

Frank's Letters to family 1918

And letters relating to the death of Frank.

Also Frank Evatt docs - 3 Thelma

undated, but from 1918, and to Bert

[unidentified by date, and only part of page:

who was killed at Ypres on September 26th 1917 and Gunner WH Wilson (Arts II) who was badly wounded on the same day. Small was a High School man and graduated in 1916. He was one of my best friends and one of the finest chaps I've ever met. He was in the same year as Jock Morgan and "Skit" Roseby and I think some notice might be given to his having fallen. His people's (W Small Esq) address is Macleay, Clarence River, NSW.

The eight of us who left Australia together - Varsity men - have been sadly scattered. Wilson is still in an English hospital. Roseby, Rodgers and Braddon are in the 2nd Division Stuckey is in the 4th and Brodie and myself in the 1st.

I have been lucky with mail of late - dozens of Australian letters came last week and many papers, English and home, have been arriving.

There is an absolute scarcity of news. We are in action on a very quiet front and are

1 Jan 1918 cards to mother

Two post cards of Rouen, Eglise and Pontois, with message

Dearest Mother, Passed through here today on the way up to the line. I sent a little souvenir – a rather pretty calendar – from here today and hope it arrives. We had a few hours leave in the town – a fine place, Fondlest love,
Frank

to mother 6.1.18 in France

[93]

France, 6.1.1918.

Dearest Mother,

On Thursday last I joined up with the ??? Battery (18 pounders) which is in action on a very quiet front, much different to the last place I was at. I left England on the 27th and the Base on the 31st and on the Journey up to the line

we had a happy spell at Rouen on New Year's Day from which I sent you a little silk calendar novelty - it may or may not arrive.

I am comfortable and quite at home in my new surroundings; the cold is at times heartbreaking but we are well fed and quartered and that makes up for a lot. I have already met some pals in other batteries - I saw the **Welch** brothers Frank and Sep - who are in the 106th Howitzers and I had a long yarn with them. The former is a very close friend of dear Ray's. I don't know whether I told you that I met Doug **Bates** at Codford Station, England, while entraining for Southampton. He was on picquet, is in the infantry and expects to go to France shortly.

So far no more mail has arrived, nor parcels either; one appreciates the value of good hand-knitted socks in this weather. But though I wrote to Ettie to send me some from my box at Aunt's place, I came away from England before they arrived. However they should reach me. The issue are no bon. in the winter.

Best wishes to all, Your loving son, Frank.

to mother 13.1.18, the Batt. 1st F.A.B., France.

[94 - 1]

Dearest Mother,

Luck has been coming my way this week in regard to mail. First there are 6 letters of yours, 20.10, 27.10, 3.11, 10.11, 17.11, and 23.11 as well as about 20 others from different people. Note that not one letter since 30th Sept. when you first started to address them c/o aunt Sophie) has failed to reach me. It is highly satisfactory in every way and as it is a pleasure for Ettie to send them on to me, please continue to address them thusly.

I also got my first, and, up till now, only parcel since leaving home 13 months ago. It was from Aunt Eva and contained a plum pudding, chocolates, sweets, fags and a lot of papers and mags. - tres bon, I can assure you. Also a registered letter from George enclosing a M.O. for £1. This is payable at Earl's Court so I am sending it back to Ettie to cash and put it with the other money I have in London.

Elaine **Pitt** wrote to me. She seems very sad and depressed, mentioning the death of Eryl and a letter from one of dear Ray's friends to Enone [could be Enorie?]. [Elaine Pitt born 1883, St Leonards, parents were Charles B and Ada; other children include Haidie 1880, Jole Eva 1881 [maybe is Iola], Gladys 1885, Nigel 1886, Eryl 1888, Howard L 1889,] [Iole E Pitt married Walter M Dixon in 1905] [can't trace Eryl in war graves, or roll, or deaths in NSW]

Some bulletins of Jack's which were addressed to the 1st F A.B. before I was transferred to the TM.B's have Just come along to me now that I have Joined the

1st Brigade. They were June and July issues, and have probably been lying at 1st Brigade Post Office for months. These things in addition to a number of Sunday Times and a large number of letters.

The life is still going well here and now that the winter is on its second lap, it won't be long before the warm weather and all that makes the world look happier is back again. For at times things are very cheerless and bleak over here. However, I am lucky to be holding well in blankets and warm clothes and up till now have avoided colds, influenza,

[95 - 2]

I do trust you are in the best of health and will try and be as cheerful as possible and to look forward to happier days. My best regards to **Bert**, Clive and Jack. I hope the first two have been successful at their exams.

My fondest love, Yours affectionately, Frank.

PS You had heard from me in hospital when last you wrote.

13 January 1918 1st Battery AFA France to Geo

Dear old George, Two letters of yours to hand dated 19.10.17 and 19.11.17 the latter enclosing a very welcome MO for £1. Many thanks I will send it to Ettie to cash and place to my credit at Cox's Bank.

I am glad you are back at Sydney. You had a pretty stiff stretch of it at Leeton and deserve some recognition for it.

Political life must be very interesting in Australia at present. Have been reading the cables re Hughes hanging on to office and Holman's scathing remarks on this. It seems to me Billy is placing himself in a very ignominious position.

Things are nice and quiet where we are, and despite the cold, snow, mud etc we are very happy and comfortable, being in a good "home". It's a treat to be back amongst the nags and 18 pounders again. I can ride very well now managing to get plenty of practice. In England the gunners were never given much opportunity to ride and I could hardly sit on the saddle.

I have been lucky with mail in the last few days getting all letters up to the end of November including 6 from the mater and a very nice parcel from Aunt Eva - the only one by the way which has reached me since leaving Sydney.

Also your clippings and 3 'Suns' have arrived all of which is very satisfactory to me. The idea of sending letters c/o Aunt is a splendid one. Every letter sent by mother since she started this system has arrived.

Best love to Stella and my bunch of nieces. Yours fraternally, Frank.

1st Battery, A.F.A., France. 20th Jan., 1918, to mother, Hermes photo

[96]

Dearest Mother,

There is no news of any interest since I last wrote, so this won't be a long note. No more mail has arrived; but the other day 2 Hermes (August and November) came along. The latter had a photo of myself! (which I don't think resembles me very much) which I was very surprised and pleased to see. There was also one of Jock **Morgan** whom I haven't seen since leaving home

In your last letter you mention receiving a snap from Mrs. **Welch**. Sep and Frank are in the 106th Battery (Howitzers), and a few weeks back I looked them up and had a yarn with them. I think I told you, Sep showed me the snap when he was in the Trench Mortars with me and he told me he would write and ask them to send you one.

Ettie has been writing and sending me papers regularly, but some chocolates and other packages which she sent have not yet arrived.

There is an absolute dearth of news and nothing very exciting or interesting in these parts. Letter writing is not a very enjoyable occupation under such conditions. However, be content with the knowledge that I am in good health, cheerful and comfortable which after all is something, is it not?

Best wishes to all, with fondest love, Frank.

France, in the field, to Bert, 20.1.18

1st Battery AFA

Dear old Bert,

Was very please early in the week to receive a letter from you (13.11.17) and an account of the College xxxxx. Also later in the week two Hermes (August and November issues). Was rather surprised to see my photo in the latter. But the way the Varsity rag is some "get up" isn't it so. I think I've read both from cover to cover. Bob Aspinall, who was killed at Ypres in July was the Medical Officer of this Brigade (1st FAB) xxx the chaps in the Battery say that he was the whitest and the best of men. He played half back for the Bxxx

I haven't seen Jock Morgan xx he left the old Waxxx [?Warren]. I heard that he had the bad luck to lose his leg, but I don't know if its true or not.

