

LETTERS FROM GEOFFREY PETHER TO HIS FAMILY 1914 - 1917

Heidelberg College, Heidelberg

31/5/14

"I suppose Babs will be writing "society novels" before long eh? Pleased her calligraphy is so good."

Dear Dad

I will honour you with a little blue ink as I wish to try its colour. I was very pleased to receive your long letter, also your compliments on my being a monitor. As you suggest I endeavour to temple justice with mercy. Although in handling the kids' cubicles firmness has to be the order of the day.

Ayrton does not at all know what sort of business he is going into in Berlin. His Father William Ayrton is a manufacturer of cotton machinery and does a little business with the celebrated Coats' firm. I do not know yet if I shall be in the school house boat but it is possible. I should probably row as bow. As this is my last term at Heidelberg I am beginning to think of suitable souvenirs. It has occurred to me that I could carry away that corner tower in the earth (the one we went up by stealth and erect it as a rocker on the garden at "Anuskad" Earth View or whatever it will be. I will be pleased to have a photo of the school chaps as a reminder of the happy days, etc ad infinitum. The church was crowded to day Whit Sunday so I thought it suitable to double my contribution and gave 10 ff. Mr Reynolds the English master, 3 other boys and self have been arranging boxing matches before breakfast, getting up at 6.30 for days a week. I boxed a few rounds with Mr Reynolds the other day on points I knocked him down in the 1st round but he was only counted up to 3. I am looking gloomily forward to Doc's garden party. I know however that you get ices, strawberries and cream which is not at all bad. Cherries are now 25pf a pound and are ripe on the trees in Heidelberg. The crop in the Breisgau (South Baden) was picked on Wednesday - Saturday.

Your newspaper cuttings were very interesting, I fear that Hamel is gone for good. My shorthand is getting on satisfactorily but in this as in maths I am rather slow. I enclose a zethel for a straw hat. I have not been able to get mine to look decent as I explained in my last. I fear that I have been rather extravagant this term as I have spent 7m - 50 pf on books this term but I think that to understand a nation you must know something of their history, development, etc. A lot of fellows say off hand that the Germans are all fools which show them to be very ignorant, in fact nothing annoys me more. I see that I have still 4m in hand so I have not wasted the money I bought with me. I am including subject matter for everyone this time and fairly closely written I cannot help admiring the domestic architecture of Germany. They seem to make the outside of the houses much more attractive than at home. I hope you will be coming to Germany in the summer so that we may go to Belgium, Waterloo, etc. I see that the Belgian govt proposes to preserve the field of battle for all time. Jolly good wheeze. The govt seem to have done good bis in South Persia with the oil interests (for political condition of Persia see my last letter to Allan). You must insist on his not being "close" with my communications to him if they are not private or of import to the state.

The Corps goes to camp at Aldershot this year, I wish I could be there, perhaps I shall be able to go to camp again in a few years. I believe V Culling is going to try for his A cert this term. I am enclosing a few photos which you will kindly look after for me. Please send on that encyclo, the Dic does not matter. Just got my Pauline on Friday, nothing particularly interesting. I also enclose a picture of British and German sailors watching athletic sports at Kiel. You will notice that the German seamen wear their cap covers loose such as xx. By the by when I am in Cologne I should like to get the "Times" foreign weekly edition' but there is plenty of time yet. Great speech of Bols' no doubt but reported rather disjointedly. Would like to have a letter from All before the end of term if he can manage it and also news of where he is going into camp, address, date, etc. Also does he know if the Cullings have moved from West View. Please write an interesting letter next week. Try and find out where the army manoeuvres are this year.

Had a jolly fine feed at Doc's last Tuesday. He is really one of the nicest men I've met.

Sunday morning Have just seen two batteries of field artillery pass the school. Ayrton is going to Berlin next term and we think we might be able to arrange the journey together. The three photos are different views of the castle from our side of the river near the school.

Well I must close now, try and write an interesting letter x x x to Babs and love to Allan and all.

Your affec son
Geoffrey

P.S. It was fearfully hot yesterday so now we are getting a thunder storm as the result.
Do you like this ink of mine.

Heidelberg College, Heidelberg
12/7/14

Dear Mother

Your letter arrived somewhat late last week but I will on this occasion overlook the error. On Thursday we had a holiday from 11 o'clock for the Grand Duke of Baden's birthday. I have never seen such illegible cacography as Dorothy's. By the by I had forgotten that I had written Mr Baker a letter, I thought I had only sent a P.C. I could see that a stamp had been stuck on your letter as the post mark had left the spot clear where the stamp had been. I have not yet received Baby's photo but am expecting it daily. The town regatta is held next Sunday so we do not get any church or collect. Am glad Dad will be at Frinton all the time; we shall be able to make a few "dusfhige" together. Do you see that the Rev Everard Digby the gent who used to be at the Neasden mission has got into a row with some old bishop because he umpired a boxing match or something at Olympia. It is high time Dad wrote to Doc about a billet for me and quarters for my heavy artillery in Cologne or else there will be no time to arrange things. Hope Allan got my letter safe on Saturday.

I regret to announce that I shall not be able to get any receipts out of our cook as she is a greasy old woman who always shuffles about in carpet slippers and in summer she is decidedly pungent as she is also never supposed to wash. I am getting fearfully spotty in the face, I is so much sweating due to rowing which makes one like this and I always cut my face when I shave now owing to these spotty irregularities. I may explain to you that an accumulator is not an infernal machine and in no wise inclined to explode. You could therefore come to no harm if you caught it firmly between the thumb and index finger and just saw if there was any acid in it, or if you like you could examine it by means of a telescope from a distance. Kindly remind Allan not to forget my instructions re above. I might inform you that I have written the following people none of whom have replied, Aunt Prill, Mr Butler, Rev Baker, Chindser, Culling. In future these people will come under my severe displeasure if such slackness is again shown. Sorry to hear that Cecil Wood has been ill, Ken tells me they are leaving at the end of the summer. I think it no wonder the Germans get fat for they eat so many sweet cakes and drink such a lot. Alas they sweat like pigs and look quite bucolic when they have to work or move about in the sun.

