

Letters from Harold Murray

(below on all if stated otherwise)

Reply to Pte H D Murray

12 Section 3rd Platoon

“M”Company, Dubbo

1

27/7/1916

Dear Flo,

I received your letter yesterday and was pleased to hear from you. I wish that I was with Tom now he is having all the fun on his own, but I suppose my turn will come I only hope it is soon. I had a letter from Mrs. Blanks today and she told me that Tom was in the firing line. Well, the only harm I wish him is that he comes out of it O.K. I'd like to be with him, that is all I wish. It is raining again up here again and the ground is sloppy. It doesn't get a chance to dry because of the rain. I was inoculated again today and my arm is pretty sore but ill soon get over that. I have escaped being sick so far not even have a cold and never felt better in my life so you don't want to worry about me being sick at all. I was surprised to hear about Tiny being gone but you will know him again if see him and you want to it hot for the one that has got him. I wrote to Barney and he ought to have it by this, and I wrote to Ruby and I am expecting an answer to-morrow. how is Nutty getting on. I would like him to have a taste of a soldiers life it would kill him stone dead. They only tell you to-do a thing once and if it done straight away they shove you in the guard tent. I haven't had that experience yet so I cant tell you what it is like and what's more I don't want it. I think I have told you all the news at present and my arm is pretty sore I will draw to a close Remember me to Mrs Blanks. Barney Martin & Rod & others. Kiss the Kiddies for me Hooray

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX From your Loving Brother Lal

Love & Kisses to all.

2

1/8/1916

Dear Flo,

Just a few lines in answer to your two letters which I received yesterday & one today & I am very pleased to know that you and the kiddies are keeping well as it leaves me at present. I was talking to a lady in the Barbers shop in Dubbo and I asked her did she know a Mrs. Levings? And she told me that a Mrs Tom Levings lived in Fitzroy St so I made up my mind to go over last

Saturday afternoon and see if it was the one I wanted but on Saturday morning our company was quarantined and all leave stopped until further orders so I couldn't get away but when we are allowed out I will go straight over. The reason our company is quarantining is that a few cases of meningitis & measles & Diphtheria has broken out so the rest of our company were put under observation But you don't want to worry about me as I have not been in the hospital yet so I am all right. I am sending £2-10-0 in this letter and keeping a few Bob to save my fare to go to Sydney as soon as I get leave so I will let you know when I'm coming down I would have written yesterday but I was on sentry duty so I never had any time. Sentry duty in the showground is only kids play to here because up here you get a gun with fixed bayonet and the officers are prowling around all night trying to catch the sentry asleep or off his guard if he does he shoves him under a rest and when he is tried he gets fined a coupe of quid but they never caught any of us last night so we are alright. I had a letter from Ruby and she said she wrote to you to meet here and never turned up Tell the kiddies that I will give them plenty of pennies when I come down to make up for lost time and will buy them and you a present. I got my photo taken on postcards with a few of my tent mates and as so as I get them I will send them down. You don't want to worry about me or Charlie being sick as I never felt better in my life. I am writing to Martin at the same time as I write this so he will get it as soon as you get this. I have a large account to settle with Nutty when I come down. I also received the letter from Glad and value it more than anything that I have got or will ever get. I think I have told you all the news at present and will draw to a close with love and kisses to you and the kiddies

From your Loving Brother Lal.

3

3/8/1916

Dear Flo,

Just a few lines to say I received your three letters and telegram today and I cant understand you not getting any word as I have written three letters since your last one. Tell the Kiddies that they will get plenty of pictures when I come down and you don't want to worry about me being sick because I never felt better in my life. Soldiers life is not bad but I think Charlie feels it pretty hard, he is bound to feel it more than me on account of compulsory so consequently I know the drill it wont be long now before I am down as we were taken out of quarantine today so you don't want to worry about me being sick at all. I brought a bit of butter to-day and so help me God it nearly made me sick on account of not being used to it. We get plenty of rain up here and it makes the ground terrible muddy and it is no use of cleaning boots Tell Nut that if he behaves himself that we will have a good time when I reach Sydney I am enclosing three photos taken outside our tent so you can see by the Photo whether we like it or not. I think I have old you all the news at present and I want room for the photos so we will draw to a close with love & kisses to all Hooray

(x's) From you Loving Bro Lal Remember me to Bill Mabblerley & all Hands

P.S. If you have any large handkerchiefs send them up but don't go and buy any or there will be a row. Lal