I also observe that **Marie Erhard** has been distinguishing herself in the Oval. She is axx bit of sprinter.

By the way if possible I would like to xx xx xx x xx

very easy and content. The winter on the whole has been a mild one. Frost, snow rain and mud of course, but not in the bitter quantities of last [year crossed out] winter (I only experienced the latter part of it but it was a pretty rotten part even though I was in Blighty).

Well I do hope you have the usual success at the final.

Best of luck. Yours to an ash Frank

1st Battery, France, 27th Jan. 1918.

Dearest Mother,

Again, there is little news of any importance to tell you except that we are still in the same place and things are just as they were a week ago. I am, as usual, as fit as the proverbial fiddle.

During the week a parcel arrived from Aunt Hannah sent on to the Battery by Ettie - containing a tin of Arnotts, some sweets and fags. I am writing to thank her this mail.

This afternoon (Sunday) went to the 12th Battery 'waggon Lines where I saw Skit Roseby and "Bunny" Rodgers who you will remember left Australia with me.

Am writing this note in the 1st Brigade Y.M.C.A. hut. There is a splendid gramophone with some surprisingly fine records - La Gioconda", Martha., "Romeo and Juliet". A really splendid aria is ~Oh so pure. from Martha - a tenor solo - it is well worth buying.

Looking forward to the next batch of letters from home, Best wishes to all,

Your loving son, Frank.

3/2/18 Sunday, to mother

In the field, 1st FAB France

dearest Mother, yesterday another letter from you dated 30/11/17 arrived as well as one from George of the same date and some more. Well I was surprised to see **Clive** do so splendidly - he is a dark horse and no mistake. I think the idea of Duntroon is excellent - it will be a great life and there will be good prospects. But of course you and he will have decided before this reaches you. It is certainly a hard choice. Whichever Clive takes on, he must stick to it, and not want to come away to this game. I'm sure that dear old Ray wanted Clive to go to Duntroon - he said so often to me.

George wrote a long letter telling me all the news. You all appear to have been keen on having **conscriptio**n - but I consider the principle of the thing an

outrage on democracy and self-liberty, and am well satisfied with the result of the referendum.

There is nothing much to tell you. As usual I am in the best of health. In a few days we move back for a bit of a spell.

Best regards to all, Your loving son,

Frank

France, Sunday, 10th Feb. 1918.

addressed to Ellimo

Dearest Mother,

Since last writing we have been on the move and at present the division is resting some distance back of the line. The battery is billeted on some beautiful Country - it should be a grand sight in summer. ~

A few days ago some Australian letters were sent on to me by Ettie. These were dated up till 19th December. I think the plan of sending them per Ettie a very sound one. They always reach me so regularly. There were two from you (9/12 and 15/12). I think from the time you first started addressing them this way (since August) that I have received without exception everyone - in fact I'm pretty well sure of it. There were also letters from Bert, George, Aunt Flo. A funny thing that during the 14 months I've been away I've never heard from Grandma.

I'm very glad that **Clive** is to start at the Duntroon College. Its a splendid scheme and I'm sure he will enjoy the life. I sent on the list of results to Uncle George.

You have received the photos I sent from Dorchester. ~: I don't think I've grown so very much but I have put on a great deal more weight. Probably the fact that I was standing against two dwarfs made me look taller

I don't think it would be any use enquiring about the folios that Ray had sent on. If they were paid for they would have been certainly sent on to you. So they have doubtless been purloined by someone or have else gone down to the bottom on some ill-fated ship. The 20th Battalion officer could not enlighten me on the subject. I wouldn't worry about them if I were you.

I am as usual in the pink. Since Joining this battery' I have done quite a lot of horse riding - a great pastime and am now quite an accomplished rider. While writing this I am on stable picquet while the others are playing football -

mais ce ne fait rien.

Your loving son, Frank

PS Have entered my name for leave to Paris but will have to get some money from London. I'm glad you don't want me to alter allotment, not an easy matter to save 2/- per day.

PS I don't know whether I'm right in using the old address but no doubt they will be forwarded on. F.

France. 17.2.18, to mother

Dearest Mother,

I'm still in the same place, viz., spelling somewhere back of the line. There is little to write about - here there is the same daily routine of stables, riding, gun park, etc. with little or nothing to vary it. I am as usual quite well and very comfortable.

A bitterly cold snap the last few days has reminded us that winter is by no means over. Today there wasn't a cloud and the sun shone bright in the bluest of skies - but the temperature would probably be some degrees beneath zero.

Today (Sunday) a church parade in the little village close by followed by communion - a welcome break in the usual daily routine.

A few days ago we were all issued with parcels from the Lady Mayoress's Patriotic Fund (Vic.) - these were splendid - mine containing fags, honey, ham pate, butter, toffee, etc. etc.

I had a letter from Russ today he is still on the permanent staff at a Command Depot in England. Best love to all,

Your loving son, Frank

17.2.18, France to Geo

addressed to Ellimo [endorsed Robertson]

Dear George, Since I last wrote to you (13.2.18) I have received two of your usual breezy and newsy letters (dated 30.11 and 13.12) There is little news from this part of the world. Our division is out spelling 'somewhere' behind the line. The battery is located in a very pretty spot (exceptionally so in the summer I should say). Here one would hardly know there was a war but for the occasional rumble of a distant bombardment or, more frequently, the passage overhead of a squadron of Gothas when anti aircraft guns, searchlights and whistling 'shrap' disturb the air.

There is little to break the daily routine of stables and gunpark, riding and grooming. Three half holidays a week and a Sunday morning church parade afford some variation.

I am highly pleased that Clive is going to Duntroon and no doubt whatever that he'll enjoy the life and make good. I hope too that **Bert** will be successful as usual. Best love to Stella and the girls. Yours affect. Frank.

Sun. 24.2.1918. France, to mother

Dearest Mother,

Another week has passed with absolutely nothing of any importance happening. We are still out resting but may go back into the line `any day now.

There has been some beautiful weather - an early Spring without doubt. Last Monday a party of us from the battery rode to a football match (1st F.A.B. v. 1st Battalion) about 10 kilometres away. It was a gorgeous afternoon and the low lying Flemish country specked here and there with small villages and thick woods was a never to be forgotten sight. Far away to the north could be seen a mount on which a famous monastery stands and to the west another whence a grand old town dominates miles and miles of the flat country. Both are landmarks for the whole of the province. The entire view was one on which a poet's soul might feast for hours and the idea of a brutal warfare would be farthest from the mind.

No Australian letters have come since I last wrote, but some "Suns" from George have reached me. Ettie writes regularly and the other day I also received a little copy of Omar Khayyam from a friend of Ettie's - a young girl whom I met in London and to whom I spoke knowingly of Omar though I don't suppose I'd read more than a line or two of the Rubayat. She of course is crazy about it, and it certainly is very fine. For instance the futility of regret

The moving finger writes; and having writ
moves on nor all thy piety and wit
shall lure it back to cancel half a line
nor all thy tears wash out a word of it

The old Persian was apparently fond of the vin rouge

And much as wine has played the infidel
and robbed me of the robe of Honour - well,
I often wonder what the Vintners buy
One half so precious as the Goods they sell

I shall be looking forward to some home letters this week' Your loving son,

Frank.