To his father
30TH July 1914
Coln. Lindenthal

My dear Dad

I regret to say that a application at Heidelberg for a luggage registration form I was told that as I only had a ticket to Cologne I could not register it farther than here. So here I am now with 1 bike which I brought along with me as they are quite neglected and rusted if left at school, 1 black coffin, 1 hand bag, 1 small hand bag, and walking stick and tennis racket and umbrella.

This is not what I consider travelling light but I cant be helped now. But I am told that if I had produced the ticket of that chap who bought you my key I might have swizzed them and got it thro to London. However experience makes one wise and as this is the first time I have travelled abroad alone I have got on quite well I think. When you come we shall be able to send the luggage to Brussels I suppose so as not to be impeded by it. I meant to call your attention to the fact that my number is Klostishasse 54 (not 74). I found out when I got to no. 74 that only an old French priest lived in the house and I was just beginning a fine old argument with the cabby who had got bored and this old priest and his housekeeper when Professor Lumping who is Herr Brinkmanns brother and who had spotted me from the front window, turned up at the critical moment and helped me out of my scrape. The reason why I

made this mistake is that the Germans make a stroke through the seven 7 which is rather illegible if ones writing is rather shaky like Herr Brinkmanns. By the by the suspense is growing here in connection with the international situation. On the way up from Heildesberg we passed 3 military trains, 2 full of infantry and one of artillery. At every bridge or viaduct stood one or 2 railway employees with rifles. The Cologne police have downed revolvers to day nobody knows why. Herr Brinkmanns brother who was going off to America on Saturday from Antwerp, left hurriedly this morning to escape a possible mobilisation. The big Hohengollein railway bridge is guarded at each of its piers by 4 soldiers with loaded rifles, a sergeant and a couple of policemen who have revolvers. Of course these are only precautionary measures. The attitude of Russia in mobilising and concentrating 6 army corps on the Austrian frontier is regarded as very provocative by Germans. The Colver Beiting says that Belgrade has been occupied by the Austrians and the Sealin bridge which was blown up by Servia is replaced by a bridge of boats. Every one thinks here that England would never fight unless she were compelled to, of course if France were attacked by Germany then we would fight, the same as Germany may fight if Austria is attacked by Russia. There is of course now a great deal of trouble in Ireland so I do not suppose we would want to fight unless it was inevitable. There is a great run on the savings banks but I took the precaution to change all my paper money for gold 3 days ago so I am all right.

Flour has gone up here 5 ff a pound since last night. At Mainz I noticed some soldiers clearing away the undergrowth off the glacis of one of the forts. Of course if there were war between Russia and Germany it would not disturb my travels in the least. Great confidence is expressed here in the straight forward policy of Sir Edward Grey in working for a peaceful solution. I intend to go to the Dom tomorrow and to the Museum, Exhibition etc. next week, when Herr Brinkmann who is a schoolmaster will have finished the term and will be free to accompany me. By the by can you give me some of your Swiss addresses with dates, and do you intend that I should go straight on after getting with you into your train from Switzerland to Belgium or would you get out and walk around for a few hours. Well must not exceed the weight limit. Will write again on Sunday. Finances are all right 34 bob in the pocket. Love to all xxxx to Viola etc. xx
Your affec. son
Geoff

No date but must be August or September 1914. To his father - 4 separate pages, not sure what order but I have put them in the order that makes sense. Obviously there are pages missing.

(a) It is only the 8th of this month that I received your letter sent on the 1st. On the 4th of August. England declared war on Germany. I went as soon as possible to the British Consul in order to get a pass, but I did not get it because I could only show my names on letters. I have received it a few days afterwards from the American Consul. I have received back all the letters I sent since the

(b) 31st of July. All the British able to go to war (fit for the war/may not leave Germany/between 17 years of age. Every body (all are) is convinced that England is making a great mistake, at least all those Germans I meet. I think that all have been well treated by the Germans. Why is England going on the same side as the Russian oppressors, the Servian murderers and the French ill political

(c) people. I hope that the Germans in England are as well treated as the British in German. The Germans who had to flee from Belgium have been treated by the Belgians in the most brutal and shameful way. I have seen a man with his wife and a little child, who had to flee from Brussels. In all stations were the Germans thrown at with stones by the mob.

(d) Then Liege was attacked, the soldiers were killed behind by the civilians. I have spoken with a reservist who works at Liege and was wounded. He told me that the Belgian women have poured boiled oil on the German soldiers and that he himself had killed many of them. Please send this to a good British newspaper because there are too many lies about the German barbarism. I am here quite well and have the

17/9/14 - Coln Lindenthal, Klosteshasse 54

My dear Father

You will doubtless be surprised to receive this letter but an American gentleman whom I met at the America Consulate here has promised to post it for me in England. I am still staying with Oberlehren Brinkmann and shall probably do so till the end of the war. I have read in the newspapers that there is a great deal of opposition to the war in England. To my mind Sir E Grey has launched out into an adventure of which he cannot say the end and has precipitated the world war. John Burns speech was very fine I thought. Almost all Englishmen of note who are still in Germany have protested against the war and condemn British policy in the strongest of terms. The day war was declared I went to the British Consul (who is a German) to get my passport which was necessary if I wanted to clear out at all and cross the frontier as mobilisation had already begun. We had till midnight, before we could be detained as people ably to serve as soldiers, to cross the frontier. I showed the consul my name on various letters and documents, but he refused to give me a passport and I was therefore unable to come home. I obtained a British passport some days after at the American Consulate but as I said it was too late to be able to clear out. The evidence of my identity was quite sufficient to have got a passport so I was told at the American Consulate. I now hear that all the Englishmen in Cologne are going to protest against the British Consul when the war ends and I am myself drafting a very indignant letter to the Foreign Office. My handwriting may not appear good but I burnt my finger a few days ago.

I have to report myself daily at the police station but beyond this my movements are unrestricted. Feeling here is very bitter against England (ie Sir E Grey) but I have been treated by all officials with the greatest courtesy. It seems to me that the British nation as a whole are quite unsympathetic with the war. Dr Holiberg came over 2 days ago from Bonn; he said that Herr Dora has joined the Army and old Herr Simon has been made a member of the Burgher's Guard and passes all his time watching a railway bridge. I should love to see him he must look very funny. The suspense is rather trying to the nerves for I read everywhere of British reserves and Indian mutinies but I don't think things can be as bad as all that. Yesterday a letter came through from J Limburg. The Hague enquiring about me in the name of a friend of my fathers in London which I will answer as soon as possible.

