribed like this –

G.R.U.

2<sup>ND</sup> LIEUT. H.J. SNAPE  
AUST. FLD. ART. 47<sup>TH</sup> BTY. 12<sup>TH</sup> ARMY BDE.  
DIED 19<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 1918

5490

(G.R.U. is an abbreviation for Graves registration Unit).

I have the address to apply for a photo. Of the grave when the flowers etc. have properly grown.

I sent you three cables – one on 29/8/18, one on 1/9/18 and one 4/9/18.

I telegraphed them through Florrie as our field post office people told me that I would save several days by that means.

**No. 144**

**FRANCE**  
**7<sup>th</sup> Sept.1918**

My dear Father & Mother & Frank,

This morning I rose early and went to see the place where poor old Harold was gassed. It was not very difficult for me to locate the exact spot as it had been pointed out to me on a map by Lieut. Edwards and I carried a amp with me. From the description of the various surrounding objects I am satisfied that I saw the exact place.

It is just outside the village of ----- (referred to my last cable in which the name was mentioned by special permission.....[Fricourt, w.b.]) There are several tracks leading off the main road and the centre track leads along a sort of gully, the bank of which is fairly steep and about 100 feet high on the left hand side and slopes more gradually back on the right side. 700 yards along this track there is a branch to the left side and about 300 yards along this branch is where the wagonlines of the 47<sup>th</sup> Battery were, just past a German medium sized field gun which the enemy had to leave when pushed back by our 45<sup>th</sup> Battalion and amongst a clump of about a dozen trees growing in the bed of the gully. After arriving at this clump of trees, if you climb straight up the bank on your left (which faces the German lines) you come to the old gun positions which were right on the top. These positions I verified by finding an envelope addressed to a member of the 47<sup>th</sup> Bty. lying in the old gun pit amongst a heap of 18pounder shell cases. Three quarters of the way up this bank are several little shallow dugouts and in one of these Harold and the other three officers slept. (Capt. Callenan, Lt. Edwards and another Lt. (named Craig I think). There were quite a number of holes about where shells had fallen and a cross denoting the grave of a member of the 45<sup>th</sup> Bty.

I spent about an hour at this spot. There were a lot of shelters for the horses which Lt. Edwards had told me he had superintended the making of and a few yards further up the gully was another abandoned german field gun. About 100 yards back were the mangled remains of one of our aeroplanes which had come to grief there.

The village near (about 1200 yards away) is not very badly knocked about though most of the houses have their roofs more or less pierced with holes by shrapnel.

I am writing this in duplicate in case the first one gets lost at sea and I am sending the duplicate to Florrie so that she will know all the particulars as well.

With tons of love

Your loving son and brother,

BOB.

**Undated and part missing:-**

**RETROSPECTIVE NOTES ON HAROLD'S ACTIVE SERVICE.**

As I feel sure you will greatly desire to know everything it is in my power to tell you about our Dear Old HAROLD, I have, with the assistance of rough diary notes, compiled the following, with the hope that you will derive some pleasure from their perusal.

This record, I know , has not been well written, as his standard of duty is so much higher than mine that I have not felt worthy to do him the justice he deserves. However, I may say to myself, like the author of Pagliacci, --

“ ’Tis for (you at Home) that the author has written,  
And the story he tells is true!  
A song of tender memories, deep in his list’ning heart  
..... was ringing,  
And then, with a trembling hand, he wrote it,  
And he mark’d the time with sighs and tears!”

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When, on January 31, 1916, first I set foot on Egyptian soil, my first thought was ‘how to see Harold.’ We were camped at Zeitoun, a few miles out of Cairo, and I kept asking everyone I saw, “Where is the Bridging Train?”; and one morning, a soldier answered, “Look over there! Do you see those two tents with little windmills stuck on the top of them?” “Yes!” said I, excitedly. “Well, you’ll find them there.” But my delight was short-lived , for I found, on my arrival at the tents with the little windmills, that they contained only reinforcements just in from Australia and that the main body of the Royal Naval Bridging Train was away in Ismailia, on the Suez Canal. I then tried for special leave, but found that this was impossible, so I wrote to him, asking him what chance there was for him to get leave to come up to Cairo. A week or so afterwards, I got a letter from him to say that he had managed to get a week-end off and was coming to Cairo to see me. I went into Cairo and waited at the railway station for a long time, but, somehow, missed him and when I got back to camp I found that he had been there in my absence and, so as not to waste the evening, had gone back into Cairo again with a couple of my tent pals.