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7/8/1916

Dear Flo,

Just a few lines to let you know that I received your two cards and pleased to hear that everything is O.K. I wrote to Ruby about that letter and she sent Nutty's letter for me to read and it was just what they wanted I would have written before but Harold went home on Friday night and I told him to go and let you know that I was alright but when he came this morning he said that he couldn't go down as he took sick. Bluey got a card and is writing to-night to you so you will get both together I haven't too much news to tell you nor have I got much time as we are on guard or picket of a night. Don't worry if you do not get a letter till Saturday after this one as we are having night Route Marches this week and I won't have time to write but (2) If I get a chance I will drop a note to you Mrs Levings lives in Fitzroy St but I haven't been able to see her yet. This is all the news at present so will draw to a close longer one next time. Remember me to all Hooray Kisses to Kiddies xxx From Your Loving Bro Lal

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9/8/1916

Soldiers Club Dubbo letterhead

Dear Flo,

I received the parcel this morning & thanks for it as they were badly wanted I don't know if it is right or not but there is talk of us going to Liverpool in the next fortnight so I will write & let you know how things are going later on. I have received three cards but no letters for a week and neither has Charlie, he told me he has written two or three to you. I am having the time of my life no sickness so far so I think I am pretty lucky. I have no received word from Canterbury yet since I sent the photo but I haven't lost any sleep over it. Tell Reg I will write when I have more time to myself as I don't get too much so far. Flo if you get your Photo taken keep mine until I come down as it will only get knocked about up here so keep it until I come down. We have had a spell of fine weather lately so it is not so bad I am expecting my uniform this week so will let you know when I get it. I think I have told you all the news at present (....) a close with Love and Kisses to all. Hooray xxx From Your Loving Bro Lal Kisses for You and the Kiddies

6

YMCA letter head

15/8/1916

Dear Flo,

I received your welcome letter to-day and pleased to hear that you are keeping well also the Kiddies. I am surprised at the way Nutty is going on one minute He sticks up for you and then he goes and mucks up but you can tell him from me that if he don't keep paying 17/6 he is in for a lively few minutes from me when I come down. We had some more rain to-day and Botany is not in the same street as Duboo for mud - why if we only got as much mud as you get in Botany we would think we were in heaven. We will be paid on Thursday so if I can catch the mail you will get it on Friday. If not on Saturday so write straight away and let me know if you receive it alright. Harold T is in the hospital but so far I don't know what is up with him there is a funeral tomorrow of one of our Company he died of meningitis after being three weeks bad. so he never got a chance to go to the war. still I suppose he is better off than some of us here in Dubbo. I think I have told you all the news at present so will draw to a close with Love & Kisses to all. Hooray.

Xxxxxx From Your Loving Bro Lal.

7

Blank paper

At sea

Sunday 12th

Dear Flo & Reg,

Just a not to let you know that I am still going strong everything is lovely now we get plenty of amusements & sport such as Boxing Tournaments, Concerts and they are holding a sports on board so the trip is livening up everyday. Don't be surprised if you get letters all scratchy as all our letters are censored now but I don't think there is anything in mine that wants crossing out. We have had some rough weather since leaving Sydney but at the present moment it is the worst lot we have struck. but I am quite used to it now and it doesn't make any difference except when I get drenched with water coming over the side I will send a cable as soon as I reach England so look out for it. The days pass terrible quick we are no sooner out of bed than it is time to turn in again. I have been sleeping on deck ever I came aboard and I am feeling dead well. wake up as fresh as a daisy all we are doing is eat sleep & Read. there are plenty of books on board so it is just in my line. I suppose the Kiddies miss me now being away so long but never mind they are in for a good time when I got back if ever I have that much luck. As Christmas will be over before you get another letter from me. I will wish you all A Merry Christmas & A Happy New Year to All with Love & Kisses xxx Remember me to Sis & M.

