



## South Australians at war – transcript – PRG 373/13E/2

### Letters written by Victor Voules Brown, 1916-1918

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PRG 373/13E/2

Letters written by Victor Voules Brown

Transcription of selected text

Transcribed by Susie van der Sluys, May 2002

PRG 373/13E/2/2

At Sea

Oct 4<sup>th</sup> 16.

My Dear Mother & home,

You will see by the date that we are well on our journey, we expect to arrive in England next Tuesday night or Wed morning We are now getting out of the tropics which treated us very fair as regards heat. I have spent many a hotter day in ~~the~~ S.A. but of course it was a different sort of heat. We saw a few whales & any amount of flying fish, the latter especially this morning there were thousands & thousands of them, they remind me very much of swallows. We did not have the best of times while at Cape Town. So much discipline Although what we did see was worth seeing, The coast of Africa is very very rough & I should think very dangerous They have a fine harbour there and it seems a very busy one, it is made in a funny shape (this only a bit different But that is the principal & Each or rather nearly all of the warfes are capable of taking three ships at once in them ~~three~~ the small lines represent ships. We have had a lot of sickness on board, especially mumps & influenza Meningitis has also been in evidence there is one case on board at present, but I beleive it was caught early enough to check it and at present, the man is supposed to be out of all danger.

Yesterday morning we called at Pt St Vincent It is a port in the Verde group of Islands & belongs to the Portuguese It is a natural harbour there but no wharfes Should say it was impossible to get at, ~~all rough~~ by the shape of it, thus It is absolutely the last place made I should say, the most hungry, rough, rocky & mountainous looking country I have seen As far as the eye could see. It was all mountain with no herbage at all growing upon it, and the mountains are peek after peek The only vegetation we could see in any direction was a patch of about 5 acres where what looked like banana trees growing otherwise it looked absolutely barren It is used principally as a coaling station Yesterday there was 20 steamers in Pt besides a lot of sailing ships One was the British Warship High Flier you may remember the name as the vessel that sank the Kaiser Wilhelm (?) Grosse sometime back We dont know but expect she is acting as our escort to England And or course we also hope so Every day now we have a submarine gaurd on of 40 men besides another



gaurd on of about 60 men I was on last night am glad it is over as now I wont strike it again perhaps for the trip. They seem to do every thing very secret now and so you may guess considering we know & hear nothing for certain, there are some great yarns get about the ship, and everyone seems to add a little more onto them

I want you to send me a Chronicle every now and again I feel as if a little Australian news will do me good Infact any paper at all with some news on it would be acceptable at present.

Monday

Well mummy dear hear we are, will soon be in England only another day And fancy it is six weeks today since we left. So you can see the ship must be fairly fast as we lost 3 good days at Cape Town and St Vincent. I think we are now in the bay of Biscay and it is as calm as a duck pond barring a swell We see quite a lot of sailing ships and steamers now

We travel now all the time in a zig zag course now thus, on account of submarines as it is supposed to hide our course better We also have orders to carry our lifebelts all the time now with us infact according to orders we will be crimed if caught without them. We have not seen any submarines uptodate, although the other night, the Colonel & officers were running about like one thing with glasses looking at something they thought was a submarine. Was talking to one of the gunners yesterday & asked him what I it was they saw. He told me it was their joke as they reported seeing something, which they knew was only a tin or piece of wreckage

How is the farm getting on I hope A1. Suppose Mr Green is thinking of cutting his hay at present I hope it turns out good.