He got back to our camp again about ten o’clock and, my word, we were excited to see each other. We walked together away from all the tents and everybody; and there, on the sands of Egypt, we sat and yarned for goodness knows how long. He told me of his adventures on the Peninsula, of Suvla Bay, and how the Bridging train had stayed almost to the last at the Evacuation of Gallipoli; and I told him all about my trip over from, Australia. He was looking the very picture of health.

We made room for him in our tent that night and shared blankets and the next morning (Sunday morning) I ‘worked a point ‘ and got away from parade. I remember it all so clearly, -- it was a beautiful morning and we strolled together into Heliopolis – that wonderful new city which has sprung up, phoenix-like, alongside the ashes of the old, old Heliopolis, one-time capital of Egypt. We walked to the beautiful home of Mrs Quilici, in Abbas Avenue, opposite the magnificent Palace Hotel, and read through the lesson sermon for the week, together. At noon, we caught the electric tram into Cairo. This is the finest and fastest electric tramway system I have yet seen. When not passing through streets, the

car runs on heavy rails and at a tremendous speed. Arrived at Cairo, we had dinner at a Greek restaurant named "Confiance" and then caught another tram out to the Pyramids.

What a day we had! This was my second visit to the Pyramids, but Harold got his first glimpse of them that day. He insisted that we should have our photos taken on camels in front of the Sphinx, and I am glad now that he suggested this. I then waited at the foot of the Great Pyramid, Cheops, while he took off his boots and crawled down the hot slippery passage inside. As I had been inside once before, I did not feel like repeating the performance. When Harold emerged from the black depths of Cheops, we rested a while and then clambered up to the top together. Right on top of the pyramid, he produced his little pocket camera and took a snapshot of me and then I took one of him.

We had tea in Cairo that night and then wandered round that fascinating old city till nine o'clock, at which hour I had to return to camp and he put up at the Hotel Splendid (opposite the main railway station) having to catch an early train back to Ismailia the next morning.

The next time we were in France on June 25, 1916.

I embarked with the 6<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance at Alexandria on March 20, and eventually went into the Line at ----- near ----- . I received a letter from Harold shortly after saying that he had transferred to the 46<sup>th</sup> Battery and was still in Egypt. A lot of others from his unit had also transferred to the Artillery and Engineers as they thought their chance of ever getting to France in the Bridging Train was hopeless.

He arrived in France in June and his battery was ordered to -----, just about two and a half miles from us, so on the 25<sup>th</sup> I was delighted to receive a visit from him. I had just finished a frugal meal in the shape of tea, when someone called out, "Snape, you're wanted." And when I came along I found Harold waiting for me.

He had just arrived in France and was not favourably impressed with it just then and remarked that they were stuck among a lot of beastly, broken up houses, etc. I went out to his battery the next day and had a yarn with him, and he showed me their guns, which had been firing quite a lot on the previous night. He seemed to like the artillery work.

Early in the month of July, my unit started on the move, but, the day before we left, I went down to Harold's battery position and found that they had all cleared out so I was unable to see him.

On the first of August, I went to work at 2<sup>nd</sup> Division Headquarters who were then in the battered town of ----- . In the beginning of September we moved up to ---- ----- and, after making a lot of enquiries as to the whereabouts of the 46<sup>th</sup>



Battery, I managed to send Harold a message, saying that I was at ----- so, on the 12<sup>th</sup> he came on horseback to see me and stayed for a couple of hours.

On the following Sunday, I biked across to ----- where the wagon lines of his battery were and we spent a pleasant afternoon together. I suggested that I should try and get him transferred to Div. Headquarters with me but he did not seem particularly keen about it but later on he agreed because he thought that you at Home would be more content if you knew we were together. He said that he had an application in for the Flying Corps as well. He came to see me on the 20<sup>th</sup> and again on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

In the meantime, they told me at H.Q. that they were in need of a draftsman so Harold's transfer was put through and he came to work at H.Q. on October 2. He told me that his application for the Flying Corps was unsuccessful and he seemed rather disappointed.

