

SOLDIERS' LETTERS.

23 Nov 1916

THE BOYCE BROTHERS.

Mrs. Catherine Boyce, of Tallangatta Valley, who has four sons on active service—Frank, Eddie, Tom and George—has just received a letter from Frank, who was in France on 14th September. Both Frank and Eddie (who will both be remembered as former postal employes in Tallangatta) have been through all the heavy fighting in France, and so far without injury. Frank is now a wireless operator. Tom and George were on Salisbury Plains when last heard of. Some evidently interesting information in Frank's letter has been blue-pencilled by the selfish censor. The letter states:—For the present we are enjoying a rest on a quiet front. I am living in a dug-out again, and am doing my own cooking, so am living very well, to make up for the hard fare where the fighting was so heavy. I had no idea what artillery bombardments were like until I went to the [Strafe that censor!] What I used to think was lively before was considered exceptionally quiet there. It was lovely to hear all our guns roaring. The din was deafening; the earth seemed to tremble beneath us; and the whole sky was continually lit-up by the flashes of the guns and bursting shells. At times I had close shaves, but my luck was in. Eddie also came through all-right, and he had a rougher time than I did. One of my Tallarook mates was wounded, but not seriously. We have had nice weather lately, but to-day there is a very cold wind blowing. The country is lovely and green here; only over yonder, where our guns are continuously pasting Fritz, are there any signs of desolation. It was wonderful to see the German prisoners coming away from the line after a charge. Poor beggars were hungry, thirsty, and dazed by the artillery, and were very glad to throw down their arms when our chaps got hand-to-hand with them. [More blue pencil, covering description of some effective material used by the British.] I think I missed one Australian mail the last time I was in action. I was away from my unit at the time, and did not hear that the mail was leaving until it was too late.