Wed. 27.2.18, to mother [seems to be a further sheet of the above]

The same afternoon that I started this letter I got two Australian letters - one from you and one from Aunt Maggie. On the following morning we moved out and are now in the line again after a spell of a little less than three weeks. Things [102 - 2] are still as quiet as yet but most think it is a sort of a hush before the storm, but that of course remains to be seen.

Thanks so much for enclosing the examination results. Cec. **Roper** certainly did very well - two distinctions and two credits. I notice a Fort Street chap won the Renwick Scholarship again. By now I expect **Bert** will be hard at it. I do hope he has his usual success.

Do you ever see **Elsie Hewitt** at all? I saw Eric passing by in one of the larger towns back of the line. He was gone before I had a chance to stop him but I am sure it was he. By the way, wasn't he wounded? I distinctly remember seeing his name in the casualty list. He may only have gone as far as one of the Base Hospitals.

Best love to you all, ,Frank.

France. 4.3.18.

Dearest Mother,

Since I wrote my last letter I received another batch of Australian letters dated up to 8.1.18. There were two from you enclosing two from **Bert** and a few others. Also an old parcel sent 14.9.17 to my original address (1st F.A.B.) turned up. It was from you and contained some very welcome items, socks, balaclava, sweets, etc. Russell Marks is still in Blighty. He is a permanent staff man and has some job in the Q.H. store of a Command Depot where he gets leave regularly. **Clive** appears to be very busy and seldom at home. I think he should enjoy the life at Duntroon - there will be good prospects after this war.

I fancied Tom Gray could be in France. I shall look him up if ever near the 34th battalion. The cold is pretty bad but conditions in France were far worse last winter for all I believe. Certainly it was a more severe season than this though I am the other side of the channel.

From what I can gather the atmosphere of the old street is not nearly so good as in days of yore. I hope you won't still be there when this gets home.

There's little of any interest to tell you. At present I am an acting driver. Waggon lines are a real home but all the same I prefer the gun pits.

Best love to all, Frank.

France. 10.3.18.

Dearest Mother,

I have had no more letters since I wrote last week. As I told you I am an acting driver and with the battery waggon lines. Its a very fine home where we are - everything comfortable and convenient. A driver's job is not half bad. Two horses and two sets of harness to look after and an occasional trip to the gun pits. It beats me why they get 1/- a day for the job. Of course its not nearly so cushy when big things are doing - neither is anyone's for that matter.

I think the winter has just about petered out. At present all is bright sunshine and warmth and likely to continue so.

I suppose **Clive** by now has commenced his course at Duntroon. I am looking forward to hear how he likes the game - also to the results of **Bert's** final exam. I do hope he maintains his usual position.

Paris leave has been temporarily cut out but it may start again any date.

Best wishes to all, Your loving son,

France, 15.3.18, 1st Battery AFA, [Church Army Recreation Hut]

Dear old **Bert**, I have to acknowledge your letter 18.12.17 which arrived a fair time ago and four notes included in the maters letters (29.12, 6.1, 12.1, 19.1.18) - for all of which many thanks. I wish you could find time to continue your breezy, newsy and cheerful, little scrawls. You have no idea how they brighten one up. You appear to have been swotting hard. I do hope you xxxxx final with the usual success.

I'm glad mother is leaving Bella Vista - by the way isn't there something wrong with this name of late years. What a pity that tight fisted land owners and jerry builders can turn a quiet refined street into a noisy slum. After all though, it will be a place of happy memories - do you remember the game of "crick" in the back yard - old Ray was so keen on it. And 'Sunny' Davis - 'get a pennorth o ice for Mrs Davis 6 Grantham St - d'y'ear? I wonder where Sunny could be located these days!

It's a good idea having the place renovated. As you say it has been long due.

Things are much brighter over here now. The winter has finished and warm weather and bright skies make life much more pleasant. At present I am acting as a driver - and quite like the job - only temporarily of course. The waggon lines are a very comfortable home where we are now - and there is not nearly the amount of work the gunners have up in the gun pits.

I am well - in the best of health. Looking forward to hear from you 'tout de suite'

Affectionately yours,

Frank

PS 16.3.18, Have just received another letter from you, 27.1.18, enclosing some very interesting cuttings and xxx

France Sun 17 March 1918, to mother

Dearest Mother

Since I last wrote I have had three more letters from you as well as some from **Bert** and **Clive** and others.

It is good to get letters regularly and addressing: them the way you do is the soundest of ideas.

So at last you're leaving Bella Vista. After all it's high time for it was much too big for you and Clive alone. And Grantham St. seems to have slipped back a lot in the last 3 or 4 years. It was a quiet refined street once - in the days when the name Bella Vista was a fact and not a joke as it now is.

By now **Clive** is well in Duntroon. You must miss him, but of course he will have some sort of vacation every now and then. I do hope you won't be lonely ~ anyhow the war can't last much longer and I will soon be home again to cheer things up .

I am looking forward to hearing how Bert got on in his final. He is deserving of the highest success. I think **Clive** did very well in the LC considering he had 2 exams to contend with - he must have worked well during the war (?). I am afraid I used to nag at him in my letters about tearing into his work.

This afternoon I was at the 101st Howitzer Battery Position on duty and by a queer coincidence struck Lew Samuells. -- Jack's old office pal. He happened to hear me mention my name to another officer while in their dugout and asked me whence I hailed from. I knew him immediately. He has'nt heard from John since he got some fags from him at Pozieres in 1916, and asked to be remembered to him. Don't forget to tell Jack. [106 - 2]

Have just had a letter from a girl friend of Ettie's. She tells me that Uncle is now a Major-General (next rank above Brig.-General to which a Surgeon-General corresponds).

I haven't heard from Ettie for weeks. I don't know why for she usually writes most regularly. They are without a maid at present so that may be the reason. Best wishes to all and sundry,

Frank.

France. 30.3.18, to mother, re leaving Bella Vista

Dearest Mother,

Have not had any letters from you since I last wrote but **Bert** has sent a couple containing interesting cuttings. There have been addressed to the battery. I think it would be better to address them to Earl's Court as usual for then I could always be sure of getting mail wherever I might chance to be, when not with the Battery.

The Brigade medical Officer is now none other than Dr. E. P. Barbour. He took over about a week ago. I saw him passing by our dugout the other day and he does'nt seem to have altered much.

Have you left Bella Vista I have been addressing your letters to Shirley Road, Wollstonecraft. You will get them without any trouble, even if you are not staying with George.

Aunt has been unable to get a servant and Ettie who is doing, all the housework has'nt much time to write often. But she never fails to send papers every day.

I heard from a friend of Ettie's that Uncle had received promotion to the rank of Major-General but Ettie did'nt mention it. Anyhow its only his due for Uncle's long service and great work has been poorly rewarded in my opinion.

Things are still pretty quiet with us but there is bad news from further down. But most of us are cheerful and hopeful despite the depressing news. I am as usual still fit and in the best of health, but getting fatter than ever. Have struck members of the old Warren crowd who are scattered throughout every division of the A.I.F.

Best regards to all, Frank.

PS The enclosed cutting might be of some interest and amusement to Bert and yourself. It is a purely typical one, F

France. 7.4.18.

Dearest Mother,

A large batch of Australian mail this afternoon contained 3 letters from you. Your letters are to me always the most longed for and interesting. I spoke when in England of entering the **Indian** army but have long since dropped the idea. A commission is of course very tempting but 10 years service in India is far from being, so. A gunner in the A.F.A. will do me for the duration - it is not a bad life by any means.