A couple of weeks after this H.Q. started on the move and eventually reached ----- on October 22, and set ourselves up in the château there. Harold and I got an afternoon off two days after our arrival here and spent a very enjoyable time in the pretty little town of ----- only about 3 miles distant. We walked in the park and also had quite a "blowout" of pastry for tea.

On Nov. 19, Harold put in another application for the Flying Corps and was very nearly successful, being rejected only on account of his weight. (The authorities were very strict on the weight question about this period). He was not too contented with the job at H.Q. and as the draftsman's work consisted of rush one day and nothing to do the next he thought he was not properly doing his "bit" by being there. At the end of November things got so slack for the draftsmen that they asked Harold if he would take on other clerical work as other departments of H.q. needed more clerical assistance. Harold would not hear of this and preferred to go back to the battery. I rather grieved at his going away at first but realised that he could not have been in his rightful place if he was not contented there. He rejoined the 46<sup>th</sup> Battery on Nov. 28, and shortly afterwards, I got a letter from him saying that he was pleased to be back with the guns again as he could not stand the thought of close, inside work after the free and open life at the battery.

We always corresponded regularly if we were too far apart to make constant visits to see each other.

Early in the new year of 1917, I got news that Harold's Unit was once more fairly close to mine so I got a pair of rubber thigh boots and after about an hour or so of walking I found the 46<sup>th</sup> in the muddiest hole imaginable. They were only about three miles from us then and we were in what was left of ----- Wood and they were just outside of what used to be the village of ----- (At the time there was nothing left of this

village but a big church-bell and about 2½ tombstones). The road was a very roundabout one and feet deep in mud. To have taken a shortcut across country would have spelt disaster. After I had found his wagon lines he came along on a horse and the aforesaid horse put the finishing touch on my toilet by smothering me up to the face in slime. When I had finished chanting a psalm in praise of his steed, I told Harold I was expecting to get away on my first "Blighty" leave in a few days and was anxious to know if he could get away with me. The prospect was a very exciting one and he said he would do his utmost.

As it turned out, I went on my leave on Jan 11, 1917 and met him at the Rest camp at ----- -- just on his way over as I was just coming back. On February 12 I got a letter from him, written from Pontypridd, saying he was 'having the time of his life'.

The next occasion on which we met was over two months later. I was up at advanced H.Q. in an old German dugout near the destroyed ----- railway station and had an afternoon off after night duty so walked down to where his Unit was – a distance of about 2 miles; they were out of the line at the time. I was disappointed to find that he was away repairing a broken telephone line. However, he came along to see me that night and we had a long chat about our experiences on leave in England and Wales.

During April, I went long journeys to see him on two occasions, but without success. But on April 28 he came to see me in the evening and on the 30<sup>th</sup> he awakened me at six o'clock in the morning with a cheery word of greeting, as he passed by my roadside tent, on horseback. He had just been participating in the big battle rehearsal which took place before the great ----- Battle. I myself had been working day and night on the clerical side of the same thing.

On September 9, I left 2<sup>nd</sup> Div. H.Q. and was attached to 1<sup>st</sup> Anzac Corps H.Q. and had to collect my belongings and make the trip from ----- to ----- on odd motor lorries. The big ----- battles were then on and we had tons of work to do. Harold discovered me somehow. (of course I had told him about my new job, by letter but I was unable to mention the name of our village). On the 22<sup>nd</sup> Oct. he had come to Corps H.Q. for some telephone apparatus so of course we seized this opportunity for another of our little conferences. He told me that their crowd were only in the next town then, so, as I had an afternoon off that day, after all-night duty, I walked down to his place and had a battery tea with him and afterwards helped him to shift his gear to another hut on the opposite side of the main road. He dropped in again to see me a week later and I obtained a couple of hours off and we had another meal together.