I sent a letter over Portugal and 2 over Holland about a month ago, but I suppose they have not reached you. I hear that the British postal authorities confiscate all the letters which they can which are from people in Germany or Austria. That is so that the British public may not know the true state of affairs. A tremendous lot of prisoner come thro here every day I believe the Germans have now 250,000 and the Austrians about 50,000 if not more. I hope the war wont last long so that I can come home for Christmas. I have heard that English people may not pay their debts to any Germans under pain of being imprisoned but of coursed will pay Doc for any schooling and these people, who by the by are rather nervous about it for my pension. I have assured them that everything will be arranged all right. They have been very kind to me and try to make me feel at home but of course the enemy's country never does feel like home. The above law is to my mind a disgrace to the British nation likewise the nullifying of German patents. It is not war and if the German and their allies played tit for tat, who would have the Alliance on his side. I don't think we would do you.

I received mothers letter over Bergen (Norway) on the 2nd of this month it had been a fortnight on the way. I am not entirely losing my time here but study when I can but really as I said the suspense is not conducive to profound study. You and I will not need to go to Belgium for some time to come as I don't think there is much left there.

As I said in my other letters people between the ages 17 - 45 are considered possible soldiers and are not allowed out. Had I been 6 months younger I could have gone home but I don't intend to cry over spilt milk and endeavour to amuse myself. You order of recall despatched on 1st August reached me the 8th. War was declared by England 4th so had you telegraphed I should have got out perhaps. All letters which I sent off by the number of about 8 between

31/7/14 - 4/8/14 inclusive came back with a fortnight. I also forgot to say that an inquiry about me came through from the American Consul of SH Galler, which I answered. I think the war will be over by the end of November, as for Sir E Greys 20 years or 1 year even that is all rot and he knows it. To my mind the Liberal government is responsible for the blackest stain in our history that there is. Russians, Germans, Frenchmen, Austrians whom I have met, all blame England (ie Sir E Grey). If Allan goes on active service I hope he'll keep a whole skin. I hear that the Govt are trying to raise a "Volunteer" army by means which practically amount to compulsion. We ought to have had National Service long ago to my mind, as it is the war be decided before these "Volunteers" can be got into shape. A lot of news comes over Holland referring to the "white feather campaign" etc to induce men to join. It's all rather disgusting I think. The Govt keeps the people in the dark in order to save its face.

Then the use of Dum-Dum bullets is a reproach to civilisation. Captured English Officers have given their word of honour here that the Dum-Dum cartridges for their pistols were distributed by the Ordnance authorities, the bagging of German colonies can have no bearing on the ultimate result of the war I think and to bring the war among the coloured races is extremely unwise. Alas the cowardly attack of Japan on Kianfohan is not to be admired. People forget that that is on the way to Australia. Why have we not got any strong men at home who could put all these things right and having made amends to Germany to conclude an honourable peace. According to report and soldiers who I have spoken with the French soldiers are not to be compared with ours. Our troops have fought splendidly it seems and the fire of our artillery was deadly but of course our little army is but a handful and cannot stand against a majority of I estimate 5 - 2. I enclose a photo of a detachment of Belgian prisoners being conveyed through Liege. I am collecting as many interesting cuttings and pictures as I can. Herr Brinkmann has suggested that you might be able to find Americans at the American Consulate in London who are coming through to Germany and could post me a letter here in reply to this. And also you could arrange for payment for my pension although a friend of yours in Holland or the American Consul in Berlin. Considering the slight rise in prices 5 bob a day is not dear and I expect I should eat more in England.

I avoid all possible expenses and have now 75 marks. Dr Holiberg sent me 100 M and I have paid for my pension up to the 18th August. I am getting on fine I think with my German. I wrote Doc a letter some days ago and there was not a single mistake in it. The autumn is now coming up very rapidly. I hear that the old jingo Kipling has been disporting himself with poems about the Huns. He has only to look at the Cologne cathedral or to hear Beethoven's, Brahms, or Bach's music or to go into any picture gallery or museum or institution in Germany to see the evidence of a culture as high as that which obtains in England. Please give my love to all at home, to Mother, Babe, Allan, and all relations and acquaintances. I am quite happy here and in the best of health. I have plenty to do and hope to see you all before Christmas. Of course many things of military or naval interest I may not write about as I must be able to assure the gentleman who taking this letter for me that I have written nothing which could be to Germany's disadvantage if it were known in England. I may repeat that I consider this war against Germany as wholly unnecessary and consider the Cabinet and in particular Sir E Grey as responsible. (See Ponsonby in "The Nation" the speeches of Barns and MacDonald and others) well I must close now as I have to give this letter so the gentleman who goes to England today and must not make it overweight. Much love to all from your loving son Geoff.

P.S. Hope to see you before Christmas. I also got a letter from a G... in Holland, which Herr Brinck answered.

Subsequent letters are written on official paper letters - addressed from Englanderlager Ruhleben.

Absender: G C Pether

Baracke 5

Box 4

12th July 1915

To Mr Pether, 13 Craven Road, Harlesden, London, N.W.

