

Athenic

4 Oct.

My dear Bazel,

Your last letter was a pleasant surprise, and it was very good of you to send it. It was a coincidence that we both stayed at home that day with sore feet, and wrote to each other. I hope your poor foot is quite recovered - scalding is a fearfully painful thing. Mine has healed nicely, ~~but~~ I am afraid I will never get reconciled to those beastly misfit boots. You need not have worried about my health - it is simply splendid all the time, much better than before I became a soldier. I am getting extremely lean and light, but very hard.

You want to know all about everything, but we don't know anything about anything. It is about the most annoying thing we amateur soldiers have to put up with, to be always in the dark as to what is doing, and to have to obey stupid, contradictory orders without question, knowing that they are ~~for~~ wrong and having to do the opposite a minute later. But perhaps our officers will

improve with practice in organisation and management, and there is a certain pleasure in prompt and cheerful obedience ~~to~~ a good man. Well, I had better repeat the assurance that I am not grumbling, in spite of appearances to the contrary. We are being exceedingly well treated in the matter of leave - general leave every evening from six to 9.30, and on Saturday and Sunday from two to 9.30. Each company goes on guard for twenty-four hours every third day, and each man of the company has two hours on guard and four off, alternately. I have only had two turns yet though. I have not begun on the diary yet - it isn't worth while till we leave New Zealand - if we ever do.

By the way, I didn't bother to tell you explicitly that we were still on board, because I thought you would be sure to see it in the papers. Only the mounteds have gone into camp, for the horses' sake. I suppose it is on account of living on board that we get so much leave. The boat is certainly overcrowded; in our company's quarters

there are 282 bunks in a space no larger than plenty of school class-rooms, and a lot of that is occupied by a big hatchway in the middle, leading to the lower hold. You can imagine what a scene it is at bed-time, when half the men are drunk. Any number of amusing incidents ~~often~~ occur, besides a few disgusting ones.

I have been working in the head-quarters office since Friday. It was rather monotonous work, just making out interminable lists of names, and I hope to get it finished tomorrow, and get out with the troops again. Our pay is coming tomorrow, so rumour hath it, and it will receive a warm welcome.

There is a growing opinion that we will be sent home again before long. We are evidently not leaving till January, and it hardly seems likely that we will be kept like this so long. I hope we are dismissed for a while anyhow.

Good-bye now. I am late for dinner.
With love from
Cecis