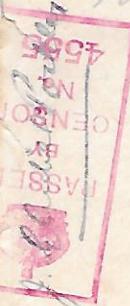


Jack to Grannie & Aunties  
6/12/12

O. A. S.



Mrs. & Mr. Hines Hooke  
Elderslie  
Wahroonga.  
Sydney.  
N.S.W.  
Australia



France  
6/12/17.

Dear Annie and Amies

(That's a nice  
decorous beginning). To thee ~~the~~ <sup>dear</sup> greetings, much  
love, and multitudinous thanks for your gifts  
and letters and cards, and books and works  
and mittens and food and etc. etc.

I am writing so many letters just at present  
that it would be most unkind of me to attempt  
to inflict a separate letter on each of you, and  
I am therefore attempting to write one brilliant  
epistle, in book form, to you all conjointly - Where  
you see my little wiggly bits and scratchings,  
you will find on turning up the glossary  
that it denotes cold blue fingers on the part of  
the author.

Your letters and parcels and Kines messages  
were most welcome. Letters and food are  
absolutely our one joy nowadays. I must not  
forget the fortnightly or three weekly bath; it  
ranks high in order of merit.

I am not in the line today, as a matter  
of fact I have been out for five days, but tomorrow  
I will be singing a different lay, all about  
"buy little wet home in the trench."

If you meet any gallant heroes over there  
who tell you, that France isn't really cold, in

the winter, that "whyj bangs", 5.9.5 and "mimies" don't feel the wind up them, or that Tiff is a charming fellow, you can put them down as mentally deficient or lacking in truthfulness.

The last time I had it, I lived in the same clothes for nine days wet and dry, and washed my face and hands "a la chat", once daily with an end of a towel dipped in a cigarette tin full of scented water. The result is known as parfum de la cheval mort.

It's a glorious life ! However one can always get amusement for oneself or others all the time, as when I fell into a pot of liquid mud one night at the witching hour of midnight and emerged looking like a blue crocodile fresh from the Nile. This little incident bucked the men up no end, and I made a mental note of its possibilities for future reference.

It was snowing gently at the time, and I had to stay there for three hours and then get into my sleeping bag just as I was, minus my waders.

Events like this should teach one to appreciate pyjamas and beds.

Taroy is very fit, and writes to me occasionally to you, we see each other occasionally.

I saw Dudley Williams yesterday, and we had a long quack together, all about the old days. He

informed me that I was looking very old, and I retaliated that he was extravagantly stout and then we had a smoke and settled down to talk.

He is in charge of an Anti Aircraft battery and should be having a pretty good time.

Since beginning this letter, I have had a meal and feel somewhat warmer.

I have a jewel of a batman who is worth his weight in gold. My former one was a grand little chap and we were very attached to one another, but he is unfortunately playing harps with the angels now.

Up in the line, ones batman acts as a runner and personal body guard, and follows immediately in ones wake like a faithful spaniel. If it is heavy going and his ~~bag~~ pack is pried it gives one pins and needles in the region of the base of the spine.

I wonder where I shall be next Christmas. I should love to send you all choice jewels and beautiful old lace, but they don't grow here and you must be content with a generous helping of love in lieu thereof. Now its no use your crying Edie, and saying "I hate this present!" It's all you'll get.

A ton of love to all you dear people and may God bless you all and make 1918 a happier year.

yours with love.  
John.