I have told you about the chap from our deck having meningitis he was doing A1 & was reported out of all danger, but seemingly had a relapse, & ~~to~~ early sunday morning died. He was buried yesterday at sea with full military honours It is a very solemn service & I hope never to see any more Church parade took place immediately afterwards, the chaplain gave a farwell sermon to the men. A real mens sermon with advice for the benifit of the Empire as well as the individual

The weather last night took a change & this morning was quite chilly. I suppose it will keep on now getting cooler until we reach the end of the journey

We expect to go into Plymouth. Also I hear it is nearly certain we will all be in quarantine when we arrive oweing to the amount of sickness on board especially mump which are just about raging Up todate barring the flue I have been tip top and at present cant get enough to eat infact I am alway hungry. If only the food would ~~only~~ get another flavour barring ships I am certain I could eat two ordinary dinners

The boxing tournament ended on Saturday. It always carries a big following with it, And ended as it started with no ill feeling against anyone.



I heard just this minute that it is out in orders from the Col that the 48<sup>th</sup> in his opinion are the best disciplined unit on board. All I can say is I am very very sorry for some of the rest if we are

T M B is still well but I think he is rather afraid his old complaint is not quite cured, he is not certain so dont mention anything about it

I have ordered a couple of Pitch and Toss papers (that is a paper printed on board about the journey, and all the principal events It is very good, & when I receive them, will forward them on.

It is now 9.25 and just on parade time so will write some more later on.

Have just had a roll call and now are having a general inspection of hammocks blankets and kits. We have a kit inspection every week, to try and find some of the things that get lost, which are very plentiful, There is generally a lot of things which are genuinily lost come to light. But a lot which are stolen always manage to keep out of sight.

I had my braces stolen off my pants while asleep also six bob out of my pants and the cover off my cap Evidently I dont sleep with but one eye lid shut. Also had my (?) or strap stolen out of my kit.

I believe some off them would steal the teeth from ones mouth & growl because they were gold filled This morning soon after we got up we saw a destroyer boat about a mile away, thought perhaps she had come to see escort us through the channel

As up todate we have seen nothing in the shape of a ~~destroyer~~ convoy.

Well mother dear I think I have told you every thing worth mentioning since leaving Adelaide I will cable as soon as we arrive if I get the chance and write soon after

Am well and in good spirits

With fondest love & hoping everyone at home is well

From your loving son Vic

PRG 373/13E/2/3

Oct 6<sup>th</sup> 1916.

At Sea.

My Dear Mother & home,

You will see by the date we are well on our journey now, and I don't think there will be to many sorry when it ends. We expect to arrive next Wed or Thursday. You will know by my



last which track we came. We have only touched 2 ports since we left. You will receive a letter latter on describing the trip more fully, at least I hope so. The orders we have had about what we cannot mention leaves very little to write about so am not going to try and write much in this.

You will gather that I am well, just about over properly of cold. and as soon as we get off the ship, will be quite happy.

Every precaution is taken now as regards submarines. Besides the ships crew all the old deep water sailors ~~in~~ among the soldiers have volunteered as lookout men, they are constantly on the lookout.

I will say Au Revoir for the present you will receive a longer one perhaps the same time as this. Love to everyone

From Your loving son Vic

PRG 373/13E/2/4

Oct 14<sup>th</sup> 1916.

Codford.

My Dear Mother

You will see by the heading that we have arrived in England. I sent a short cable just to let you know I was well. We arrived at Plymouth on the 11<sup>th</sup> so have been here 4 days now. From Plymouth we were entrained to this Camp through Exeter & Taunton. The country is I think in bonza, and am quite satisfied it is all the girls & you said it was, only the reality is far away & above a description And can quite understand an Englishman fighting for his country.

We are camped on the side of a hill with farms all around us, between two small villages Codford & Wylie. The other evening I went for a walk through Wylie, a lovely walk. It is a funny little place The Country Church & Inn are right along side of one another infact the Church is practically in the Inn back yard. I had a look through the the Cemetery but it was to dark to see much every thing seemed as old as Adam. Saw one funny (?) In Memories of John ——— 28 years rector of this Church also of Anne dearly beloved wife of the above who died in Bath

Am going to try and get off to go to Church one Sunday.

