

[Front line] 6 August

My dear Hazel,

I am hoping to write from "Blighty" next week, as I am expecting to get word of the probationary commission in the Royal Engineers which I told you about. I was sent for yesterday, and asked some very satisfactory questions about education etc, and the final decision may come tomorrow or it may be weeks. At any rate it should be almost a certainty for me. There is one month's probationary instruction at Woolwich or Chatham, at the end of which there is an exam. and some weeding out, then a regular course of, I suppose, several months. I am telling you this in anticipation so that

you will understand what I am doing if I cable home that I am in England. It will be good to think that poor Mother will have no worry about me for a few months, at least.

During the week we had a short rest in the third line, but we are back again in the old locality now. The periods of billeting in town have been practically cut out for some time past, but I believe we will get a rest before very long. But it is not a very strenuous life lately, and we don't really need a rest much.

We are getting perfectly glorious weather now. One day I got down town for a few hours, and was picking fruit in a

real garden, just like home. It was the first private garden I have been in since I left home. There is a museum of shell fragments in this trench, collected by the ducklanders, and some of the "tickets" are amusing, like this: "This interesting specimen struck an Anzac on the breast pocket, but thanks to the amount of back pay in his pay-book it luckily failed to penetrate. The pay-master has been mentioned in despatches." The native wit of the average rough colonial is a wonderful thing, but it very seldom bears repetition, as so much depends on being familiar with all the circumstances and allusions and characters concerned. English people boast that they always "keep

on smiling" but it is often a set smile and a grim one. Our boys are full of happy laughter all the time. I only hope I get on as well with the "Tommies" if I ever have to command them. No doubt they are good fellows but not quite ~~so~~ like our own.

Well, it seems Fritz had the laugh of us about Semberg and Roumania but anyhow both items are likely to be soon fulfilled, and the news is so consistently good nowadays that one has no need to feel impatient. All is going well and we can safely expect the best.

I must close now, dear. Perhaps I will get a letter from you before next Sunday.

With best wishes and lots of love
from Cecil.

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