My dear Dad! Have received yours of 27th June and all before that date, Mothers letter of 12th and 28th, letters from Lester and Aunt Prill and Viola. Babs is getting a big girl and looks very pretty and like Mother. Mother looks well too. Please follow by photos of yourself and of Allan in uniform (this is a demand). Regret to say last bread quite uneatable. I am sorry you seem not to have only understood that I only wanted Vol 2 of Sons of Venice. Do not send any books except those which I name. The last money I received was the £1 which Mother sent me about 18th May. I am afraid I have had to borrow from Mr F Athick it would be better if you send me 20 bob on the 1st and 15th of every month. I do not get eggs for breakfast, do not believe anything for or against which you see or are told. The last books I received were sent off May 18th with The Sleeper Awakes; Hugo's Spanish etc. I acknowledged receipt of these a month ago. Mr K is very leased with his book. It seems you have not received my last letter yet. The Cullings have not written me a long while. Out of sight, out of mind. Do not send any more bread through Harrods but get Ma to send me 2 white loaves a week wrapped in cloth and paper and with plenty of room to breathe as one could say. I received your parcels vis 4 sent on 12/5, 1 each of 15, 17th, 8/8th. As I write this your card of 4/7 arrives. I fear 20/0 will not be quite enough (see last page). I can get tinned things heated. Please ask Ma to send pyjamas, trousers, shirt and other odd buttons, grey thread and needles. Pack Montpelier in tins and let Ma make up parcel, placing them at bottom so that they do not get damp or mouldy. I have written regularly. Was awfully bucked to hear that Lester had gone. Well done and good luck to him. I was really not surprised. Has Ken gone. Did our last domestic elope with a train driver or a Tommy. It will be a year here soon and I suppose big people have forgotten us in England. Perhaps then another year and then another. I cannot see why no effort is made to exchange us and they keep splitting hairs when they ought to be willing to do so at a little sacrifice. It is a disgrace to the Govt and to civilization. And at times distant friends just to get a card with the stamp on, write "keep smiling", just been for a fine bike rid, etc. And Ken is still at home. Meddling tho' is no good this time. I wish you could tell this to some influential people. Our own countrymen are apparently not to be considered and Mr Butters friend Mr Bass if in England is probably going to garden parties, etc. We must buck up at home. Do not send any more Gluten or Fancy bread as though very nice there is not enough "body" in it. Also do not send any more sardines, or golden syrup or any more coca and milk. Lehman's Captain are the only biscuits I need for a time. Cake is again "officially" allowed. Send me more chocolate for a time and ask Harrods to fill out the slips in full. Could you not send me a few topical Pcs of the day as they come thro' all right. I have developed my first corn which is rather painful. Can I get rid of it as I walk about a lot and it annoys me. I hope Mother will ask Mrs Keeble to tea with you as she must be rather lonely. She is however very cheerful by nature so do not let Ma talk sentimental talk to her. I should be much pleased if Ma would do it. Of course she is by birth German tho' English by marriage. Make her feel at ease. So long for a week, love to all xx etc. your affec son.
Geoffrey

from Engländerlager Ruhleben.

Absender: G C Pether

Baracke 5

Box 4

24th July 1915

To Mrs Pether, 13 Craven Road, Harlesden, London, N.W.

My dearest Mother, Was so pleased to receive yours of 13th inst and to hear that my long delayed post had at last arrived. You must ever worry if you do not hear for long periods as the post is always liable to be held up and I write regularly. I believe Mrs Keeble has moved lately. I only gave you her old address I will get the new one. Please do try to trot about with her a bit as in these times it is our duty to be pleasant and helpful to people who are having rather a rotten time and whom we shall probably never meet again. In spite of the fact that I am trying to keep cheerful I must say that, if, when I do get home I find that at least another two years were expected - no effort or sacrifice made to get us home/ I shall be very sore and bitter indeed. So glad you are sending us a cake as your home-mades are always so fine. I was indeed very pleased to hear from a certain Elma McAdam whom I do not know from

Allan. I cannot think where Greenhill Road is. I only wanted 1 sheet. I hope you will enjoy your holiday in the country or by the sun. Send me a few photos. My good cousin Allan will I don't doubt be awfully bucked to get a move on. I would give my arms and legs and £1,000 to go with him. I have a few private scores to pay. Auntie Bessie I know is brave as all Englishwomen should be in these times, and the more who did as Allan did the quicker it would be over. We must not live in a fool's paradise. Things are serious. I hear from Miss McA that Ken is still trotting and playing with the LBB. Last time I was home the talk of the moment was the H.A.C. let Allan explain this to you. Please excuse my scrawl and ungrammatical constructions. You may tell my opinions to everyone you see. I certainly admire Lester for his pluck. Mrs K's boots came through in a month in my American Express Co parcel. Your garden must be jolly fine. Be careful to pack Montpeliers in tins with sugar especially as they may get damp and mouldy. Pack parcels yourself and put in some tea in addition to usual things and a tin of mustard. Please thank Edna Mc'ct for her very nice letter which I appreciated very much. I will try to send her a P.C. soon. I am reading Motley's Rise of the Dutch Republic. Ask Allan not to forget those puttees. I was thinking of starting Russian but the first glance in a grammar was enough. It is a most horrible language and I shall stick at Spanish, I can now converse slowly. I am going possibly to take French conversation 2 times a week with someone in the winter as well. "Blobs" Cotty is going to join with me. It all kills time. Roger Day called on me a few days ago to say you had not heard. He is a much nicer fellow than I thought at first and has dropped a lot of that side. I have just read Lord Lyttons "Night and Morning" a very beautiful book. It is funny that the Brinkmans have not answered my last 3 cards. Perhaps they have moved or he may have pegged out so I am writing to Dr H to find out. I don't think they would not answer out of spite as she was very good to me before. Do keep up your courage. In Bony's time civil prisoners were away for 20 years. Now it is so bad so we must consider ourselves lucky. Could you make me some of your rock cakes with coconut in and plenty of currants so that they do not get too dry. (24). I received a currant loaf in good condition the other day. However, send white ... in last time. Tell Dorothy Whitlock and Lester I will write if I can spare a card next month or the month after. I hope all at home are putting their shoulders to the wheel some way or other. We are always too lethargic. Could you send a little cheddar cheese from time to time wrap it in oil paper. However so long "hasta la vista" and much love to all from your ever affec. son Geoff.

PS Please send 20 bf every fortnight.

Thursday, 12th August 1915

To Mr Pether, 13 Craven Road, Harlesden,

My Dear Dad

I received 2 days ago Mothers letter of 31/7 and yours of 1/8. I appreciate much the telling off you gave me and fully appreciate that our sense of proportion here must be rather warped owing to the circumstances. However I only get these fits of indignation occasionally but I would far prefer to be in a certain warm corner with Allan than ----- . I feel very annoyed at the possibility of the money you sent not having reached me. I reckon that I have only spent about £12 since last November. On Sunday my counterfoils of which I don't think I have lost one I find that you or Ma sent off £1 on May 18th, £2 on 30th April, £1 on 2nd July, £1 on 17th July and the last £1 of which I have just received the certificate of issue on July 31. It is very annoying if any should have gone astray.