I also paid a visit to the Inn or Tap Room it seemed very old and just what we read about. The walls seemed about 6 ft high, and in the little parlor very stuffy & smoke dont mention it. When I say I couldnt stand it & and had to get out you can imagine it was bad. And the publican also just what we read about, a funny old codger in real English clothes.



I am going to write to some of the cousins I wish I had Doughty's address but suppose I can get it from Cousin Perkin but not in time to see them on my 4 days leave to London which I think is going to start on Tuesday.

Only one thing may stop us & that is both yesterday morning & this morning 3 cases of mumps have turned up and at present we are under isolation Am hoping it will only be for a day or so.

We had a destroyer for an escort the last day & a half before coming into Port my word they are lively little things, when she turned we first saw her on the sky line and in about a ¼ of an hour she was dashing around us at the rate of knots.

In some things their camps are above ours but take it all around they are not in the same street for convenience & cleanliness. I think the discipline over here is going to be rather sudden and will take a bit of getting used to. I think I have found out where (?) Alf is also Jack Malone Alf is about 14 miles away & Jack about 3½ Am going over with luck to see Jack tomorrow to see if he knows anything of Ernie. Au Revoir mummy.

Best love to all

From Your loving son Vic

PRG 373/13E/2/9

Codford

Dec 11<sup>th</sup> 16.

My Dear Mother & home,

There is a mail leaving for Aus about the 15<sup>th</sup>, so will let you know the latest I suppose the most important is that the 5/48 boys are all warned for the next draught We don't know for certain when we are to leave, but believe it will be on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of this month, so it looks as if we will not see an English Xmas after all, but as we are told we will get no Xmas leave if we are here, we will miss but very little by ~~stopping~~ going. We don't know for certain where we are going whether France or Mesopotamia some say one & some the other, I think it will be France, as according to what we hear the Australians are in want of Reinforcements but hope it will be Mesopotamia as I am afraid of the cold in France. We are having it very severe over here, & practically everyone is ill more or less We hear of deaths now every day, & you would not be surprised if you knew the treatment or how ill some have to be before they are taken into hospital. It is due I will say in a big way to some of those who mangle & are always on sick parade to try & dodge a bit of drill, consequently a lot of the dinkum fellows have to suffer. Up to date I have not been on one sick parade so you can see I have been holding my own, I am taking no chances now, as too many are ill, in a lot of cases I think it is neglect on their own parts Yesterday Sunday was a beast of a day. We had a little sun, a cold wind, sleet, snow, and rain, & this morning the ground was simply frozen hard with frost. According to what we hear I think the winter is exceptionally cold



for this month. On Sunday we had another couple of hundred men come into the camp from Queensland, they are finding it pretty cold needless to say. There was about 1000 of them arrived in the boat they came in. There was Australian mail arrived about a fortnight ago I got letters from Dora & Mary, but none from home I think yours must have gone down in the Arabra. I have received an Australasia also a Bulletin from you since arriving

We have got a bonza band over here now in our Training Battalion it is from NSW It makes a big difference when out on route marches We are in D Comp of the 12<sup>th</sup> Training Battalion 4<sup>th</sup> Division, but as regards address keep to 5 Remt 48 Batt A I F you can add 4<sup>th</sup> Division if you like as we will still be in that Division whether training or at the front. I forget whether I told you that I had a letter or PC rather from young Alf, he could not manage to meet me as he was leaving for France so I suppose he knows now ~~by this~~ how cold it can get.

For the last week I have been acting as an MP I took it on for a few days to get out of the cold, as it is mostly indoor but would not like to stop at it, as I am quite satisfied I was never cut out for a Policeman.

