

Jack to Hodges  
12/1/18

O. A. S.



PASSED  
BY  
CENSOR  
No.  
4582

Mrs & The Misses Hooke  
"Edinboro"

Wahroonga.  
Sydney.  
N. S. W.

*Per Melbourne  
Australia*

With  
love to you all  
and blessings  
upon your beloved  
heads for your  
letters and love.  
love for  
France. T  
—  
Jan: 12/1/18.

Dear beloved brother

I hope you  
will forgive my not writing to each  
of you individually as I should  
like to do if time were not my master.

I wish I could send you letters  
more frequently but I cannot possibly  
keep up with my correspondence these  
days and when I get a letter  
I merely exclaim "Bless him (or her)"  
as the case may be, and I frequently  
have to let them go unanswered.

I have to report that I am  
in excellent health and spirits,  
and hoping like everyone else for

the end of the war. —

I got a letter from an Armistice friend last mail, congratulating me upon having got my Captaincy.

As Mark Twain would say

"This has been grossly exaggerated."

I am at present acting as Intelligence Officer for my Battalion,

and as we are out of the line just at present, having been in for 46 days, I am having a spell by doing an Intelligence School. It is very interesting work, as our outlook is a bit wider while we are doing this class of work. We had a lecture

111  
today from a very illustrious  
personage on the Staff of the  
British Army, and he told us  
some very interesting things  
indeed. Most of them will never  
be known, and some will probably  
come out when the war is over.

Of course we are all wondering  
where that will be. I imagine  
Fitz is, if anything, rather more  
interested even than we are, in  
the question.

Winters in France spent in the  
trenches are not uproariously  
comfortable, and we miss our  
fires and easy chairs and slippers  
at times. Of course in the line

<sup>15</sup>  
it is against orders to take off your  
clothes or even your boots except  
to rub your feet and treat them  
with anti trench foot preparation.

Consequently, after you have been  
buried in mud time after time  
and frozen stiff after it, and  
have been in the line for a  
few weeks, one has a decided  
antipathy towards ones clothes  
and in addition to this, the  
small designs of ones garments  
become very tiresome. Fortunately  
they dont like the cold or being  
frozen, and they evidently find  
a frozen mud-caked human  
hide, a bad dwelling place

during the winter months.

However as Mark Twain again remarked "A certain number of fleas is good for a dawg."

It certainly has its humorous side though, and I often find myself smiling grimly to myself in the dark, and picturing people at home, and the look of absolute disgust on their faces if they could see me at the moment.

Modern war has lost its glamour with a vengeance, and you can't imagine it unless you actually see it.

The soldiers who have lived through a few years of it, are

absolutely a unique type and they  
have my respect every time.

Nothing comes across to them  
and they can live on the smell  
of an oil rag and sleep absolutely  
anywhere. They do it all so  
naturally too.

I have myself already  
experienced the procedure of  
going to sleep while walking  
along, and it is quite easy, in  
fact it is hard to do anything  
else at times.

Last time in, I began my  
day's work at 3 a.m. and  
worked until 11 or 12 at night.  
Then I crawled off to my

blanket with a <sup>20</sup> telephone within reach.

Half an hour later. Buzz-buzz  
buzz-z-z-z! I would sit up  
and light my candle "Wullo!"

"Wullo!" would come a frantic voice  
"is that the —" "I giving my  
stage name & trip has listening  
posts everywhere, same as we have  
and can pick up a conversation  
unless it is camouflaged. "Yes,  
what's up? I would croak.

Then he would proceed to  
tell me in a wode conversation  
that he was getting blue blazes  
knocked out of his crowd by  
a machine or a 7.7. am gun  
and he would demand retaliation, or



rather pray for it - if one demands anything he doesn't get it.

Coming "himself" and Fritz in general I would ring up the spot where retaliation, in the shape of inquisitive noisy lumps of metal, comes from. "Hullo Jimbo! Kate is walking in her sleep again at L.Y.T 1. to 40. 20. and her along a sleeping draft will you" Presently it would come screaming overhead in large quantities, and I would frown and shut my eyes again, only to be woken up again to hear that somebody else had a pencil, and so my three or four hours of rest and peace in every

twenty four <sup>14</sup> would pass, and  
presently the sleepy signaler  
or duty would tap me on the  
shoulder. "Three o'clock sir,  
and — are waiting for your  
— report!" Then another day  
would begin.

When I get back home I intend  
to sleep like a boa constrictor  
for a week or a month — I  
haven't decided which yet.

Darcy is very well and is  
also having a rest, by doing a  
signalling school. I don't see  
a great deal of him at any  
time, and nothing at all  
nowadays. Tubbie is also

<sup>74</sup>  
blossoming, or Mick as he is now  
called. He is at present doing a  
long school in England. He has  
been over here for 12 mths without  
a spell, and has earned one.

I have never come across  
Bruce Hunter yet. I saw  
Dudley Williams the other day  
and he is going strong.

I am puzzling my brains  
as to what I am going to do  
with my faithful "Friday" after  
the war. He has a moustache  
and will not make a bullock  
and though I am sure he would  
be only too pleased to become

<sup>21</sup>  
a riding horse for the frog or  
play bears with him, still I  
am afraid Jell might object  
as he doesn't manicure his  
finger nails.

Nevertheless, he is a priceless  
old thing in horror. He follows  
me about like Mep used to,  
all the time, in the line, and  
we have rolled into steel huts  
together, and lain flat out in  
No man's land while they cut  
the wire about 6 inches above our  
heads with machine gun bullets.

If anything comes unpleasantly  
close, he has a habit of catching

me by the hand, not because he is scared himself - he doesn't do it - but because his aim in life is to shadow me from all ills.

He runs my bank for me, packs my clothes, spreads my blankets, buys my food and carries my gear, and is laundress and seamstress and tailor all in one. I tell you he is some henchman. He always says "ours" instead of "your", if talking to me, and "my" or "mine" instead of "her" or "his", if talking to anyone else. I am writing an awfully long screed and you must be tired of it long ago. I shall stop