I was very pleased indeed with the sheets and last night I had the finest sleep for 9 months. You would laugh to see yours truly making salad, darning or shouting insulting remarks to the mosquitoes when safely under the netting in bed. Am glad Ma is going to meet Mrs Keeble. Mrs K of course paid me for the boots. I only liked to receive despatch notes filled properly out as I thought on their production the government might allow compensation afterwards for the necessaries we receive. Will they be putting up pressed beef in jars now. Those army rations were splendid. I received 4 mouldy loaves last week (see P.C.) I acknowledged receipt of Dec's a month ago. So sorry Babs was queer hope she is now alright. Ma's cakes

really take the they are absolutely topping and remind me of tea in the garden which seems centuries ago. Do not send any more lemonade as we have enough for the rest of the summer. Dr H is now working for the "society for helping German prisoners in foreign lands" and has 17 clerks helping him at the school. I am sorry I worried Ma in my last letter. I was an idiot and ought to have said nothing. I am glad Ma is going to send the bread herself. Do you know if Allan and I can or will be able to correspond direct over Geneva or anywhere. You might ask him when you write. I think cakes flavoured with Montpelier would be jolly tasty and a few currants as Mother puts them in. I don't remember asking for pyjamas as I have 2 pairs in Koh and have just worn out 2 here. I hope Ken has gone and Harry Whitlock as well. I shant think much of them if they don't. As I write parcels of 29th July arrives. 1 currant loaf only eatable. Altho' that other bread tastes much better than white it does not stand transport in summer. I just see on rereading your letter that Ma is going to send bread in future. I am afraid I cause you a lot of trouble at times. That Limerick bacon is fine. Do you think it would be better for me to try to swot up shorthand again and start Dutch or Russian. Ma sends to other prisoners I believe. Did Viola get a prize this year. Dr H acknowledges my card re settling up (all in order). Hope you have a real jolly time at Swanage.

If next parcel you would send me a pair of boots like Mr R's (large 8s) and one (large 8s) to Mr Howat Box 13 in my barrack I would be most obliged and do not get them at cost but at selling prices. Therefore you need not send me more than 10/- that month saving. As you asked me some time ago, my suit is almost worn out. I have just remembered this at the end of my letter. Could you send me a walking suit of the tweed I had before. I should also like 3 grey or white blankets, or 2 blankets and our old railway rug which you possibly not need. Put the lot if you could into your old Gladstone bag, which will help me to get my things home when the happy day does arrive. No immediate hurry. In a few days I will send my measurements.

Love etc
Affec Son
Geoff

30th August 1915

Mr A Pether, 13 Cravens Road, Harlesden

My dear Dad, by now you will probably have received some of those parcel acknowledgement cards of which we are allowed 2 a week. They are rather formally worded but I expect you like to receive them. It is a funny thing that your parcel of 6th August containing corn plaster has not arrived though I have received 4 of the 9th. I safely received the 22M sent off by you on the 4th August. Who should drop in the other day but Mr Petan who told me that Allan had met Mr Percy Ashmond-Bartlett at Finsbury. Is that the case? You will be pleased to hear that Herr B has just come out of hospital. Will you please send me a little tea and coffee in the next parcel. The things you send are just fine and meet the case very well. The sausage you sent arrived as you thought but was quite good inside. However I now hear that tinned things may again be sent. I have not yet started smoking as I have no particular inclination to do so. You will be sorry to hear as I was that Mr Goodgrut vanished last autumn under most painful circumstances and has not been seen since. Do not send any more corn cure. I should like some cake with Montpelier flavouring in it as Mother makes it. I have not yet received any bread from Switzerland though a lot of people in the camp have it sent from there.

I hope you are all having a jolly good time. Please give my best wishes to the Butlers. I do not think I shall start Russian as French or German takes one almost everywhere in that country. I rather fancy Dutch would be useful though. I hope you do not think my letters abrupt or disjointed but I have so many things to express in a few words. I must again return to the old fact that I shall not be keen on having anything to say or do with anybody like Ken who slacks now. I bet you and Ma and all our family have their shoulders to the wheel. Its funny that more time is taken for my post to reach you than vice-versa. Do you mind if I send Allan one of my 2 letters next month. Stick it is the cry of the day. My lump of patience has so developed that I had to cut one side out of my hat. Ask Allan if he remembers "Abimilech".

Could you get me "The Mind" and "The Religions of the World" in Hodder & Stoughton's "Useful Knowledge Library". The postcard of Swanage Bay made me long for a nice swim. I dreamt I was rowing on the canal the other night. I feel I am an awful nuisance at times but of course when you are growing things will not refrain from wearing out. Could you send me a dozen night lights. Little Babs looks very healthy and strong in the photo. Will you please send me a cap I believe I take about ¼ size larger than Allan. Nothing horsey or loud. I am getting on with Spanish and am going to take an hour's German and French every week in about a months time. I cannot write again until August 6th. Please thank Aunt Prill for her card of 14/8. Tell her it is post free. Is Mother going to stay with Mrs Forester this summer on the farm. I also received £1 sent on 31st July. H hear that the Swiss bread arrives in very good condition. I have just received 5 mouldy loaves of 9th and 10th August. This has been 3 weeks on the way. Am glad you are sending it from Switzerland. Corn plaster not yet arrived. Love to all, ever affec son
Geoff