Now mummy news is scarce, so will say Au Revoir

With fondest love to all at home

From Your loving son Vic

PS When I get away I will try to let you know in what part I am by spelling the first letter in each word after a —

PRG 373/13E/2/16

Somewhere in France

26/2/17

My Dear Mother

A few more lines, this time to wish you & Doll many happy returns of the 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> It will be a bit late for those days, but during the last 10 days I have had no chance of posting letters, but still my thoughts will be of you both on those days, & may they be happy days. Since writing last I have gone through some more experiences I have been up to the front & I suppose now am entitled to be called a dinkum soldier. The Batt was up there for 8 days I was only there for 6 days as the first two I spent in the hospital with influenza, but am practically free of that now thank goodness there is no doubt whatever about the days in the line being the hardest time of a soldier's life I used to think we were treated hard at times in the training camps, but I am quite satisfied I will never growl anymore about the training part also when I come home again growling will be cut right out of my programme



A couple of days before we went in the ground began to thaw & owing to that the ground was practically one big mud hole at times we were up to our middles in it quite common to be up to our knees needless to say it is impossible to keep ones feet dry. And when we left to come out again well I am sure you would not have known me, As we were practically covered in mud. I also had about 10 days growth of beard on, which did not improve matters as far as appearance Anyway we arrived out of the stunt with few casualties, and at present are camped in huts a few miles out of it. It is glorious to be able sit down dry, & practically away from the roar of guns.

It is about 3 weeks to a month since we changed our clothes & about 7 since I had a bath, but I think in a day or two, we will all be treated to a bathe & a change of clothing, which will be very acceptable as my clothes at present are always talking to me I am looking forward to another hunt this afternoon While up at the front I received a letter from both Doll & Dora, also the two cables that were sent for Xmas. They were on the late side for Xmas but nevertheless were very acceptable And yesterday I received quite a lot of letters, infact I think I must have received all of those that had nursed me since leaving Codford, so you can guess what a bonza day I spent reading letters. All the rest of the time was spent cleaning clothes equipment & rifles. It is a work of art to get the mud off, we have not finished yet, most of them are still brushing away. I have to have another go directly

I had a very pleasant surprise on coming out I saw Bob (?) walking along in charge of a group of men, Needless to say when I sang out Hallo Bob we both fell out of our (?) & had a talk. Bob is a Sgt in the 32<sup>nd</sup> Lewis guns. He came down to see me in the night, and again last night the first night we talked over sardines & tinned tomatoes, last night over the contents of a parcel I received from cousin Fanny. I also had one from Fred & Rosa Perkins All the cousins over here seem very good to me. I have not been lucky enough to receive any from PA up to date but am still in hopes, as I am looking out for some socks. I hope Bert was lucky enough for Duntroon to be opened up again, as that ought to keep him over in Australia long enough to miss this lot, & I can assure you it is worth missing I will keep on the look out for Will Smith also Harry & Norm (?) Will now say Au Revoir once more I will write again in a few days with best love to all & hoping everyone is well

From Your loving son

Vic

PRG 373/13E/2/20

France

April 3<sup>rd</sup> 17.

My Dear Mother

A few more lines from another spot in France We seem to be always on the move, always in a different place to write a letter from. No doubt the War News these times must seem A1 to all at home after so long of the same old news. I can imagine in Australia a lot being



added to the news. But no doubt about it at present the Allies seems to have got him on the move, & I hope it continues so, as I for one want to be home for next Xmas. This country is not good to me A rotten cold wet froggy hole I am beginning to think there is only one season here & that is winter, as soon as we have a fine day one can bet the next will be either snowing or else wet & windy Since writing last we have been at two or three different places. We camped a few days right near the place where the big push started last year. And to see it one can understand why the casualties were so heavy. Fritz's positions no doubt were very strong & in commanding positions On looking about at different graves I came across poor old Frank Lang I should say he is buried right in the spot he was killed He has a nice little cross over him I spent a little time trying to make the mound over him a bit straight I thought perhaps his people would like to know so took a copy of what is on his cross. It is this CR U3. I memory of Lieut F H Lang 5<sup>th</sup> Field Comp Aus (?) Killed here 26.7.16. 34 years. C of E He was killed just near Poziers. In another place I also saw Capt Jule (?) cross We stayed another couple of days in an old ruined Abbey. another one of Fritz strong holds that was It is like all other villages nothing but a mass of broken stones bricks & timber We camped in the old vaults cellars & dugouts And were not sorry to leave it behind, as for a sleeping compartment it was no good too wet & too much company especially in the shape of rats, they squealed & galloped all over us all night long.