The following incident well illustrates his fondness for music and musical things:

One morning in December 1917 I was feeling a bit 'down in the dumps', and as we were not very busy at the time, I picked up a pen and idly scribbled on a sheet of my writing pad, what words I could remember of Schubert's song 'To Music':-

*"Thou holy art: how oft in hours of sadness*

*When life's wild tumult surged around my way,*

*Thy gentle power hath waked my heart to gladness  
And shown the dawning of a brighter world, a fairer day.*

*Full oft a strain from thy serene dominions,  
Some tender chord of harmony divine  
Hath borne my soul aloft on heav'nward pinions  
A brighter world, a fairer day."*

The writing and recollection of these words cheered me up somewhat. Next day, I decided to write a short note to Harold, telling him things were just jogging along as usual and I hoped to see him again soon.. When I had finished my letter, I was annoyed to find that I had written it on the back of the sheet on which I had scribbled 'To Music' the previous day. However I didn't feel like re-writing the letter but just put a note at the foot, "Sorry, but I didn't notice there was something written on the back of this sheet."

A week or two later (dec.19) I went out to his battery to see him, and he said, "I was feeling in need of something to cheer me up when I got your letter, and it was just the thing."

He was at this time expecting to go on leave to Paris any day, so I told him everything I could think of about my trip and all the points about the place. (However, all this was knocked on the head owing to his being selected to go to England as a result of his application to be sent to Cadet School).

The 21<sup>st</sup> December – a cold winter's day – was the last time I saw him in France. He came to see me at our Headquarters, about 4 p.m., with a big smile on his face and the great news that he was going to London the following day. All work was flung to the winds as far as I was concerned and we hied ourselves to a little estaminet nearby and celebrated the occasion with fried eggs and coffee (the best obtainable at the time and place) and we talked the whole thing over. He expected to be in England for at least six months and would get fourteen days' leave before starting at the school. I was delighted to think that this would mean that he would spend the greater part of the winter in comfort. To go to this school had been his ambition for a long, long time.

I have not forgotten that day. The air was rather nippy and there were queer little bunches of white stuff hanging on all the branches of all the trees and every time a gust of wind blew up, this stuff was shaken off the branches and fell to the ground like snow. Harold said that the Tommies had told him that it was hoar frost. It was the first time we had seen this.

Harold was always most generous and thoughtful for me, and was always thoughtful about wording his letters in such a manner as would cause you at Home the least possible anxiety about him. The following are instances of his generosity:-

He picked out his best blanket to use on the journey over to the school in England and, when he arrived at his destination, he posted this blanket back to France to me, as he that I could have done with an extra blanket at the time.

His first letter to me from London, contained a couple of franc notes and a ten shilling English note, with the words, "This shrapnel may come in handy to you for Christmas." (The word shrapnel is used in France to signify torn notes) ----- He had sent the ten shilling note for me to have a good time with at Christmas while he was spending his Christmas in Wales!

When I was with him London, in March 1918, he kept on saying, "Are you sure you have plenty of money, Bob? I've got tons, so if you ever run short at all, just say the word you know."

But his gift to me which I shall always treasure most of all, is the little brown-covered 'Science & Health,' which he sent me as a New Year's gift. He wrote on the front page, simply, "R.O.S. from H.J.S. NEW Year 1918." It was the very thing I was wanting, and I almost had tears in my eyes, with gratitude at his thoughtfulness, when I opened the little parcel, and my thoughts instantly flew back to the time, in Australia, when I had given him a copy of the vest pocket edition, and, I believe, I just marked it, "To H.J.S. from R.O.S."

At times he has posted portion of his Home parcels to me, and I have done the same for him when I have known that his Battery was in some particularly forlorn place.

During his stay in London, Harold went once or twice to see Miss James and went on a number of occasions to the First Church (of Christ Scientist) at Sloane Square. He said he greatly enjoyed the service there and that, at the School, they used to 'fall them out' on Sunday morning according to the churches to which they desired to go, and the senior member of each party marched his party to its destination. As Harold was the only one for the Sloane square Church, he said he used to "fall out and march himself round."

Though I think Harold has always been heart-whole' as far as girls are concerned, he and his pal met some very nice girls on their Scotland trip, and he and the other Cadet Officers were introduced to quite a number of nice girls in and around London and he told me they used to spend some very happy week-ends.

He was always very amused at Frank's funny letters and generally kept them to show me. --- He used to say, "I don't know how on earth he thinks of all this bosh." He always had at least one saved up for me when I came to see him, or when he came to see me, and sometimes we would read them through together, and laugh till the tears ran down or cheeks.

Somehow Frank's letters to me were never quite so funny and frequent as his letters to Harold. Perhaps Frank thought I wouldn't fancy them so much, but I'll bet he little thought that his letters were nearly always read by us both.