Tomorrow we go on the road again probably somewhere near where the big strafe is. I hope you are not worrying very much about me. Try and be as cheerful as possible. I am content and happy and in the best of health.

Captain E. P. Barbour, M.O. for the Brigade sent for me the other day and had a short yarn. He said that H.V.E. was one of his particular friends, but has given up all hope of hearing from him. He is a fine fellow - asked after your health, etc.

A letter from Aunt Flo which arrived yesterday tells me that you will be staying with her for a month. You deserve and should have a good long rest and I hope that now you will avail yourself of the opportunity now that it has come. B.V. should soon let and you won't have anything to trouble you.

The London Evatts have relet "Wayside" which Ettie tells me is looking beautiful. The Surgeon-General has been in the country for some time and Aunt and Ettie were for a few weeks at Camberley.

Your loving son, Frank

7 April 1918, France to Geo

Dear George, Included in a goodly number of Australian letters for me to day was one from you dated Feb 18th. Glad to hear you have had a good holiday & a well earned rest at the Mountains.

I wrote some moths ago from England saying that I was considering the question of a commission in the Indian army - I have long since given up any idea of taking it on - I don't think I would care for soldiering as a permanent job under Imperial Army Regulations. The comparatively free and easy life of a gunner in the AFA will do me for the duration and four months afterwards.

Tomorrow we go on the road, bound doubtless for the scene of much strife. It should certainly provide a maximum of excitement and work from what I can gather.

The Ropers seem to have done excellently at various exams, but I think **Clive's** all round record for the year was splendid. I think he should be very successful at Duntroon. The old General regards the Evatt family as of an essentially military character, and is delighted that **Clive** is going to Duntroon.

Mother tells me that she has at last left 'Bella vista'. I think it quite time for it is ridiculously large for her and letting part of it is a very unsatisfactory scheme. I have been addressing all her letters for some months c/o your address - s that I don't think many of them should go astray.

Best love to Stella & the girls, Yours affectionately, Frank

Card 16.4.18

addressed to Ellimo

France. 18.4.18.

addressed to Ellimo

Dearest Mother.

Have had no time whatever for writing the last twelve days or so - having been continually on the go - 22 hours out of the 24 as it were. But the whole has been an interesting and novel experience. Our division is at present mobile and incidentally we see a lot of the country moving from one front to another, without much waste of time.

The bad news must be very depressing to those at home but it would wring one's heart to be here and see. A few miles from where we were out spelling and at that time one could hardly have known there was a war on so quiet and peaceful everything seemed. Now **brutal warfare** wages there in all its reality. It is difficult to realise the fact.

In a village not far from the battery position -there are some pathetic sights. The inhabitants were evidently forced to flee without a second's notice and even their most valued possessions were left behind. Shells have shattered what a week or two ago were happy homes. Our own troops eager for salvage have strewn and trampled clothing, books, and valuable tapestries. The inns reek with spilt 'vin ordinaire'. Crucifixes, rosaries, effigies, and other religious symbols so common to the French home are scattered in all directions. within a few days everything of any value use or interest has been salvaged by the troops - and now I believe there is little left worth having. I would have liked to have got some of the fine hand made tapestries and other beautiful needlework which a few managed to obtain - but was unable to do so.

Our guns are in the paddocks of a French farmhouse in which the old peasant and his son are still remaining, though his womenfolk have gone further back. We have been having beaucoup grub, fowls, rabbits, potatoes in galore, and plenty of beef all n backsheesh over and above our usual issues.

There is not much sleep these days, what with gun-pit duty, shoots, and standing to every night, there is little time left for the blankets. However, I am as usual O.K.

Best wishes to all, Frank.

France 25.4.18 to Bert

Dear old Bert, I had two letters from you in the last batch of Australian mail which arrived a few weeks back (5.2 and 19.2.18) as well as several selections of interesting clippings. Many thanks for the 'Bulley' Red Pages - I wish you would send me them regularly. Also I wonder if Jack could send the Sydney Morning Herald occasionally.

During the past weeks we have been continually on the go. The division is mobile at present and incidentally travels all over the country from one xxx to another one we're having quite a time?? At the time of writing our guns are in the xxx [paddock (dairy)] of a French farm house vacated by the owners when the Huns pushed back our gallant Tommies. As for grub and high living, we have never fared better but sufficient sleep is an unknown quantity. '505' [most likely 'SOS'] gunxx, shoots' and a 3 hours stand to in the early hours of the morning are not exactly conducive to uninterrupted slumber.

Dr EPB was the 1st FAB Medical Officer for several weeks but appears to have left it, for I see a new 'quack' has taken over. He sent for me and had a bit of a yarn some time back, has given up all hope of hearing from you, would like to have a copy of the new 'Hermes'

[could be the second page]:

however have their own opinions about the prowess of the Tommies and don't worry much about what the Jingo press says; these remarks of course only refer to the men in the line - infantry - or the '**diggers**' as they are called.

I am anxious to know the results of final and am looking for them when xxxx

Best of good luck

Yours to an ash

Frank

28.4.18 PS a letter from you today (5.3.18) and two March letters from the dear mater. May the best of successes have been yours at the exam. Am still OK though things are beginning to 'roughen up' in our direction. F.

27 April 1918 to MOTHER. France

The padre you heard from was the CE Chaplain at the Base from whom I received a cross, a blessing and the sacrament the last time was there.

Dearest Mother, Another letter from you yesterday (24.2.18) You were still working on the old place - I do hope you haven't been overdoing it. Certainly a great heap of stuff must have accumulated through all the years. It must hurt a little in one way to leave the dear old house, the garden etc; but of course its impossible to stay on there by yourself and the street has 'slipped' a great deal of late years. One day when this rotten show is over and we are able to rally together again a cottage in Manly, Mosman or the Shore would be a good idea. "B.V.' painted and repaired should never be empty for long.

I have been getting occasional welcome 'Bully' from Jack and interesting cuttings and pars from **Bert**. Do you think it would be much trouble to send along the 'Mail' now and then. Reading matter is an unknown quantity at present, though in normal times over here, this is not so. But one thing of which

there is no dearth is grub. Never have we fared better before. Each gun detachment has a mess of its own and does its own cooking - and believe me there are some attractive bills of fare - to satisfy even the most exacting gourmand. Such things are of course only possible in sectors recently evacuated by the civilians. The whole thing is very sad - you can see where the struggling farmers have ploughed the fields and clipped their hedges for the Spring - and now back of the line, the unfortunate refugees eke out a hand to mouth existence. It is very hard. I dont think the people of Northern France will be eager for war for many years to come.

Looking forward to hearing the results of Bert's exam. I sincerely hope he's in the usual place.

Best regards to grandma, Aunt Minnie, Jack, George and the others. Keep always well and healthy like Yours lovingly Frank.

PS Two more letters from you 3rd and 10th March cam today, 28.4.18. Best love,
[endorsed Irwin??]

Gun-Pits France 5.5.18, to mother

Dearest Mother,

Another month is here - May - best and brightest of all months, May - when the world seems cheerier and things seem more hopeful. And here, where I write this - because war has not been waged long enough to mar and defile the land, May and all its glories are possible to behold and drink in. but then the impression of beauty is destroyed when guns boom and shells scream and crash; and **the cruel reality of war** is once more forced upon the mind.