The (?) has again changed & now we are up in the new country which has just been taken The towns are like all the rest in ruins Fritz seems as if he can't help but ruin everything he leaves behind even the fruit trees he has cut down & what building that were any good he left mined. We are camped in an old stable Last night we had a very heavy snow storm, I woke up about 2 o'clock this morning to myself in a pool of water & wet through It seems to be only a trifle though & one has to get used to it It is now three weeks since I have had any letters, and am looking forward to a mail very much, as no doubt in a few days we will be moving again up to the front. I will finish this later on & let you know if I get any letters during the next couple of days

April 5<sup>th</sup>

Well mother I received two letters last night one from you & one from Dora both written on Jan 13<sup>th</sup> Three weeks ago I received some letters dated 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan so these two must have gone astray, nevertheless they were very welcome, some of the boys got letters dated 2 & 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb so perhaps there will be some for me in a day or so.

My word mother I could spend a very enjoyable hour amongst the fruit trees at present, they sounded very nice in your letter If as you said Bert expected to leave in the beginning of Feb I suppose he is now in England, also Will Smith. I would very much like to meet them, but it is like looking for a needle in a haystack to look for anyone over here. Last night & this morning there has been a very heavy bombardment on not too far away from us I'll bet Fritz knew it We have been doing fatigue work cleaning, making, & repairing the roads there is a lot of work of that description now to keep up with the transports.

Au Revoir mummy hoping everyone is well & best love to all I remain your loving son Vic



No 9 General Corp

No 7 Ward

France

My Dear Mother & Home

You will see by the heading I have again shifted quarters this time into hospital, but thank goodness it is nothing very serious. I am not sure what hit me as the hole is a bit big for a machine gun bullet unless it was a dum dum. It went straight through my calf on the right leg missed the bone. It is getting on tip top of course it was very sore for a while, but not bad now as the bruise is coming out a1 On the morning of the 11<sup>th</sup> we Aust had rather an extensive hop over along our particular front, in places it was rather a hot shop as Fritz I think expected us, but all the same some of us got through and gained our objective which on our particular front was his two front lines of trenches no doubt by this you have seen accounts in the Australian papers. We went into the line on the 7<sup>th</sup> so I received a funny old birthday present. We are getting the best of treatment here & everyone is very kind to us all. Of course when here we all live in hopes of going across to England most of us are marked on our charts for there, but things are very uncertain owing I think to the submarine warfare on the hospital ships I wrote to cousin Nellie the other day and asked her to cable to you so I suppose ere this you know. I couldn't wire before as I have no money here, & was frightened if I sent to the Bank for some I would be shifted across to England in the meantime as everything is very uncertain. There is no doubt at present that Fritz is getting a bad time all along the line, May he continue to get it so I wont write anymore at present, infact their seems to be very little to write about, but will try & write more next time, I ought also to have some letters soon to answer.

Hoping everyone at home is A1 With fondest love to all from your loving son Vic

PRG 373/13E/2/32

Richmond Military Corp

Surrey

May 19<sup>th</sup> 1917

Dear Jack

I think I must owe you a letter the last one I had from you was a bonza long one. No two ways about it that to receive letters over here especially in France is just bonza, & I can tell you this boys don't half look forward to a mail Last time you wrote you wanted to know why it was the troops in France did not vote for conscription. I told you as short as I could perhaps it was censored so will tell you again. To cut it short the boys in France have had such a doing of it, that they consider it murder (or near enough to it) to compel anymore to come from Aussie. And then again they consider once conscription is brought in it is the