We always made it a practice to give each other a good old hearty handshake whenever we met or parted, and most of our meetings were at the most unexpected times and localities.

I arrived last in London, on leave, on Wednesday, March 20 and it was about half past five in the evening by the time I had gone through all the military formalities, etc., and fixed myself up with a room at the Shaftesbury Hotel. --- Knowing that Harold got off from the St. John's wood School in the evenings, and being afraid of missing him if I went out there, I straightway sent him a telegram to meet me at Trafalgar Square that evening. After waiting there for about an hour without any sign of him, I concluded that he must be down for a lecture or something. However, I found out afterwards that, through some carelessness on the part of 'some person or persons unknown,' he had not received the telegram till 9 p.m. Whilst waiting at Trafalgar Square, I saw two fellows wearing the white hatband of the cadet Training School, so I at once bowled up to them and asked if they knew Harold. They did, and told me that 10 o'clock in the morning would be the best time to go out to see him.

Acting on this advice, I journeyed by Tube next morning out to St. John's Wood station, which, in my blissful (?) ignorance I supposed would be quite close to the St. John's wood School.

On arrival at the station however, one of the beloved London policemen informed me, to my disgust, that I had about a mile to walk – for it was then about five minutes to ten.

For fear of missing him, I ran most of that mile.

The school is in an old military training establishment in Ordnance Road, and I arrived there breathless, shortly after ten, much relieved to find that he was out on a gun parade in one of the parks, with his section, and was expected back any minute. I waited in a corner of the old courtyard of the School, watching some Cadets being marched up and down at express speed, and then, with a great clatter and shouting of orders, Harold and his section galloped in with their guns. Harold was mounted on one of the horses pulling a gun, and was dressed, like the rest of his company, in white overalls for the occasion. He was too engrossed in his work to be aware of the existence of his brother in the vicinity, but I rushed up to him as he was leading his horse to the stables, with the words, "Hullo H. Here I am!" He gave me one of his good old smiles and said he was "jolly pleased to see me again" and, after handing his horse over to one of the grooms in the stables, he took me round to the dormitory where he slept.

He had no time to spare as he was due almost immediately for a lecture, so I was only able to chat with him while he changed his overalls.

He produced from his locker a parcel which he had just received from Mother and gave me some 'humbugs' which had come in the parcel. We then asked each other the usual important question, "What's the latest news from Home?" He then said that he was unfortunately "booked for a beastly air-raid picket" every night for a week, but would try to get the weekend off and send me a telegram to the Shaftesbury Hotel as to whether successful or not.

This was a disappointing commencement and, to add to all this, on Saturday night I received a telegram to say that he was unable to get any time off during the week-end, so I went off down to Pontypridd and Maesteg, returning to London on Thursday night. The next day was Good Friday and Harold came along to the Hotel in the morning with the delightful news that he had till Sunday night off. We thereupon booked a room with two single beds and it seemed just like the old days in Australia again.

We strolled round to one of the Food Controller's Offices for meat cards and then went to the Strand Palace Hotel for dinner.

Ever since he grew up from boyhood, it has been the principle of Harold to always have the best of everything. And why not? Is not the true man, the highest expression of his Maker, entitled to the best of everything?

We dined in style, I can tell you, and after we had done justice to I-don't-know-how-many courses, Harold called the waiter and said, "Cigars please." So we selected a cigar each and strolled into the smoking room in a manner befitting the distinguished and honourable family of which we are members.

My word I am glad I had a new tunic and a new hat, as he looked so fine with his tailor-made rigout, gloves, with buttons and spurs all polished up, and nice white lanyard and hatband. -- I can tell you, I never felt so proud to think that he was my brother.

During the afternoon, he piloted me round to Dicken's Old Curiosity Shop, at the back of Kingsway. You may remember waht a lover of Dickens he is, and how he used to talk about The Old Curiosity Shop (little did I then think that we should ever go together to see it), and Mr. Peggotty, Mr. Dombey, and the rest.

