

Present Address

*27^a A & H
A. I. F*

VX 65607,

Padre L. Cula,

11th Aust. Army Hospital,

Advanced Field Workshops,

New Guinea Forces,

May 1st, 1944.

My dear Digger Pal,

It has not been possible for me to have a final church parade, nor to visit each one of you individually for the purpose of saying goodbye. I cannot, however, leave the regiment without addressing to you a few words of farewell as your Padre.

At the outset, I want to say what all of us must be feeling about the future of the regiment, no matter what traditions we have entered into, in war time, a greater vision of the Army in winning the war must accepted, so the inevitable had to take place with such-like regiments and their particular work. I know how sorry the Commanding Officer and his staff feel about it, but I do know this, that wherever you go, you will carry on the good work which you learned to accomplish as a member of the regiment. You are on your honour in these great days to do this, to maintain the highest standard of self-respect, the completest form of self-control, so that, at any critical moment, you shall not fail. Your life built on this basis, your future shall be worthy.

My term of office as your Padre for the past two years has been full of interest, friendliness and happiness, and I want you to know how very sorry I am to be leaving and giving up my work amongst

you. I am very conscious of many failings and shortcomings, and realise that I could have done much for the furtherance of your spiritual welfare, at the same time I am indeed thankful that through your comradeship and co-operation a great friendship has been cemented for all time, and that privilege is the only good thing that can come out of war. My prayer is that you will never lay the charge that you could have been a better man had I been a better Padre. What I am most thankful for was, that it did not matter what denomination we were, the whole regiment was a united happy family, that is what Army life does; although we are of divers tastes and thoughts, and give allegiance to our respective churches, it helps us to sink our denominational differences, live and work together as brothers in a common cause.

I shall always remember the great church services we had "in the field." I tried to show you the great need you have for the Church, and the Church's need for you, because she is Christ's world-wide catholic organisation for the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth. One thing is certain, if we are to look forward to a new, brave world after war, the basis must be a living and effective force in the world. It is a challenge for every one of us to accept, and by action in the Church of God we can help to build on the ruins—the city of God upon earth.

I shall remember the community sessions, quizzes, suppers. I have always enjoyed wandering into your huts, the air thick with digger language and smoke, and entering into your conversations. I feel that the personal contact was forged in this way. It was a great privilege to prepare so many of you for confirmations, and I trust that all who have been confirmed will become faithful soldiers and servants unto your life's end.

I am leaving hundreds of ready officers and other ranks alike; I shall long for the great friendship and the great times we have had together. I shall never forget you. Goodbye for the present, my heart is sad at leaving you. Whatever regiment I serve in, it could not be more friendly and co-operative than the wonderful 8th Cavalry Regt., A.I.F. God be with you and bless you wherever you are, in whatever unit you find yourself. My very best wishes to your home-folk, for I feel I know them through you. Give me a thought sometimes, for I will be thinking of you all; I will be pleased to have a note from you.

I cannot finish this farewell letter to you without expressing our very deep appreciation to each member of the Regimental Auxiliary for their interest, time and money they have so willingly given us; my welfare work in the regiment was considerably helped by the Auxiliary, and to a very large extent made camp life more bearable than it would have been.

May the time be not too far distant when we shall be wearing our civvy clothes again — the war finished, the victory won, and peace in the world again, and have the pleasure of meeting all my digger pals at a reunion of the Regiment.

Good luck, and God bless you.

Believe me to be,

Your Padre who has been a Digger too,

LESLIE CULA.