end of a free Australia (No doubt about it John Australia is the finest country in the world to my idea. When the vote for conscription took place I was in Codford & I voted yes, but dinkum I am like the rest now I have seen it, & wouldn't compel anyone (barring the few rotters of single chaps that wont come. And of course to get them one would have to get a lot of others, so under the circumstances let them stop at home It is no good for a peaceful life over there & I can tell you I am not looking forward to the next dose. I was dead lucky to get off with what I did, because it was hell let loose while I was there, & afterwards it was worse, & of lately has been the very devil it self. Our men have been cut to blazes They have been right in the worst hanging on to Bullecourt. I dont know why but it seems to me they always pick out about the (?) stop they can for the 1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Din. The 3<sup>rd</sup> have got their share around Armentreus, they have been around that part ever since they left England, take it all round though it is very quiet up there to what it was on the Somme. I heard the other day it was some of the 4<sup>th</sup> Din artillery that Fritz broke through & broke up about 3 weeks ago. Was talking to a visitor who works in (?) road (A1 F (?) the other day who told me the the 12<sup>th</sup> 16. 28. 45. 46 48 & 50<sup>th</sup> Bat got about knocked right out especially—All the same there is not the slightest doubt in my mind that we are winning slowly, but when the end will come I cant even tip It may be in a month or it may be another 2 years there is no doubt that Fritz has got hell itself from our Artillery, & am sure for every shell he sends over he gets 10 in return, At times our guns fairly make old mother earth tremble, when perhaps a 100 gun will start to bombard on the same particular front, especially if it is to slip a counter attack (when it is often rapid fire

They say some of his regiments got completely cut up, anyway I would sooner chance a barrage from him than go through all of ours. That is the one thing I dont like from the infantry point of view, is that the artillery will throw young crou (?) over at the infantry which perhaps is miles away while all one can do in return is duck his head & keep to the dugout if one is handy. Of course both sides are the same. That is one thing which the military do not do by numbers (Duck their (?) Every body does it from the Colonel to the private & never notices the next chap. Our old Sgt when I first went over told me to take no notice of anybody else, but when I thought the shells were getting to close to be comfortable, to duck & keep ducked)

Well brother I am getting along A1, the leg is still a bit sore, but doing fine. Am expecting to get sent to the convalescence camp any day now some are getting sent straight on leave & some are getting a short leave, both silly things to stop, because instead of their 14 days the men say oh well I'll go now till you get me, don't blame em either I haven't thought out where to go yet, have got Scotland on my mind at present.

This week I have received another mail from Aussie tell mother I have received ~~tw~~ the socks she made also a pair from Kath. & another pair from I dont know who with some tobacco & toffee all I could make out is Renmark on the stamp & Name & Address of Sender. Chowilla St perhaps the girls will know of someone. It was a1 to get them now as I have lost everything I had The first thing one thinks of when hit is to get rid of the harness & load he carries & get out to the dressing station. Of course we will be issued with a new kit when going on leave, but the socks are nothing like the home made ones. I hardly ever get a paper although Doll says she sends one every fortnight All I have received from Australia up to date is a parcel from Mary (?) from Walkerville road, a pair of knee pads from Mill & the three afore mentioned socks. of course one does not expect to get any parcels which reach the Batt when wounded as it is an understood thing that should one arrive those that are left in the platoon share it up among them Am lucky at getting to



England at this time of the year, the weather is just A1 for a holiday, & the country just looking at it very best.

I hope you & yours are keeping in the best tell Jack I have received the photo of him on the stool also of you & the kiddies it is very good also you & mable & according to photo everyone of you still look blooming Remember me to Mrs Haddrick, also the Pocock family when you see them Will close now wishing you 5 the best of good luck & wishes From Your loving brother Vic

PRG 373/13E/2/35

June 24<sup>th</sup> 1917.

No 2 Command Depot

Westham

Weymouth.