I quite forget where we had tea that night but I'm sure that it was a jolly fine tea for all that. And after tea we went to Queen's Hall and heard Ben Davies, the bass singer; Moskiewiez (I cannot spell his jaw-breaking name) the splendid pianist; and Madame Alvarez, the singer. Harold was much more enthusiastic about music than he used to be in Australia even. He went to quite a lot of good concerts during his long stay in London. He expressed admiration for the unostentatious dignity of Schubert's Marche Militaire (played by the pianist), and we both very much enjoyed a sympathetic rendering of Rachmaninov's Prelude in C Sharp Minor. We also had a few quiet laughs at the antics of Mme Alvarez, who was a very stout woman and sang with a tremendous amount of un-necessary gesture.

We had a good long yarn about old times as we went to bed that night, and next morning (Saturday 30<sup>th</sup>) had breakfast at the Hotel and dined at the Holborn Restaurant. We then went to a matinee performance of Mozart's "Magic Flute" at Drury Lane. This was an opera which Harold said he had always wished to see, as it contained one of his favourite songs –

*"Within this sacred Temple  
.....  
The mind forgets its sorrow,  
.....  
All ye whose hearts are seared with grief  
Come here and find relief."*

Robert Radford was the bass soloist: he was in glorious voice and I remember Harold saying to me in the theatre, "I hope he'll go right down low when he comes to the last notes of "Within the sacred Temple", instead of taking them in the higher register." And so he did 'go right down low.' It was altogether a beautiful performance. The orchestration, as in all Mozart's music, was most delicate and artistic throughout: in fact, perhaps a little too delicate for operatic music. I'm sure it charmed Harold, from beginning to end.

That evening, we were going to dine at the famous restaurant where Dr. Johnson and his friends used to meet and where the same sort of pudding is served up to this day just as it used to be served up to the good old Doctor. However, we were a trifle disappointed to find this restaurant closed down for the Easter Holidays, so we went to Simpson's in The Strand, instead. Simpson's was great, and it seemed to please Harold immensely to take his 'big brother' round to this "great place for a feed," as he called it. But it really was 'classy'. It is run, I believe, for gentlemen only. The waiters are dressed all in white, and when you ask for a dish, say Roast Beef, a man all in white, with a white cap even, pushes along a contrivance on wheels, with several spirit stoves fitted into it, with steaming joint or meat thereon, and also several dishes of various vegetables "all hot." Everything is kept hot all of the time.

The same evening, we went again to Drury Lane and saw "Tannhauser." (We had a very musical day, you will think). It was a fine performance of "Tannhauser," Frank Mullings taking the name part, with Rosina Buckman as 'Elizabeth' and Robert Parker as Wolfram. Harold enjoyed the magnificent harmony of the Pilgrims' Chorus, and I remembered that he used to like to hear me play it on the piano or organ at Home.

As Sunday morning is the right and proper time to visit the notorious Petticoat Lane – in fact Sunday morning is said to be the only time of the week when this locality is really exciting – we went down there about 10 o'clock (Sunday March 31) and amused ourselves among the bustling, mercenary throng of all nationalities congregated in this long, narrow

lane. Harold also showed me Dirty Dick's famous tavern, but we were unable to go inside, as the place was closed for the Easter Holidays.

We came back to The Strand, via the Tube, from Aldgate and had dinner at the Savoy. It was a beautiful afternoon, so we strolled in Hyde Park for a few hours afterwards and then had tea at the "Popular" in Piccadilly. After tea, we went to the London Opera House, 'the finest theatre in LONDON,' but now unfortunately turned in to the Stoll Cinema.

Harold then had to leave me and return to St. John's Wood for the night as his pass expired that night.

Our last meeting was on the following Tuesday evening, when we were so terribly unfortunate as to arrive at "La Bohème" an hour after the performance had started – on account of the time of commencement having been altered to suit new Regulations regarding early closing.

He had not been able to get off on the Monday night as he had to study up some notes on lectures – he said that the only time they had at the School, for study, was in the evenings.

Of course, La Bohème was excellent and Jeanne Broila played Mimi. We both enjoyed it immensely. As soon as the curtain went down, we said goodbye as he had to hurry back to the School so as to be there before his pass ran out. I returned to France next day (Wednesday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>).