There is little to write about, though the life just at present is full of action and one can hardly complain of boredom - the Bosche sees to that, when we dont! The battery is in action at frequent intervals throughout the day and night, and these "shoots" are to me the most enjoyable and looked for periods of the day.

No more mail from you since I last wrote but some "Bullies" from Jack and clippings from George. But still looking forward to some more letters shortly.

Best regards to all,

Yours lovingly.

Frank

11 May First Aust Div Artillery information

Note to 1st FABrigade, re No 31079 Gnr FS Evatt, inform him that a cable has been dispatched to Australia inquiring into the circumstances of his case, from Staff Captain 1st Aust Div Arty.

France . 18.5.18.

Dearest Mother,

Just now weather conditions here are very reminiscent of sunny N.S.W. - glorious hot days, cloudless skies. There's no doubt that France in the summer time takes some beating. And at the back of the deserted farm house in which we are quartered are the remnants of garden once well cared for, now neglected. But the flowers have so far managed to survive and it is a pretty but indeed pathetic sight. It is not difficult to imagine how this same place will look after long months of fighting - a desolate God-forsaken appearance scarred and pitted by all the devilish devices of the war.

No more letters from you since I last wrote but some should soon come along. They generally arrive in fortnightly batches. Am always eagerly looking forward to news from home. I hope you have been getting all my letters - I write fairly regularly and have been addressing c/o Shirley Road for many weeks. So that not too many should go astray.

Ettie, Aunt and Uncle are well. Have at last obtained a maid after much worry and trouble without one.

As usual in the best of health,

Best regards to all, Your loving son, Frank.

In the Field. 1st Battery. May 26th 1918, to mother

Dearest Mother.

Three letters to hand from you dated 16th, 23rd and 30th March and a fair number of others. They certainly contain some interesting news items. So there is a nephew at last - that is really good news and Jack must indeed be a proud father. I must take an interest in my namesake.

And Bert too - How glad I am that he has attained the usual excellent results ... He has certainly had some academic career and will go high in the world of law I trust. He writes telling me he intends to stay with the CJ for 12 months - a very happy plan, don't you think? He certainly deserves all that comes his way in the nature of a successful career and no one is more pleased than me that such will be his.

That little calendar did arrive. I was doubtful for I left it in the hands of the shopkeeper I bought it from at Rouen who promised to send it. It seemed rather pretty and the dates being in French, interesting as a souvenir from "la belle France". And now to yourself. If you hav'nt gone away somewhere for a good long holiday do so immediately. Heaven alone knows that it has been due to you for years and now you have the opportunity don't fail to have a long rest. You are too considerate for others mater and not nearly enough for yourself. I'd feel much happier if I knew you were in perfect health and wer'nt wearing yourself down by overdoing things.

So Geoff Pike has left at last. If you could get Aunt Flo or Dot to send his regimental address I'll get in touch with him and if possible look him up when he arrives in France. The Engineers are not a bad mob, but the Field Artillery for mine where a chap does 'box on. directly with the Bosche. If Pike gets a Divisional Signalling Coy. (branch of the Engineers) he will have a better job, I fancy, than an ordinary soldier.

I was highly amused at Bert's account of the launch episode when Geoff sailed. As the chaps over here would say in their rough. manner "What a gutser".

So Clive is settling; down well to barrack and college life. I hope he intends to take an interest in sport. I was always a dud in that line - dabbling in all games and excelling; in none and have often regretted it. Especially over here where there is little or nothing to sustain one's interest in the world of sport.

Aunt Sophie has a sprightly young servant of 58 years. Ettie saw the age on her meat ticket. What a terrible war when even a woman's age cannot be concealed. Best wishes to all and do have that long awaited holiday, Your loving son,

In the Field, 10 June 1918

Little of event has happened since I last wrote (May 27) & I have had no mail from you since, though the usual amount of English mail has arrived. Summer is now at its best over here and the war apart, life is well worth living. The countryside, as yet unmarred by signs of strife, looks beautiful – vastly differing from the battlefields of normal trench warfare.

I wrote to Bert a week or so ago congratulating him & I must also offer my felicitations to Jack this mail. I haven't heard from Clive since he started life at Duntroon but maybe he will soon write.

By mere accident I cam across this in a 'Daily Sketch' sent me by Ettie. They evidently did not notice for Ettie didn't say anything about it. Rather interesting – don't you think.

This letter is ridiculously short I know – but there is nothing to write of – and I don't want to bore anyone with 'shop' stuff about what we did and what we didn't do.

Am as usual in splendid health and feeling very fit and rather tanned by the last few weeks of bright sunshine.

Sincerely hoping you are having a quiet and comfortable time & not doing too much. Best wishes to all . Your loving son, Frank

In the Field, 16th June, 1918, to mother

addressed to Ellimo

Dearest Mother,

Another Australian mail has Just arrived including with a batch of others, two from yourself. Am so glad to hear you have at last taken a well earned spell at the glorious Blue Mountains. It makes me homesick to think of dear old Wentworth Falls, Leura and Katoomba and the good times we had together. ~There's lots of good fish in the sea. but I think one would go a very long way to find places of greater beauty and grandeur. For mine, I don't wish to go further from Sydney than the Mountains when all this rotten show is finished. Aunt Flo says that you are to stay at "Whangaron". for a month and promises a good time. You must never miss an opportunity of a decent holiday. By the way, I hope the weather did'nt quite spoil things for you and Aunt at Leura.

As you say, events over here are not calculated to make one very cheerful. It is ridiculous for people not to recognise and admit the ability of the Bosche, as a strategist and fighter; and the passive optimism of wise ones who aver that victory must be ours without making every possible effort for that victory is very tiresome. Personally I am confident that the Huns will not carry all before them, but it may take many months for the tide to turn.

But enough of war. Bert wrote me a highly interesting and amusing letter. He should take things very quietly for some time he has indeed worked strenuously these last years. ~r. Richardson wrote me another good letter and says that Sydney is carrying on almost as though there was'nt a war. For which praises be to `Allah. It does one good to think that the war as yet has left no blight on sunny Australia. Though many of the best and bravest have gone and many fond hearts still ache.

I usually write at many intervals to many people but have certainly never yet failed to answer every letter I receive. If Miss Irons has not had answers to her letters, either they [115 - 2] have never arrived or mine in reply, have gone adrift. However I'll write this mail and explain.

Am in the best of health and like the rest of the gunners waiting cheerfully for the Huns, God bless them.

Best wishes to all, keep smiling, Your loving son, Frank.

PS Have just received another letter from you.

7th July, 1918. In the Field, to mother

addressed to Berowra

Dearest mother,

Another Australian mail in and three letters from you. You are indeed very sensible to be having a complete rest and a good holiday at the glorious Mountains. So you have had Dot and Elsie Hewitt staying with you at Leura. Our No.1 Sgt. Jerry Thornton, a Muswellbrook man, knows the Hewitts since they were quite kiddies. Eric is in the 4th Division - I saw him months ago at Bailleul but didn't have the chance to have a yarn.

I had a letter from George who tells me to continue addressing letters to his care, as he hopes that you will eventually take up your permanent abode there. Aunt Flo writes again and talks of the month you have long since promised them. Apres la guerre and when Clive is through with Duntroon perhaps the little place at Manly, Mosman or elsewhere when we are reorganised will be a good plan. But time enough for these ideas later on.