Sept 7th 1915
Mr A Pether, 13 Cravens Road, Harlesden

My dear Dad,

I safely received last Saturday your parcel of 18/8/15 and also 4 loaves sent off from Berne, all well packed and in fine condition. Parcels have been rather irregular for the last month but I expect to get the corn plasters soon. His Majesty's Censor reminds me that all correspondence to me must be written in ink. I received a Field Service Card from "Chubby" Calling the other day and as you say Allan is where he is and the card reached me in 10 days, I conclude that he is in France while I thought he was at the Dardenelles. Hope his leg is getting in order again. How is Mrs "Funnily Enough" getting on. Mr Keeble and I have thought of an arrangement which will doubtless meet with your approval. He is no longer able to send money to his wife who is now living at Hempstead. I thought therefore that it would be grand idea if you stopped sending me money and would instead send cheques for amounts which Mr Keeble gives me here to Mrs K. This would obviate the necessity of your sending me money and there would be no risk of it getting lost. In future I will advised you of how much Mr K gives me here and you can then send cheques as, I suggest, from time to time, to Mrs K. My friend Mr Pelier came in to tell me that Mr A F Harding and Mr J M Hooper had been burnt in an accident. I now hear that this is correct from you. Good luck to them both. You might ask Francis to write me if he has time. It is highly probable that the coming winter will be much severer than last which was very mild. We may get - 15 centigrade this year but we are better prepared altogether than we were last year. By the by the people at Berne sent me 4 loaves for this week, is that right or should there be only 2. I understand it costs 3/6 a month. I am very surprised that you are busy at home now. I had understood that there was nothing much doing. Thank H Culling please for his card. Thank little Babs for her card of August 8th. I have now paid off all that I borrowed. As up to today 7/9/15 I have not received the parcel containing corn plaster, buckles and pyjamas of 6/8 I fear we must give it up for lost. If it does turn up so much the better but as the cold weather will be on us in a few weeks I ask you to send me a pair of breeches and a jacket. This one which I have had for 2 years will soon be done for and my grey suit I finished in Cologne. Of course if that parcel does turn up so much the better. Do not send me any more money. Frank Carthy is about 23 and Blobs has just come of age. I believe you printed a letter to the Chronicle for me last September. I am afraid it was more tosh. That was a very nice cake which Mother send me on August 12th. I have quite enough socks although a pair of Scotch stockings (not loud) and a cap would be useful. I hope there was not many slack young men loafing round that boarding house. Could you send me "La Grande Theresa" now 15 in Nelsons 1/0 Colecion Espanola. Also La France d'Aujourd'hui no. 46 in Nelsons. Selected French Works 1/0. also no. 6 in the same. Mon Oncle et mon Cure. Please do not send any others except these. Well I must close now. Much love to all at home xxx for Babs and Ma. Keep smiling ever your loving and affec son
Geoff.

Sunday, 10/10/1915 Baracke 5, Box 4
Mr A Pether, 13 Cravens Road, Harlesden
My dear Dad; The £1s sent by you of 4th & 17th Sept have safely arrived. I have received your

letter of 3/10. You will now notice that I am in box 12 which is dryer than our old one. I am sorry to say that I may not send you any more blue cards. I am hoping that the blankets and jacket will soon turn up now. We shall possibly get -20°C of cold this winter. By the bye in view of last year's experience I think it better if you send off my Xmas things before the last week in November. In Mother's letter of 26/9 she says she had not heard for 3 weeks. I am very sorry but I had to send one card to Cologne for my footer boots and 1 to Dorothy to give best wishes for her marriage which I had just heard of. Give my best wishes to Archie Curtis and thanks for his kind regards. Wick is of most value where he is. I am so glad that "Stumpy" is a good companion to Ma. I have received no advice notes from Berne for the last 2 weeks altho' Mr F's bread comes thro all in good condition and order. I wish you would write them to see what is up. Everything in our box is put into the comma store. You would laugh to see us at meals on a bed. Do not be under the impression that I hob nob with anyone persons in the box more than with any other. We are all on excellent terms. I have had to spend 10/0 this week for educational books but I am sure you will not mind. Please stick to the arrangement re money if you think it all right. It is quite all right this end. I will write you whenever Mr K would like any sent to his wife. I should be much obliged if you would send me 1 more tube of Euthymol and 1 packet of Red poppy (not Montpelier) corn plaster. I do not think I shall try Russian after all, at least not yet, but only French, Spanish, German, and possibly some other subject not a language. I have done a good deal of miscellaneous reading lately, in the 4 languages and am struggling through "A life of" who do you think "Napoleon" in Spanish. I am playing hockey this winter and had a game this morning. They shifted me from inside right to left half at the last moment; however had a very good game. Each of us in the box takes it in turn to keep it clean by the table etc. I shall be a regular "cook general" when I come home.

Could you in the next parcel send a few magazines like Everyman, Pearsons, Land & Water and a recent number of the "Old Pauline". I must write to Dr H next week so I fear it will be 2 weeks before you hear from me again. But do not worry as I can't help it. I propose to wear the breeches with the puttees and boots you are sending me. I am glad to hear that we are not "feather bed heroes" as someone was supposed to have said. Am hoping to hear from Allan soon. The parcels are just the right thing but you might send 1 tin less of meat and 1 tin of condensed milk instead if you would. Be careful that the milk tin does not get smashed. Could you send me my old Archimedean drill with some bits or a small screw driver. Please send £5 to Mrs Keeble. This will last me some months. Your ever true & loving son.
Geoff

Barack 5, Box 12
12th November 1915
Mr A Pether, 13 Cravens Road, Harlesden

My dear Dad, I am writing this early in order to avoid the possibility of it not reaching you in time. I hope you will have a very happy birthday & Xmas. The loss of Utting did not influence us in moving but we seized the opportunity some weeks after he had gone to move into better quarters. I hope that next year we may all spend Xmas at home together. It seems a great same that Allan does not receive your cakes. In my humble opinion Utting was a little rotter. If he were "fetched" it would do him a lot of good. The dog and cat are apparently very handsome animals to judge from Bab's sketch. Parcels now take nearly a month to come out. You will I hope be pleased to hear that I am taking 3 lessons a week of French & German alternately. The Spanish I have had to let drop a while as the teacher has had no spare time lately. I have also bought a few fretwork tools, which I hope you will not think extravagant, and am making a model of the box. That 3 ply wood box you sent me comes in very useful. I hope to pass the time with these diversions and occasional games of Hockey. Please do not send a Thermos flask. We are always able to get things heated. I hear that there was a picture in the Daily Graphic of my friend Mr Mahoney engraving here. He is in our box. That cardigan and sleeping bag, gloves, etc. were really just the thing. Thanks awfully for them. By the bye I have not yet received any books or mags, nor the Pauline. Could you dig out my Rahty's Higher English and a Pendelburg Arithmetic. Do have Stumpy seen to by a vet. It is so unkind to leave them without treatment. I myself shall never approve of birds or animals being caged or without freedom after this. Provisions as you are sending

