

Overseas Base

Gezira, Cairo

13 Feb. '16.

My dear Hazel,

My mail has gone wrong again - I hope not for long. They have had plenty of time to send it on here, but I have not got any yet. I have still no idea when I will be leaving here. Some are taken very suddenly, at perhaps half an hour's notice, others remain here for weeks. I have had a very good time here so far. I met Bill Summers in town last Sunday, and spent the afternoon and evening with him. On Thursday I went to Zeitoun and saw Bill and Eddie Withell, The latter was leaving ~~for~~ next day to join

the engineers, so I just got him
in time. He will probably keep
his three stripes there, so he is
ahead of me already. Well, I am
lucky to be alive, so it is no use
complaining of hard luck in
less important matters. Les. Hutton
was in this camp for a time, but
left for New Zealand some days
ago. He is returning with a
commission, which is only what
he should have had at first,
but it is much more satisfactory
to have earned it on service.

There are some gardens just
across the river from here, where
I generally spend the morning.
A number of Egyptian and Greek
students come there every day,
also some jolly nice nurse-girls.

I am getting plenty of practice in French over there, and can get on pretty well in conversation, but when two of them speak to each other they lose me. They clip the sentences so much, use lots of slang and speak very rapidly. My friend Farquhar introduced me to some of them. He was in what he thought was a permanent ^{job} here, but he was called away yesterday. The fellows I came with have also moved on, and there is hardly anyone I know in camp, but I always drop across some one when I go to town. One day I met Habites - perhaps you remember him at College - and yesterday two of our company officers. They told me our boys are doing

very solid divisional training, and advised me to keep away from it, but I want to get back, or I may be left out of the battalion altogether. Cairo is just the same, but I have lost trace of the few civilian acquaintances I had. There is a good new Y. M. C. A. place in the Esbekieh gardens, in what used to be a skating rink. I am not reading much now - only two books in the last ten days - "The Pleasant Land of France" and "L'Immortel" (Alphonse Daudet). So far I have not revisited any of the tourist places, though I know if I could raise the energy I would enjoy seeing all the wonders again. I have written in a hurry to catch the mail - please excuse.

With much love to you, dear
from
Cecil.