Glad to hear my letters have been arriving with more or less regularity tho' apparently many have gone astray of late weeks. I have not been writing as much as usual for no other reason than there is absolutely nothing whatever to write about and under such circumstances - it is no easy matter.

I came down from the gun pits about a week ago after about 10 weeks of it with very little interruption and am now at the waggon lines. There are rumours of pulling out for a spell - high time too - for we hav'nt been out of action since last February. But after all luck has been with our division the artillery at any rate - and we have not had such a particularly crook spin as the chaps would say.

So poor old **Tom** was gassed - hope he soon gets fit and well again. It is not a very pleasant experience by any means.

Summer smiles here as warmly as ever but the Flemish landscape becomes very monotonous at times. One gets to long for the keen salt air and fresh breeze from the harbour and the beauty of the wooded foreshore.

But enough of vain longings. Am as usual O.K.. and feeling very fit.

Best wishes to all, Your loving son, Frank.

19 July 1918, George, France,

Dear old George, Received your letter (May ??) a week or so ago & was much pleased to hear that the mater has been having a long needed holiday. But sorry to hear that Stella and the bairns have been ill. Hope they are their happy selves again. Tonsilitis is a rotten thing to have, I should say.

I am most anxious to have a copy of Bert's first published literary effort. I hope he sends me one. He will undoubtedly go far. Here's wishing him the best of luck.

Time certainly flies in a remarkably quick manner. It doesn't seem more than a year since I pulled on this game but it is actually close on 2 years. Occasionally I wonder what will be doing when the scrapping is over and a chap gets back. A lot of coves - hardly optimistic - declare that a few years of this unsettled life will completely spoil him from returning to former occupation - so far as work of an intellectual description is concerned. What they probably mean is a restless disposition and an aversion to return to books & midnight oil. Personally I think those ideas are all bunkum. I would give something now to be back poring over once familiar text books and so forth. Though after all I don't fancy the war is going to last many more months. I confidently expect the Huns to break up any time thought they have certainly held ace high up to now. The Yanks when in full force must make a big difference.

Am scrawling this on the thick green grass in front of our guns (as yet unmarred by shells & so forth) after an all nights shooting. Feeling as usual Ok & in the best of spirits. Love to all. Yrs to a cinder, Frank.

[endorsed Hayten]

In the Field. 23/7/1918, to mother

addressed to Berowra

Dearest Mother,

Have just received another letter from you (18th May) with a few from **Bert** and one from Aunt Eva. I hope by now that you have had satisfactory and reassuring news from **Uncle Tom**. I hav'nt heard from Geoff [This could be Geoff Pike, see below, b 1899, 1st FC Engineers, RTA July 1919, embarked March 1918] though I wrote to him a few weeks ago. Expect to get a letter from him any day.

Bert is certainly mounting the ladder of fame isn't he. He sent me the circular of his first publication - with Prof. Woods' laudatory forward. As a double text-book at the Varsity, it should have a great sale. He seems by the way rather struck on Mary Alice Sheffer who is younger than I am tho- jolly good looking ..

Carmichael seems to have made a big success with his recruiting; and as for Billy Hughes - he's one big boom in London. Times and Daily Mail are daily extolling his splendid qualities and suggesting his entry into British politics. He is certainly getting a good hearing.

The life here is still going good. Blighty leave has restarted and, there are whispers of leave in gay Paree, but nothing definite as yet as to the latter. I may have the luck to get the 8 days leave, but am not building on it by a long chalk.

Reassuring news comes from further south and generally speaking, I think the Hun will soon crumple up, though up to now-' he has held ace high - and then some.

As usual am O.K. and in best of nick. Love to all, Yours fondly, Frank.

23 July 1918, in the field, Bert

Dear Bert, To hand a letter from you (16th May) and a host of interesting cuttings. Especially was pleased to get the circular of your first publication. As a Varsity text book in two subjects it must surely have a good side.

As it happens the 13th Batt are in the 4th Division which are not on our sector of the front but many miles away. So that for the present I won't be able to get into touch with any out of that battalion but may be able to later.

I indeed envy you when you write of the glorious musical program you've been hearing. Musical recreation is very limited over here - an occasional glimpse of a concert party when down at the waggon line, a gramophone perchance at some YMCA joint. These are oases in the desert of a life devoid of all the elements of culture - music, art, literature and so on.

Congratulations on being made a life member of the Sports Union. That is certainly top hole. But after all I think you have more than earned such recognition of the work you did as an undergrad. Such unusual honours as this and being the first and only undergraduate president of xxxxx????? [line missing, next page]:

must be eminently satisfying to you, over and above your academic achievements. Not like the usual type of present day student - a swotting weed, whose sporting enthusiasm doesn't ascend above chess, or an athlete with barely sufficient brains to make his head ache - But I don't fancy you want any flowers from me.

[July 1918 to Bert]

Mary Alice is a jolly pretty kid - my junior by the way. Hence the epithet - whom I used to annoy many years ago when she wore her hair in two large golden pigtailed. She started the camera rage at Pikes one Christmas vacation and I had score of interesting little snaps in my wallet for years until some rotter pinched it when I was in the Toc Emmas (T. Mortars by the way) about 12 months ago. I haven't seen the Mary Alice for years but she must be some class now.

Am doing OK Have written to young Pike and expect to hear from him any day from England

Best of luck Yours fraternally

Frank

[Jeanie's younger sister, Florence Emily Gray (1871-1944) married Edwin Deacon Pike, their children were Dorothy, Geoffrey (1899 - and probably young Pike, who went to war in 1916 or 1917), Una, Nea, Garnet, Rita and Brenda (1912 -)

13 August card

addressed to Berowra.

Aug.17th 1918. France.

addressed to Berowra

Dearest mother,

My 20th birthday and I never knew it till I was entering up my diary - the date (17th Aug.) seemed familiar somehow. Forgive me that I never sent birthday greetings to reach you and **George** on yours.

It must be weeks since I wrote to you (I sent a P.C. about a week ago). But if you knew the circumstances you would readily understand why. For just a fortnight after once more shifting our position in a N.S. direction, we have been moving at a fairly steady pace in a W.E. direction. For a fortnight we have taken part in chasing Fritz back to where he came from with much gusto and very little opposition just on 5 months ago. Of course as usual London press accounts make no mention of Australians - but nevertheless our glorious infantry followed up by our modest selves penetrated to the furthest depth and got the most booty and prisoners. As the Yanks might say - it was some stunt.

And now for a few days we are resting, in gloriously hot weather by the banks of the Somme. We hit this place yesterday and needless to say it didn't take long for the chaps to try the water. I swam myself to a stand~still yesterday - it was great - springboards and several punts add to the enjoyment - and all this right at our door as it were.

But resting is not all that one might imagine. After a week or two of continual activity for both drivers and gunners, they come out of action and the latter are put on to scrubbing the vehicles, the former on to the harness. Not to mention regimental brigade guards and picquets and sundry other irritating red tapisms.

Despite all of which I am as well as ever, rather sunburned and only a little tired after a 24 hours guard which mounted at 6 p.m. after being on the road since 2 a.m. the same morning and swimming solidly for the rest of the day.

A batch of Australian letters arrived.] from George, Bert, Dot, 2 from Aunt Flo and strange to say, none from you. They were dated first week in June. Also have had a letter from Pike Jnr. [this is his cousin Geoff Pike] who likes the life and has not yet seen the Evatts though he hopes to when he gets leave.

Bert's letter was a bumper one - 12 pages of bright, breezy, witty news and gossip.