them are perfectly suitable. I believe I wrote in my last letter that it would be cheaper owing to the rise of prices to send the butter and milk from home now. If you could send me ½ lb of former and 1 tin of latter weekly I should be glad. I am still spending about £2 monthly vis food 9 M, lessons 12 M, washing repairs etc. 6M, papers stationery etc. 5M, subscriptions 2 M, barrack and parcel fees 2M, books odds and ends, 4 M. These are average monthly expenditures. The Rev Williams who is still in Germany gives a service in camp every other Sunday which I attend. The same services with a congregation of seamen, firemen, tourists, professional golfers, jockeys, bank clerks, students, Negroes etc., in every variety of costumes are more impressive than many I have been to in big churches at home. My voice by the by has not yet fully broken. Your letters often reach me in a week or 10 day now. Could you send me a lump of beeswax and 50 fretsaws of various finesses and 2 dozen bits for those little Archimedean drills. I hope my tools are not getting rusty. I still send 2 letters and 4 cards monthly. Give my best Xmas wishes to Allan. I have received a parcel today of 20/10 which completes the parcel no 55 except for Captain biscuits and 1 tin

Well my dear Pa I am itching all the time to be where Allan is but it can't be helped. I hope that you will all have an Happy Xmas and you yourself an enjoyable birthday. Do not be down in the dumps because I am not there. They sent me 1 tin pineapple in parcel 55 possibly instead of apple. Give my best Xmas wishes to all at home. Could you give Mother "The Poems and Tales of Bret Harte" for Xmas. The following men would be very grateful for parcels from Harrods, John Forster, Barach 5, Loft A, Vincent Abela Barach 5, Loft A & (crossed out afterwards Henry Koty Barach 5). Don't mention my name. Love etc for happy birthday,

affec
Geoff

Barack 5, Box 12
1st December 1915
Mrs Pether, 13 Cravens Road, Harlesden

My dear Mother

Many thanks for the bread which arrived in perfect condition but do not send any more as we now receive plenty from Switzerland. The rock cakes and cakes are really top hole, your fame as a cake maker is growing international. I hear that magazines do not reach us if not quite new. The supports are a relief tho' I think that when I do stop growing I shall be able to dispense with them. Those absurd lines "Little Billy sails his ship, while Jack and Mummy have a dip" have somehow got into my head. I fear you will think I am an awful old woman having so many ointments, plasters, etc. sent. They are really very useful tho'. I have bandaged 2 peoples' cut fingers this morning. Do not be sentimentally quiet at Xmas. Have a few good hymns and songs. The old Superb & Drakes Drum are suitable. Was very bucked yesterday to get 2 letters from you, 1 from Babs and 1 from Elna. I hope that Babs is not ill at awkward moments like I was. Do you remember how I was ill 3 times one night when you were packing to go away. I had no idea that my old books by Fern Henty (?) could interest Babs. Can she read without help now. I calculate this will about reach you in time for Xmas what! I am sorry Allan does not feel very grand. However that kind of weather only lasts 4 months. Am glad you are practising economy with the notepaper. Every little helps. Mr F is very much obliged to Dad for getting the boots. A good stout pair are a boon here in winter. That marmalade pudding was rather difficult to get heated so I think it better not to send any more. Likewise no more coffee or cocoa for the next 2 months. Keep smiling we will do, if necessary for a century. I have received parcel 57. By a slight error they put in a small tin of compressed beef instead of beef and vegetables. I heard from Miss Stonham the other day and also from Chubby Culling. Many thanks for the magazines which have just come. They will be awfully interesting to judge from the illustrations. You have probably heard that we have a camp magazine. I am collecting it regularly and it will prove an interesting souvenir. You might ask Allan to be so good as to pick up any odds and ends that would interest me as souvenirs. I have already got several things for him in my luggage. I have seen "The Master Builder" by Ibsen at our theatre this week. Very interesting but complex. I am doing a lot of miscellaneous reading now as the weather is not often favourable for long stays outside. I hope all at home are coming up to scratch. These are stirring times for all except prisoners. I hope to pick up my music again quickly after getting

home. I think my taste is improving as we have many excellent concerts here. Correspondence and parcels are coming thro' more quickly again. At Xmas do not worry about yours truly. We shall be cheerful whatever the circumstances. We don't care if it snows. I fear that I shall not be able to send Xmas cards as many friends as I had hoped so please give my kindest regards for Xmas to all aunts, uncles, cousins, friends, etc. I suppose the Butlers will be staying with you at Xmas. Is Dad sending some more stuff for that little Kitchener. I am reading Martin Eden by Jack London and am going to assault Thackeray's Henry Esmond soon. Please kiss little Babs for me at Xmas and be cheerful. To my mind there is no cause for depression. I am making a model of our box to pass the time. With a few tools and some bits of wood and metal I can pass the time very well. Well so long now. How is the Rev Baker. Do you remember that tubby little cleric who spoke so disparagingly of this, the female gum's(?) husband. I am so pleased that business is good and that Dad can get home earlier. Do you ever seek Chichiton. Many kind regards to all xxx to yourself and Babs and I hope a happy meeting before long. I hope next year will see the last act. Your ever loving son.
Geoff