My Dear Mother & home

Well here it is another week gone by & up to date I have not had my furlough I am looking forward to it, but have not felt good enough to take it on I can't see the use of going on furlough & putting in half ones times lying down. The last 5 days I have been in hospital again with one of the new complaints the war has brought along the Drs call it Trench fever It is not dangerous but very painful It is something Rheumatic only no swelling & all the pain is in the bones principally in the legs & arms I think Thursday & Friday night were the worst two nights I have ever put in But today am feeling a bit better Am undergoing a course of electric massage as well as medicine so perhaps in the near future I will be alright again.

I met Maurice Beckwith the other day he seems to be fair & is on a home service job down here I dont think though the winter be any good to him, he wished to be remembered to you all Old Lou Bennett is also here working in the PO. I would not be surprised if Lou were not sent home. There are a tremendous lot of chaps down here booked for Aussie & from what I here they will not be very long now before they are leaving these shores (I wish I were going with em)

I received Kath's letter also Mary which they sent through cousin Nellie also had two from Walkerville Rd written on the same date, but up to date Dads has not come along I do wish it would as I am quite anxious to know just how every thing is going along on the farm.

I heard from Bert the other day he is at present also in hospital with the measles he said it was a very mild dose he had so suppose he will soon be out again. You will remember when I went over to France before Our Bert was at Etaples I hear now that Etaples has been taken over by Canadians & our Bert now is at Le Harve



I think during the last few days the news from the front has been a good deal better If only the Russians would come with a big push I believe we would have a chance of getting home for Xmas now, because I think in the East at present Germany is very weak owing to shifting such a lot of troops on to the Western front

Well mother I will try and write more next week but news seems very scarce down here With fondest love to all & hoping everyone is well I am

Your loving son Vic

PRG 373/13E/2/56

Murdcott

F 16<sup>th</sup> 18

My Dear Mother & home

A few more lines from this side of the world Perhaps in the near future when we arrive back on your side I wont have to write so many letters Ask Dora if she will write to you for me (Except sometimes) when I come back.

Great excitement I received a parcel from home this afternoon The one you sent me for Xmas It is I think the best of its kind I have been lucky enough to receive from you And it was addressed to the Bta so I suppose I was luckier still Needless to say at present I am smoking an Aust Three (?) with the almonds & raisons near at hand

Young Alf is still here I see him nearly everyday He still seems about the same, he was like myself very disgusted that the last three mails to Australia had been sunk, as he told me he had written quite a number of letters of late And my usuals with a few extra have also gone to the bottom It is too horrible for words to express.

While out for a walk yesterday afternoon saw two aeroplanes out flying One of them had the misfortune to run out of petrol and started a rather quick downward passage. It fell about 200 yds away from us It was smashed to pieces One of the men inside had to be carried away on a stretcher seriously hurt the other one managed to limp away not quite so bad. The plane itself was bent & broken very badly

I think a few letters back I told that up to date the troops had not had their rations cut down It is now about a week since a new order came into force cutting nearly everything down shorter One God send at present is their seems to be a big supply of potatoes & other vegs on hand otherwise the shortage would be very marked

Their seems to be no doubt that the food problem in my mind is as big a factor the British have to face as the Hun himself And as soon as one is so (?) the other will be beaten.



PRG 373/13E/2/61

Sutton Veney.

April 24<sup>th</sup> 18.

My Dear Mother

This morning I received a letter from Doll also one each from Mill & Dora. You know how pleased I was to get them I am answering yours or rather Dolls straight away & Doras on Friday after Anzac Day which is tomorrow There is going to be a great day here shorts and boxing galore to suit all a good spread at Noon and the evening is to be taken up with concerts in nearly all the camps, so really it should be a good day at present the weather points to being a really fine day but one can never build on tomorrow in this fair England I have heard so much about You know that dont you? You people in Australia seem to have had a particularly hot summer this year I wish we got a bit more sun than we do over here It would suit me a lot better still at present I am feeling pretty good again & provided I keep on going I will soon be back again helping to crush the detestable Hun again In one way I wont be sorry as I am just full up of this life in England