Best wishes to all, Frank.

P.S. enclosing an aerial photograph I found in a dugout in a German army corps hdqrs. Some of our battery positions marked in red ink. Also a Hun field P.C. PS Dainty little souvenirs like Hun helmets and 5.9 Krupps were easily obtainable but difficult to send away. Besides I am not a souvenir hunter.

17 August 1918 - Geo

Field card to Geo, receipt of letter of 17.8.18

France, 26.8.18., to mother

addressed to Berowra

Dearest Mother,

Have had 3 more letters from you since I last wrote. One was redirected through Army Base P.O. so in future when addressing them c/- Earls Court Square don't put regimental number and rank as they may be sent through military channels and all take longer to arrive. Ettie will add all that is necessary when readdressing.

We are once more in the line engaged on a fresh stunt which promises to be as successful as the last. While on the canal the Divisional Artillery held a swimming sports. Frank Tydall [Tyndall?] a C.S.R. man whom Ray and I knew at Clifton Baths, and myself represented the battery in the diving. Tydall is a beautiful diver and got first place, while I could do no better than tie for third. The fancy diving put me out of the running. But I was quite satisfied - for have I ever done better than get a 2nd or third place (if any).

Burstall - the chap you mention - came away and was in camp in England with me. I met him while on hospital furlough in London last November, he got a nasty crack in the face. My particular friend, W. Hawdon Wilson, who was wounded alongside me at Ypres last year, has also returned. He was an Arts II man when he left. You might ask Bert to look him up.

Herc. Braddon who came away with me has got a commission - though he was never in a battery and never nearer the line than Don Ack. (Div. Art. Hdqrs.) So that service in the field and gunnery experience -are apparently not necessary qualifications for an artillery officer. Skit Roseby, Rodgers, and Brodie are still drivers.

You might induce Clive to write occasionally and tell re something; about the life at Duntroon. He must be in fine condition a bit different to me who am very fat and flabby.

Best wishes to all, Frank.

letter to Bert 27.8.18

Addressed to HV Evatt MA LL.B St Andrews College Camperdown

Dear old Bert, ~ ~

Another letter from you - 11..6.18 - included with several others has arrived. Enclosed within is the glowing tribute from the Fortians to your achievements. The whole sketch of your career was eminently pleasing for me to read. A splendid photo of you too - one that I don't remember seeing before.

The mater tells me that you have met Bill Burstall who sailed and was at Salisbury Plain with me. He is a very fine cove. I met him again in London last November on the top of a bus, we were both in London on hospital furlough. He had received a nasty crack in the face and was waiting to appear before a medical Board for classification. *By the way, one W. Hawdon Wilson - a particular pal of mine - Arts II man before enlistment - who was wounded alongside me at Polygon Wood has returned home - paralysed arm. Should you ever strike him, you might have a word with him.*

We are once more in the line engaged on another stunt - after a 4 days spell by the Banks of River The Divisional Artillery (D.A.C., 2 F.A.B's and Trench Mortars) held a swimming carnival ... "representing the 1st Battery in the diving competition and with my usual mediocrity, tied for 3rd place.

yrs. affect. Frank.

FILE ENDS.

3.9.18

In separate bundle of letters, 124/127, very dark]

Dearest Mother,

Two more letters from you (8th and 15th June) since I last wrote (26.8.18). So glad to know you have been getting my letters alright. You must never expect them regularly for even, when it is possible to write, many delays may occur in the Postal Service.

We are again out for a short spell by the banks of the S...e Canal. Both horses and men are in dire need of a rest after the splendid rapid pushes made during the stunt. Have you been reading of the glorious achievements of our infantry. At last they are getting their due credit in the English press, and are looked up to now as the ultimate standard

of efficiency and courage. As for us, I am proud to say we had the honour of following up and supporting the 'diggers' - as we call the men of the battalions.

A load of Australian Comforts arrived yesterday (some of them labelled by a strange coincidence - 20th Batt. Comforts Fund Committee). They included woolen shirts, excellent Xmas cake, sweets, Arnotts Biscuits and 40 fags per man - the latter arriving when there were hardly the "makings" of a cigarette in the battery.

We are getting a very fair "spin" this time - every afternoon off. Last night and again this afternoon concert parties were performing close by. An excellent violinist at the former (32nd British Div Party) played one of Chopins Nocturnes (12th I think). It is a beautiful thing and was splendidly rendered, meeting with the fullest appreciation of an audience representative of the 1st "Divvy" Artillery.

Best wishes to everyone, love to Aunt Minnie and Grandma.

Your loving son,

Frank

P.S. Best of nick as usual.

Leeton 18 Oct 1918

Letter to George from staff of Water conservation and Irrigation Commission, addressed to him at Sydney

Letters re war graves. Nov 6, 1918 and reply 5 Dec 1918

George asked for information about the location of graves, and received a reply addressed to "Ellimo" that the process of photographing was taking place. [it was later done]

university roll of honour Oct 11, 1919

Unveiling program

3.9.18

In separate bundle of letters, 124/127, very dark]

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Best wishes to everyone, love to Aunt Minnie and Grandma.

Your loving son,

Frank

P.S. Best of nick as usual.

10.9.18 1st AFA France, to Bert

Last letter to Bert

Dear old Bert,

Your letter (25 xx and also your book came yesterday with a lot more Australian mail. Thanks so much for "Liberalism in Australia" Have just been showing it to Brodie of our DAC (1st) who was at the Varsity and who came away with me. He was quite enthusiastic about it. Also told him that you had seen Burstall and would also meet 'Hawdie Wilson - both of whom left with us.

Things during the last week or so have been fairly quiet for us in fact we have been in reserve for ten days after our last advance. But tomorrow morning we once more move forward into the fray. We had a good 'spin' this time out of action - good grub - plenty of rest for both men and "chevals" - but civilians are a long long way off & after each push we get further and further away from the inhabited villages. So that for the majority the spell has been a very 'dry' one - no 'vin blanc' or 'bock' (Camouflage titles for the muck the French estaminets

dole out to the troops. We also heard some excellent concert parties, which go far to remove the tedium of an evening.

How are Mary Alice, the Pikes etc. Aunt Flo seems delighted to have you over their way. Eileen Green wrote me a particularly happy letter from Hazelbrook where are living the 'simple life'

Clive is about the only delinquent as regards letter writing. I should like to hear an occasional word from him about the life at Duntroon and how he likes it.

The good weather is just about finished though earlier than last year. Except for a slight "code id the head" am as well as ever.

Best of luck

Yours always

Frank.

Letter from Russ Marks, No 1 Command Depot 16 Sept 1918

France 17.9.18

Dearest Mother,

With this mail three more letters from you (26.6., 6.7, 13.7). Glad to know by the last that you have been getting my letters with more or less frequency. Of late I have been very spasmodic as a correspondent, but of course its no fault of my own. Even when mail is being accepted by the F.P.O. one may not have the opportunity to write.

We have been in action again just six days, and are expecting another big stunt. News of late should be very cheering and reassuring to those at home, though of course big advances must of necessity abound with many casualties especially in the battalions.

With regard to the scholarships etc, you mention, I have seen and heard nothing, and without anything definite to go by, it is hardly advisable on my part to act. Certainly I would jump at any such opportunity of continuing Medicine. It would be a great thing to visit Oxford and Cambridge, were it merely to get some idea of the "atmosphere" of college life at one of those places. However, one must just wait and hope for the best.