From Your Loving Brother Lal

P.S. Write soon

8

Blank paper

No.6210

17th Rein 20th Bat

5th Brige AIF

11 Jan 1917

Dear Flo and Reg,

Just a few lines hoping you are in the best of health as it leaves me at present. I have just come back to harness again after having four Days leave in London. I had a royal time treated well by everybody I meet saw a lot of things worth travelling to see & I was sorry when the time was up & I had to return to camp again. But for all that I wont be sorry when I get back to Sydney again I got a letter from May yesterday and she seems to have mixed up Milly Riley with a girl named May Riley I know the May Riley she means & I was with a chap in the 18th Batt that went with her while he was with Sydney & he told me a little bit about her that was not too pleasant to hear I happened to be helping him to address some letter when I came across the address& I asked him her Christian name & he told me & also a few things about her. Anyhow when I get back if I have the luck I know what girl to go with that is if I'm not knocked about too much I suppose you can guess who it is if you're too blind if not you are too blind to see your nose. Perhaps someone else can tell you if you don't know but I think you do. Ask Ma Blanks she might be able to tell you ask her to show you the first letter I wrote to her I mean the one I posted from Cape Town Anyhow to change the subject I went & saw Buckingham Palance where the King lives & saw the Kings Guard change a practice that has been carried on for 400 years also St. James Palance where Queen Alexandria is living and saw the house where Lord Kitchener lived when he was in London saw the Guildhall where the Lord Mayor of London holds office. The old fellow that was showing us around was in the room with the heads so we had a rest in the Lord Mayors chair a great piece of work, also went through St. Pauls Cathedral which took 35 years to build it is one of the Grandest places you ever set eyes on & people go there three times a day to pray for soldiers at the front. We then went to the Tower of London where we saw the Crown Jewels a sight worth travelling the world to see. On the whole we saw more sights than ever to see in one day but all that I would rather be in Sydney it is no wonder that pommies go to Australia they don't know what a decent feed at a reasonable price is until they go there You have to pay dear for everything over here. I think so much of England & its climate that the first one that mentions England or any place in it if ever I have the luck to get back I will hit him that hard he wont be able to say England for months It is all rain, snow, mud & slush & the wind blowing a gale & we have to get well muffled up when we go on parade I send a few curios with the last mail so when you write let me know if you received them alright. I hope the Kiddies are keeping well also Remember me to Cis Martin & Rod & tell them I hope they are keeping well. I think I have told you all the news at present so will close with Love & Kisses Hooray xxxx From Your Loving Bro Lal

9

YMCA letterhead

Febr 2nd 1917

I would have got something for all hands but they don't believe on tick in London & we all broke so I couldn't nip any but never mind if I get the chance again I will send you all something but you said in your last letter to try & send them a card so I did my best. I am sending some flags out of cigarette packets so you can work them on a cushion cover. I will try & get my dial taken again before I leaves for France & send you all one & that will be the last. Since I started to write this I have bumped George Hartigan he has just arrived & he nearly went mad when he saw me. He is going to get transferred with me so if he comes off we will be together again so I only hope he come off. It might mean stopping back here for a couple of weeks until he catches up to me but I would stop back a month or two months if I could only be with him. He wrote a letter to you from Durbin so you ought to have it long ago he is looking well & is anxious to get with me in the next letter I write I hope to be able to tell you that we are together also to let you know that I have heard from Jack. I have just found out that his camp is ten miles from us & I have written to him so I may have some news to tell you about him next week. I think I have told you all the news at present so I will close with Love and Kisses. Hooray. Xxxxxxx From Your Loving Brother Lal. \

Remember me to all Hands

P.S. Hartigan Lost that letter and Photo that you gave him for me Somebody pinched his pocket Book that he had it in.

10

Blank paper

No.6210

Pr. H. D. Murray

17th Rein

20th Batt

AIF

FEB 12th 1917

Dear Flo and Reg,

Just a few lines in answer to your welcome letter and cards which I received on Saturday (10.2.17) I was very pleased that your Reg & my two little cock sparrows are O.K. I was sorry to hear about my good old Pal Tom but if it is true that he is in hospital poor Ma will know where he is & can be assured that he is getting well treated still for all that I am sorry that he is wounded at all I hope I have better luck. I don't want any money so you can make up your mind to spend it all don't start saving anything for me I will be alright you just look after yourselves I cant find jack at present as Salisbury Plains is a large place & I heard that he is camped about ten miles from me I have sent a letter to the place but so far have not received any answer to it. We have a few blokes with us that thought the war would be all over by the time they got here & have found out

they have made a bloomer no doubt it is all over by that I mean all over France but it is not what they wanted. I am expecting to be here for another two to three weeks yet as I have twisted my ankle & sprained but it is not serious it will be right in about a weeks time so you need't worry about it only for that I would have left here to France tonight but it has put me back still I wont be here too long you can bet your life I will look after that. I am sending a card with this so look out for it. I think I have told you all the news at present so will close with love and Kisses. From Your Loving Brother Lal. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

11

Blank paper

Somewhere in France 6210

Pte H.D. Murray

"C" Company

20th Batt

AIF

March 31st

Dear Flo and Reg,

Just a few lines hoping you are all in the best of health as it leaves me at present I have been in the thick of it since I last wrote & it must be a month ago but now we are out of the trenches for a bit of a spell I have got a bit of time to write a few letters. You need't worry about me I am having a good time here & still alive & kicking not even a scratch so far. You say you put in a quite X-mas, the way things are going over here if they only continue like it I think you can reckon on having us home for this X-mas if not it wont be much later. Fritz is getting a hell of a hiding now and I don't think he will hold on for too long. Warfare isn't bad only for the Iron Foundries they toss about but I am quite used to it now & don't take any notice of them except when they begin to drop too close & then we dive for a shell hole. I am glad to hear that you had a good time at Manly. Tell the Kiddies they will get pently of Merry-Go-Round when I get back. If anyone writes or wires over to you for any money don't send because I don't want it & will not send for it so don't take any notice of any money matters. The only thing I want is to keep the mail up & I will be satisfied. As soon as I get a chance, I will send you a souvenir. I have not bumped Jack yet but I heard he has just arrived over here there is not much chance of seeing him yet a while but I will try & see him if possible

