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26th Dec., 1941

19088 Pte. R.T. Street,
I. Section,
Headquarters Company,
26th Battalion,
2nd. N. Z. E. F.
Middle East Forces.

Dear Mum & Dad,

Well, here I am again,
sitting on the edge of my bunk in the dug-out.
Frank & Ralph are both scratching away with their
pens as they write home, telling their people of the
two outstanding events of this week; ① the flood
which occurred on Monday night & ② Christmas
dinner yesterday. Outside, or I should say,
up on top, the wind is blowing from across
the desert, but we are quite comfortable in here
with no draughts, & we now have a kerosene
lantern hanging from a beam; one which Ralph
found on a rubbish heap & for which we made

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-a glass out of a cut down bottle. It gives quite a good light. We have just eaten some of the cake which Edna sent for Xmas (made by the 'Ritz' of Nelson.) & which we cut yesterday. It is a first-rate cake; nice & moist & with plenty of fruit. I haven't received your cake yet, - or Edna's parcel, but I expect they will come to hand soon.

Well, Xmas. Day was fine here, though an unpleasant wind was blowing. It seems to blow here on more days than not. A big mess-tent had been erected - during the past week & we had our Xmas. dinner here, sitting - about on the sandy floor like a lot of school-boys at a picnic. What a dinner we had, in such a God forsaken place! It was reminiscent of home, having N. Z. mutton, green peas, boiled & baked potatoes, & cauliflower, followed by plum pudding & fruit-salad. I went back for a return

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(nothing unusual for me). The food was served out by our officers. My word, it was a treat to eat such well cooked food. Our cook was deserving of the highest praise. Had you tested the dinner, you would have thought you were back in N. 3. We were each given a bottle of beer to go with the meal, so you can see that we were well treated.

Frank & Ralph & I staggered back to our dug-out, lay down & slept till tea time. Then more food; a mince pie & piece, piece of Xmas. cake & nuts.

I was thinking of you back in N. 3. yesterday, wondering what sort of day you had. I can picture the four of you; you, Dad, Aunt Bess & Florrie. The days when we all used to gather up at Aunt Grace's, on the lawn under the chestnut tree, for Xmas. dinner seem to be a thing of the past. But who knows? Maybe next Xmas. will see us

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back again in the same old spot. I hope so.
Yesterday morning, we were each given
a patriotic parcel. Mine was from a Mrs.
Blapham of Feilding, & her parcel among other
things, - contained a tin of home made "ginger-
-nuts" & a tin of shortbread. I have written
her a line, thanking her for the gift. On
the outside of the parcel was a list of the
-contents, the last one being a "packet of
Dr. Morse's Indian Root Pills!"
I haven't had need of them yet.

Now I must tell you of the
phenomenon which occurred on Monday
night - to wit, a - cloud - burst & flood.
You wouldn't think such a thing possible
here, & yet happen it - did. I was
awakened at 11.30 p.m. by the noise of
thunder. I thought at first it was artillery
firing, it was so loud. However, as soon

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of as I knew what it was, I went off to sleep again. I was awakened some minutes later by Ralph who was calling out "Ray! Ray! The water's coming in!" I fumbled for my matches & lit the candle. Yes, the water was coming in all right, a muddy stream of it & soon it was six inches deep on the floor of our dug-out. Had we rolled out of our bunks, we could have had a bath then & there. We put on our boots & began bailing out the water in benzine tins. In half-an-hour, we had most of it out. Now, our quarters are situated on top of a rocky rise. For the quantity of water which came in, there must have been a sort of "cloud-burst." It was all over in such a short space of time. The water which came pouring in, came down the passage way which is the entrance to our dug-out. Now, down on the flat ground, many

6/ Aug- outs were ruined. Some had four feet of water in them in no time. In B. Comp- any's area, they suffered worst. A wireless set, - canteen stores, Xmas. cakes & a quantity of mail the boys had written were covered with water & mud. A short distance from here are two lakes of water which have been there since Monday morning. The water just rushed down the slopes as it hadn't time to soak in.

I remember seeing a photo in the Free Lance a year or so ago, showing the result of a sudden downpour somewhere in these parts, in which a tent was flooded to a depth of several feet. Now I know how such an occurrence was possible. None of our gear was affected by the water as we have everything stowed away on shelves above our bunks.

27th. Here I am again. I left the letter last night as two of our section came

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in for a chat.

Yesterday was Boxing Day. We all went for a route march of about 8 miles, taking our rations with us. Unfortunately it was very windy & there was quite a bit of sand flying which made it not so good. Our section had a loaf & a tin of salmon. Some others had the butter, but we became separated at lunch time, so we did without it. You get used to things like that here, & we did very well on what fare we had. Moreover, we had eaten enough the day before to last us for some time.

This morning I noticed & counted over 70 sacks of parcels that had just arrived by truck, so I suppose there will be something for me among them. This afternoon Frank, Ralph & I went for a walk during the course of which we had a paddle in the sea & washed our towels & hands.

Ikerchiefs in the salt water. Ralph stopped right off & splashed about for a minute or two, but the water was on the cold side. The last time we had a swim, Ralph sat down on a rock & cut his posterior. We told him an octopus must have bit him. We often have a good laugh over things like this.

On one day during the week, our section went out on a reconnaissance of a certain part of the country in this area. We went in our truck & had an interesting day, taking our lunch & boiling the billy ~~carried~~ on a primus carried on the truck. My word, we went over some rough places, up slopes with rocks sticking up everywhere. All the trucks in these parts have very big & strong tyres. They need them to stand up to desert conditions. Three of us sat up on top just behind the cab, & had a grand view of every-

91 - thing. There isn't much to see, mark you, in the way of scenery; just barren, undulating country with tufts of camel-grass here & there.

I was very pleased to receive a letter from you both & / on Wednesday of this week. (No. 12) & by the same mail, one from Edna & one from Aunty Lou. It was a lucky day for me. Many thanks, Mum, for the 9d. stamp you enclose with your letter. It is a great help. Edna sends one with her letter too.

Well, time marches on, & it is time I brought this letter to a close. I trust that you are receiving my mail regularly. I write usually once a week. I am fit & well & hope that these lines find you all well in Nelson. I trust that you had a happy little gathering on Thurs. Day & that the New

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Year will bring good things for us all
Love from your son,
Rewai

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