

Harce
7/7/18

Dear Jack, Have been waiting
an opportunity of answering
yours of ss. 3 B. and it
has arrived at last;
we are out for a breather
of a few days tho. still
in the war zone ready for
emergencies - so liable to
receiving orders at any moment.
We are still in the 'land of
the departed' as one might
call the area in which
the only traces of civilisation are
deserted villages, & crops
that have been sown by
man's hand & which are now
overrun with poppies & cornflowers
as tho Nature were trying

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touch up the picture & hide
its decay, dullness, & the
charge its atmosphere of
sadness & misery again.

I think the worst of our
experiences are the sights
of refugees fleeing from their
homes, which they have had
to leave in a hurry, then
finding these homes pillaged
& burned & made out. Passively,
the evidence of the child life, in
toys & scrap books scattered about
inspects me most. Death &
pain & suffering on our
own fellow's part are bad enough,
but these other things are worse!

But, to be more cheerful
one is proud to be a "denkum",
to be able to wear the
uniform of these fellows who
are ~~unhappy~~ ^{unhappy} tradition that

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will be proud ~~to~~ⁱⁿ the
history of Australians.

It was a pity that I
missed Duncan Hall in
Oxford - there was yet an
opportunity of seeing him,
as one or two friends I have
made in that place give me
reason for visiting it whenever
the opportunity does occur.
I might interest you to know that
chief among my Oxford friends
is the Assistant Secretary of
the Canada Press, J. de M.
Johnston, M.A., who has done
a lot of work in Egypt in
connection with the Exploration
Fund. As for the Secretary of the
Press, my acquaintance with
him is more on the social side
for his family took me in.
I've heard more than one

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pleasant meal with them
at their house opposite
Madgale College, as well as
afternoon teas, in the secretary's
room in the Press Buildings,
with his three daughters
who since the war have helped
him. On a couple of occasions
Johnston tried to arrange that
I should meet Sir Walter Raleigh
at tea, but something has
occurred to upset the plan.
Someday, however, I'll get
some leave, or another "Blight-"
I'll be able to meet that
great person. I believe he is
one of the most interesting figures in
Oxford life, at the present
time.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely
R. G.

H. B. Barker