Bert sent me a copy of 'Hermes' as well as his splendid publication on "Liberalism". The former was as a gift from heaven. I've read it over and over again, and am prouder than ever that I am one - not a very important one - of the great many who came from the 'Varsity' / And even the knowledge that those who 'kicked off' with me are now in Med. III does not shake that pride.

Promotion seems hopeless in this division. What few casualties there are among NCOs are quickly replaced by others returning from leave or hospital. So it looks much as if 'Gunner' will be my rank for the duration - and it's not a bad one either, believe me! - certainly a better life than that of an officer in a battalion.

As usual am OK as regards health.

Best love to Grandma and Aunt Min, Your loving son, Frank

PS No parcels arrived to date. Please tell George that his cable arrived all serene about a fortnight ago, and tender him my thanks. Had a cheery letter from Eileen Green from **Hazelbrook**. She is sending me a photo of herself. F.

=====

Letters about Frank death

Information from the front about Frank's death

The telegram 14.10.18

The telegram was addressed to Rev Frazer, informing him of Frank's death; it is signed by Col Sandford at Victoria Barracks, and says died of wounds on 19.9.18. Please inform mother (Clergymen had the task of telling relatives.)

letter of 14.10.18 from W Newby-Fraser to George Evatt enclosing the telegram with the bad news which came the day before. From St Johns Milsons Point

official letter

A follow up letter from Victoria Barracks was sent to Mrs JS Evatt at 8 Grantham St Milsons Point on 1 November, your son no 31079, Gunner Francis Septimus Evatt, 1st Field Artillery Brigade, AIF, is officially reported to have died from the effects of "Gunshot wound Chest" at the 12th Casualty Clearing Station on the 29th September, 1918.

Stuff on pay and allowances.

Inventory of effects from the field: pipe, wallet, coins, book of verse, Note book, 1 Franc note, one packet of letters, cards and photos. [service record p 26; it was forwarded in Sept 1919] [There was some correspondence about writing to Cox & Co which is not clear, this was in September 1919]]

12 Casualty Clearing Station BE Force 29.9.18

Dear Mrs Evatt, It is with very great regret that I write to tell you about your son Pte FS Evatt he was brought to us today, very severely wounded, with

several wounds the most severe one being in the leg. He was very collapsed & the surgeon did everything he possibly could for him, but unfortunately without avail, & he passed away at 3.40 pm this afternoon. It seems very dreadful to tell you, but try to comfort yourself with the thought that he did not suffer, as he was too ill to realize anything. [further sympathies] I am, yours sincerely. A Duncan (sister-in-charge) [answered 15.1.19]

second letter 23.3.19 Sister Duncan says that your boy was so ill & so very collapsed when brought in that he was almost unconscious all the time which was very short. He did not realise that he was leaving everything & as far as I remember he did not speak else I should have told you, in my last letter. goes on about the cemetery, where he lies with others who died the same day, etc.

OTHER LETTERS FROM:

France 18.10.18 [CJ Davidson (32988 Gnr)]

My dear Mrs Evatt words fail to express the sympathy I should like to convey to you for the loss of your son Frank. He & I had been chums since enlisting together in Sept '17 & I can in some small measure realise your sorrow in as much as his going has made a great difference to me. I did not see him after he was hit as there was a very heavy mist & I was laying our gun some distance apart. However, the men who attended to him tell me he was suffering no pain & as he died within 24 hours of being hit, I should say he passed away without enduring pain as medical attention would be given almost immediately by a dressing station near by. I cannot give you any consolation, but I know he died as would have wished himself, like a soldier and a good Australian. He was always talking of you & the other dear members of his family. Please forgive me if I have awkwardly expressed myself in my desire to sympathise with you in your great loss. I have spoken to the Pardre [sic] & he will write you with particulars re the situation of the grave &c. Once more please accept my heartfelt sympathy. If I can be of any service to you please let me know. Very sincerely yours, **CJ Davidson** (32988 Gnr) [answered 15.1.19]

France 28 10.18 [Ewans or Evans]

Dear Mrs Evatt, I am writing you on behalf of the various members of the sub section to which your deceased son Frank belonged. It is the general desire of all Frank's associates to convey to you their deepest sympathy in this your second bereavement occasioned by the war. It will no doubt be some satisfaction to you to know that he had many friends in the battery who appreciated his stirring qualities as a clean living young gentleman & also that everything was done to ensure that he had every possible chance of recovery. Unfortunately he died on the evening he was wounded 29th September & interred the following day. [personal effects etc * On behalf of comrades and myself believe me yours sincerely Ewans or Evans [answered 15.1.18]

29 October 1918 from revd Dymond

1st Australian Field Artillery Brigade PEF 29 Oct 1918 Dear Mrs Evatt, The military authorities will have doubtless informed you of the great loss you have sustained by the death of your brave son, 31079, Gunner Francis Septimus Evatt, of the 1st Battery of the above Brigade. He was severely wounded on the 29th of September & went to the 12th Casualty Clearing Station, where he passed away at 3.40 pm on the same day. The chaplain at the hospital buried the body of your brave boy on the 30th September in Tincourt Military Cemetery. The military map reference of the cemetery is Sheet 62C, J 23b4.9 Your son was wounded severely in the chest by shell fire in action with the guns. These few particulars I have gathered from various sources. All his various kit etc. will be in the hands of officials, and any private property will be returned to you through official channels. [Religious sentiments follow] Yours sincerely, (Revd) H Dymond Pell CF. envelope endorsed Answered 15.1.19. It was readdressed from 8 Grantham Rd, to Ashmore, Belmont Ave Wollstonecraft. _____

Lt Cpl HE Harper, 17 Jan 1919

Jan 17 1919, for both, knew Frank at E St Leonards and Fort St School. (formerly Lachmund)

CO 12th Casualty Clearing Station 14.1.19

letter dated 4.1.19, from CO 12th Casualty Clearing Station of British Expeditionary Force: No. 31079 Gunner FS Evatt was admitted to the CCS on 29 September 1918, suffering from sever gunshot wounds of the chest from which he died at 3.40 the same day. He was buried in the Military Cemetery, Tincourt, France, the following day, the Rev, HA Griffith conducting the burial service.

Sent to Bert by Red Cross on 28 March 1919, to Wentworth Court.

Maggie of Burwood 10.4.19

April 10, 1919, with photo which seems to be of Frank as a boy.

Sergt Beckiton, 12.5.19

1st FAB, No 12735

statement, re Gunner Evatt, Gunner Evatt was in my sub-section and I knew him well. I met for the first time when he joined up in France. He was quite young, of nuggety build, fair and about 5 ft. 6 or 7" high. At Henincourt, near the Hindenburg line I saw him hit with the fragment of a gas shell. He was taken first to a Dressing Station and then to a Clearing Station. he died at the Clearing Station on the same day. It was the 29th September 1918. Sergt J Beckiton, 12/5/19.

Private Address, Wangalnella Post Office, via hay, NSW.

The above statement was sent to HV Evatt Esq, Barrister-at-law, Wentworth Court Phillip St. by letter of 23 May 1919 by Red Cross.

Memorial Tablet 21 NOV 1919

letter to Mrs JS Evatt re this, dated 21 Nov 1919.

mother's addresses

Berowra, 64 Carabella St Milsons Point

later, letter addressed to her at 8 Grantham St,

by November 1919 she was at "Avonlea" Murdoch St, Cremorne, and was till there in December 1920.