

Jack to Grannie + Aunties
6/12/17

O. A. S.



Mrs + The Misses Hooke
Eldershope
Wahroonga.
Sydney.
N. S. W.
Australia

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BY
PASSER

France.
6/12/17.

Dear Grandma and Aunties

(That's a nice decorous beginning) To thee ~~be~~^{be} greetings, much love, and multitudinous thanks for your gifts and letters and cards, and books and woks 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~~ write one brilliant epistle, in book form, to you all conjointly - When you see funny little wiggly bits and scratches, 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 Vera's message 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 "my 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 writer, that "whizz bangs", "5.9.3" and "minnies" don't put the wind up them, or that Trip is a charming fellow, you can put them down as mentally deficient or lacking in truthfulness.

The last time I had in, I lived in the same clothes for nine days wet and dry, and washed my face and hands "à la chat", once daily with an end of a towel dipped in a cigarette tin full of scented water. The scent 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 pool 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.

It's like this should teach one to appreciate pyjamas and beds.

Tarcy is very fit, and writes to be remembered 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 wait 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 bayonet is fixed 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 it's 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.