Shortly before Harold's return to France, after his course at the School, I received a postcard from him, worded as follows:-

*"I put them up (the stars) the day before yesterday. Everything fixed up at Horseferry Rd. 4 allotted, 3 deferred & 14 in the book. Am going down to Wales for a few days. We have to report back on the 8<sup>th</sup>. So won't be long out of France now. Am leaving my suitcase and a few things with Florrie and will put your letters in it..... Hoping to see you soon, Love, Harold. 28/6/18."*

Harold's duty on many occasions compelled him to go into the most dangerous positions. His first visit to the trenches, however, was quite an unauthorised one. It was while on the Gallipoli Peninsula: the Bridging Train were at Suvla Bay and (he said) were subject to very little shellfire and he and several other members of the Train were anxious to see the trenches, so one day they took 'French leave' and, after walking some distance, crawled along a communication tunnel right into the trenches and each fired a shot at the enemy. In France, of course, things were different and while in the 46<sup>th</sup> Battery he was usually employed at the O.P's (Observation Posts). These are located in any commanding position where it is possible to see the effect of the shots fired so as to be able to telephone back to the Battery to increase or shorten range, as the case may be and the O.P's are generally much in advance of the gun positions themselves.







BUCKINGHAM PALACE.

I join with my grateful people  
in sending you this memorial  
of a brave life given for others  
in the Great War.

*George R. I.*

Until yesterday I doubted the story that Fritz boiled down his dead soldiers in his corpsefactories, for oil and fat, etc. Now I'll believe the worst about him. I can guarantee this: When the Hun had been driven from a Somme town, parties began the unsavory job of clearing up the mess he had bequeathed: incidentally they had to bury a score of odoriferous Huns. One body, which was found sprawled across a footpath, went off with a "bang" when the Diggers touched it: some delightful Huns had actually mined their dead comrade who a few days previously was defending with them the humane ideals of his glorious Vaterland! The mine did its work: the four Aussies had to be taken to hospital.

8651, Cpl. R. O. Snape,  
Headquarters,  
Australian Corps,  
F R A N C E.

20/9/18.

This is an unfortunate piece of work, written just a month after Harold's death. It is uncharacteristically full of loathing for the enemy who had claimed Harold's life. Somewhere, I have seen the same story in print, but citing the Allied soldiers involved as being 'Billjims' (Belgians).

Bob has, at some later stage, cancelled it out by scrawling, "All rot", across the face of the document.

**No. 156**

**FRANCE  
31-10-18**

My dear All,

I'm afraid my last letter was a rather depressing affair, written during fitful moments of despair which sometimes get the better of me since the passing of dear old Harold.

Two letters from his friend, Lt. Moylan, have turned up lately but contained nothing except the fact that Harold had left a tunic at a certain address near London.

In yesterday's Daily Mail, Mr Hughes stated that he had made arrangements for all Australians to be returned within 9 months after the termination of the war. If I keep my present position I would probably be among the last to get home. I have a strong idea in my mind that somehow you will all want to come over here immediately travelling restrictions are removed. I will not offer any advice one way or the other. I am anxiously waiting the arrival of letters you have written after receipt of my cables. Was I too blunt with my particulars? I feel that I acted rightly in telling you everything without sentiment.

A letter from Aunt Maggie arrived the other day. She does not write cheerfully but can one blame her? Bert is right in the thick of things over here and has been acquitting himself splendidly according to her letter. When I think of Bert's fine wife and 3 little kids I can't help wondering what keeps the single men in Australia back? Are their paltry lives so valuable to the world?

But how thankful I should be to think that my Father & Mother have been at least spared the physical agonies of these noble people over here --- tho' I know you have your full share on mental anxiety.

In Paris again last time my hand was wrung by a widow (husband & son given for France) whose emotions got the better of her in the boulevards. These dear people cannot hide their feelings whether of joy or sorrow. I have seen a lot of refugees coming back to what is left of their villages – with queer collections of furniture on old fashioned carts & wheel- barrows. But they are all so eager to get back, poor things. Last month I was passing thro' a ruined village, silent as death & apparently quite deserted, when I came across a solitary middle-aged Frenchman with a few provisions in his arms. "But monsieur," I asked in astonishment, "surely you are not living here?" "But yes," he replied, "I am the first to return. Regard my house--- all buried."

Who says the French don't have any backbone? And they're so philosophical about it.

In the towns the Germans have systematically destroyed all factories. There will be a tremendous run on machinery after the war.

I am keeping in good health & pray you are all the same. Trusting to see all your dear faces again soon,

With very much love,

Yr. Lvg Son & brother

Bob.