Bluey Downs is still going strong I saw him the day we came out of the trenches. I think I have told you all the news so will close with Love & Kisses. Hooray

From Your Loving Brother Lal xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

P.S. Don't forget to put "C" Company instead of 17th Rein

12

Blank paper

France

June 29th 1917

Dear Flo,

Just a few lines in answer to your letter Dated 28/4/17 & was pleased to hear that you are all well as it leaves me as present we are still out of the trenches & having a good time. Tell Barney to write & also send DeLancy's address & I will find him. George is still going strong & has written but has not had any for a long while. I have not received any photos yet but only one that Reg sent We spent our Easter very cold it was snowing at the time not like the last one. Anyhow I know the next one will be better. I have had one parcel since I left from Ruby & that arrived a month ago. We have been having good weather lately nice and warm but it rained pretty hard last night & washed us out. I had a letter from Dad and he told me that Les Cox left last November with the Engineers so if you can find out his full address let me know & I will try & find him. He said that Mum was in P.A. Hospital with a few bones broken it is a wonder you didn't let me know before he said that she is looking better than ever she did so that is alright. I forgot when writing to Rub to tell her that Reg Young is in England & is expecting to be over here shortly so you can tell her. I think I have told you all the news at present so will close with Love & Kisses & Hooray. From Your Loving Brother Lal.

13

YMCA letterhead

France

August 10th

Dear Flo,

Just a few lines in answer to your letter Dated (27/5/17) & was pleased to hear that all are in the best of health so it leaves me at present. You don't want to worry about me as everything is O.K. & it was only a scratch I got. I had a letter from Tom a few days ago he is back in England again & by all accounts is doing well He has a girl in Birmingham & he says he is not thinking of marrying her, he said she thinks he is going to take her back to Australia with him but he said she is making a bloomer. I saw Will again the other day & he is still going strong George is still the same as ever but not quite so fat. I saw Bill Russell yesterday & he is still going strong. We have been getting very little mail lately as some of the boats have been sunk & I think my parcel was on one of them as I have not got it yet. I am sending you a card this mail & if I can get another one in time I will send Mary one so tell her if she does not get it this mail she will get it next one also a letter. I am getting my Photo done & as soon as it is finished I will send it home I think I have told you all the news at present so will close with Love & Kisses. Give my love to the Kiddies.

From Your Loving Brother Lal.

14

Blank Paper

France

August 20th 1917

Dear Flo,

Just a few lines in answer to your welcome letter which I received today Dated 30/5/17 & was pleased to hear that you are all well as it leaves me at present. I have had a couples of letters from Tom to say that he was doing well. I shook him up about not writing home & he says he can't understand why she has not received them as he writes regular & says he hopes shes not worrying about him so you can tell his mum the next time you see her that he is O.K. and not to worry. I have not received any letters from Cis or Rod yet & have lost the address you sent me. It is about time that ?? .. and left

.. he was going to stop in camp for the duration of the war. you say that Reg is tired of camp already I should think he would be you know yourself he shouldn't be in at all & whoever kidded him to enlist ought to have more sense & if the Military Authorities find out his right age they will make it pretty warm for him & I don't suppose it is his fault as I have a fair idea that somebody has either chipped him about me being over here & in stopping behind or else some good have ? ? him into it. Anyway whoever they are ought to have minded their own business as he is far too young to be in them at all. I am going up to see Hilly in a few days time so will let you know how he is getting on in the next letter. Gary is still going strong & as fit as ever also Bill Russell I see them both pretty often

15 – separate from last letter (doesn't match)

(2)

...soon. As you can. I am writing a letter to Benny tonight and see how he is getting along. Charlie has not had one drink since he came here neither have I so you don't want to worry about me getting pinched for being drunk. The beer & spirits they sell up here is dosed so that the reason we don't touch it. I have written a letter to barney so he will get it the same time as you get this. I went to the Pictures up here tonight & the only fault was the fleas. the place was lousy with them so we soon shifted out. I done my washing today and crikey it was tough. that's the time when you hear them call mother when they have to do their own washing. When you write let me know if Nutty is any different if he isn't I will deal with him when I come down so don't forget to let me know. How is Dave's hand getting on tell him I hope it is better by now & remember me to him I was sorry to hear about Arthur's sister so if you see any of them remember me to them. I think I have told you all the news at present so I will draw to a close. Kisses for Gladys & Ruby & yourself. Xxxxxxxx

I remain Your Loving Brother Lal.