It was not half bad while I was at constant job I heard the other day from good authority that the 4 Div had had a special French distinction placed on the whole Division for the good work done in stopping the Hun in his advance on Amiens (Good old Aussie Now Mummy dear Doll tells me you have not been to well at time of her writing If you go getting sick I'll get quite cross with you I know though you will be better again by now In fact Doll said you were improving when she wrote You must not worry about me Mummy I will be quite alright and I feel sure in the near future I will be back again with you all And then for a happy time again For you, for me, for someone else, & infact all at home Do you know at present I feel as if home is in another place I wonder if it is You know I hope not because I did love the old house But I expect father has found it to much for him to do and in that case perhaps it is for the best. I wonder what you are going to do If you intend to build again and where. I hope not out of old Brighton. I was pleased to hear the Aunts are keeping so well Poor Ma dear How they must miss dear old Mary

No Dorothy Brown You need not worry about me running away with an English Princess I am quite safe Doll to return home to Aussie as I know someone else will return That is happy and full of thankfullness to think we were spared to come back again to those we love It is quite true though Quite a lot of our boys are getting married over here, but I dont think to the extent you think so Some of course are quite all right Others enough said from both sides of the argument. Tell Mill who also had a word to say on the same subject that the piece of poetry she sent me fitted me to the T.

Will close now and go and get some coal for tonights fire With very best love to you all and hoping everyone is quite well

From Your loving son Vic

PS I have just written to Nell They are good to both Bert & I. I am wiring tomorrow or rather Nell is for me for you to send me £25 pounds I have made the others (?) out well,



but at present I am getting way down And leave is always on the cards over here if one is lucky.

PRG 373/13E/2/64

Sutton Veney

May 22<sup>nd</sup> 1918

My Dear Dad

I have just had four days leave & while in London I received a letter from both Doll & Mill March 19 & 29<sup>th</sup> telling me how dear old mother was getting along If only I had not received your cable how different it would be to read the letters as they are both full of hope for her to get better again (we must all cheer up though Dad as it had to be & my memory will always be of how lucky I was to have had her for a mother

I was sorry to hear that Uncle Will had had news of Douglas Lakie dying in France of consumption Dad there is one of the little arguments come nearer home as regards conscription in Australia Was it right to send that lad to France being in the stage he must have been in With any fair examinations from a fair minded Dr do you think he could have been legitimately sent into a winter in France.

I know your views Dad on conscription but Dougs case is one of many more we know of but Australia knows nothing.

At present I am an orderly for the men coming in & going out of this Depot for how long I do not know as at present I am expecting to go to the O L B for a bit of training before going back to France as lately I have been feeling tip top again This warm weather suits me right down to the ground. We are having just perfect days The sun feels extra hot It is quite a different heat to Australia, a more moist heat I think if by any chance it could get up to say 110° we should die. The country too at this time of year is just perfect It is just what pictures & stories tell us it is, only the reality makes it quite a lot more enjoyable

I suppose at present you people in Australia are like us expecting every day to hear of the big push starting again I think though this time Dad he will find it a much harder job to get through The Yanks must make a big difference there are about 600 000 of them in France I am expecting great things from them during the coming year.

Am expecting to hear from you next mail Doll said in her letter that Mr Green had just on finished up. with the harvest Evidently you have come to a satisfactory arrangement for Green to carry on for another year or more likely I should think owing to what should be fallowed this & next year a two years agreement, but of course I dont know I am only surmising

Well Doll I am sorry I could not fulfill your dream you told me of in your letter, but never mind that good day is to come lets hope it is a lot nearer than we think it is.



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The last two letters I wrote home I mentioned the fact I want you to send Nell £30 send it straight to her I can then get it without any trouble at any time Lately I have been stony broke It is no good at all these times over here as everything is very dear

I will write again next week & let you know my movements So for the present Cheerio

And best of love to you all

From Yr loving son Vic