Barack 5, Box 12
12th December 1915
Mr A Pether, 13 Cravens Road, Harlesden

My dear Dad, I have not heard from you much lately but as both parcels and post are rather overdue or irregular I hope to get news again soon. The parcels no. 58, 59, 60 I am expecting to receive soon. We are not having very good weather now but I am plentifully supplied with warm things and blankets so do not worry. I have been doing a little maths and find that I have not forgotten so much as I expected. At the moment I am trying to discover of the diagonals of a cut at right angles. We only use the hot water bottle when anyone is unwell. I find the bed socks are warm enough alone. The sleeping bag is really top hole as are also the gloves. I hope to wear them next winter at home. If you send me a little food for the little kitchen like the last lot fortnightly it will be quite enough. I was really delighted to get the mags and they are most interesting indeed. If you would be so good as to get a newsagent to send me Everyman which Allan used to take in weekly I should much enjoy them. Do not send any more Cassels or Nash's magazines, cocoa, coffee, sardines or more than 1lb butter weekly or bread. The Paulines have not turned up. Do you know what they are doing. By the by did I give you the name of Mr Revill Barrack 3 10 for parcels. I rather fancy I did. Ma must not send my letters to Aunt P until you have seen them. By the bye my friend Mr Mahoney will probably be visiting you soon. You might arrange for him to stay to dinner one evening when he is in town. He was in our box and was released on account of ill-health. You might please give him my best wishes and tell him 3 parcels of his have arrived 2 being the old dates he had not detailed. I hope he had a good crossing. I am glad the financial arrangement is convenient. I am trying to economise as far as poss as that is the order of the day. Please send Mrs K another £5. Please thank Mother for the rock cakes etc, they are really awfully good. Shop cakes as a rule I do not like but the plain school cake that we so much enjoyed at Rugeley I still remember. Please do not send any more night lights but an occasional packet of candles would be appreciated. There is a good saying that "hunger is the best of sauces" and I can now consume tinned salmon and sardines without difficulty. I am much more comfortable than I was a year ago. Do not send more than 1 small tin of milk weekly. I have received Mothers card of 1/12. Certainly young Utting is a most offensive and unenthusiastic individual. A few months training would do him good. "I don't wish to" and "It is contrary to my convictions" were favourite expressions of the little fool. I do sincerely hope that Allan and I will be on Mother's chintzes (pillows not allowed) before long. By the bye what was the joke about my doing the step. If Ken is no use he might come and be my substitute for a short time. The visit to Gamages used to be so very important did it not. I have just had a card from Mrs Drew (junior). I suppose which is most useful where he is. Mr F is very pleased with the boots and much obliged to you for getting them. We went to a play "La petite chocolatiere" last night. You really could not tell that the girls arts were being played by fellows in the camp. Mrs Keeble's new address is 67 Belize Park Gardens, Hampstead. That book "La France d'Aujourd'hui" is most interesting. I hope you all had a

very happy Xmas. Little Viola is getting quite a big girl as a Irishman would say. Well so long Dad. I am looking forward to reading Allan's letter. Please give him my best wishes and I hope he had as enjoyable a Xmas as possible. I hope to be home for next Xmas but we must not stop now. Many xxx to Viola and Mother - Love to all at home ever your loving son,
Geoff

Barack 5, Box 12

6/1/16

Mr A Pether, c/o Messrs Harrods, Brompton Road, Yeovil

My Dear Dad, you will probably be surprised at my addressing this to your business but I am writing a few things which I think it best not to tell Mother. Well to begin with she thinks apparently that the efforts of Mr M of Brighton in certain quarters will result in success. I know definitely that much bigger and more important people have made similar efforts without any success. We must therefore I think accept the inevitable and it is highly improbable that I shall be released before the whole thing is over. There is another point. Please don't interpret this as the shadow of a coming event. When we do move I shall still have the greater part of my things with Brinchmann. It seems to me better perhaps for me to fetch these things and turn up a few days later than to have to go direct and then come back and send for them. I attach a great sentimental value to most of my things there and sending for them might result in some being lost. Of course we may have no choice in the matter. I am anxious to know your views on these two questions. The following is for you and mother.

To begin with you sent 2 advice notes of parcel 62 which has just arrived. I hope the order is not being duplicated. Apparently the only thing which has not turned up in the last 4 months as far as I can tell are articles 123 & 5 in parcel no. 61. By the bye you have been sending me my dear Dad much too much lately. It is a pity anything has to be sent at all but it cannot be helped. Kindly send nothing from Harrods for 2 weeks. After that send no more than 1 tin milk & ½ lb butter weekly. The quantities of meat and other things are sufficient & send as before. Send however no more coco or coffee. Tea as usual 1/2 lb fortnightly. The cheeses you send are jolly fine and better than the tinned ones. Swiss bread arrives regularly in good condition. Dr H. is showing up very badly lately. Has quite forgotten his manners to another O.H. here. I have written a plot for a photo play which my friend Reynolds who was a master at the College tells me is excellent. I intend to get hold of an expert when I get home. R says I ought to get £5 for it at least. Please tell no one except Ma of this. I gave myself 3 weeks holiday at Xmas but start again next week. The 25 men you are employing are very insolent and should be treated firmly. The statement you made which they told you no longer holds good. I hope you and Mother and Babs received the Xmas cards. Do not send any more nightlights, Ahermogine or medicines. The fruit you sent at Xmas was really top-hole. Mr K who has a nice garden said the apples were the very best going. The little kitchen is very useful. I think you will notice that Mr M has rather lost his sense of proportion which is only natural and evident from his letters but it will return in time. He is not very healthy and too inclined to overdo himself but I expect his wife will keep him in hand. Many xxx and thanks to Ma for cake and pudding (no date visible). I can imagine nothing more ideal at the present moment than to be sitting in the drawing room on Sunday even (en famille). In Mothers Xmas day letter she says she would like a view of my face. I fear the length of my facial fungus would spoil the effect. I hope you received menu in Allan's letter!! Many thanks to Uncle F for his letter and fruit, it was fine. Also many thanks for cards or Xmas wishes from Mr Baker, Babs, Mrs Keeble, Stanley Barnett. I believe Brussels sprouts are tinned. They keep the blood in condition. Do not send any more bacon. It is too fatty for warm weather. Excuse somewhat disjointed style of letter. By the bye I would like to see Everyman if it still appears. Did the Pauline people write to you? Am studying rhythm and rhyme this week. Love to all xx
loving son
Geoff

Barack 5, Box 12

13/2/1916

Mr A Pether, 13 Cravens Road, Harlesden

Dear Dad, I am very much afraid that I shall not be able to fill this letter but will do my best. To begin with I am glad to say that education expenses are about 25p weekly representing the cost of stationery. I get 3 French, 3 Spanish, 2 German lessons weekly. I also do a fair amount of work alone. It seems to me that this is the only and indirect way we can be of use. Your card of 30/1 received, but letter not yet. I was very glad to hear from Allan. By the bye, please use the very plainest stationery when writing to me, it is cheaper. In a letter which I wrote to Allan about 15/1 I asked him to give to Mother our Xmas Menu which I had enclosed. Mother has not mentioned this tho' she has acknowledged the letter. Was the writing illegible. I am trying to make this as clear as possible. Mother was apparently that I'll "give way" at times to use her own words. I think I have a pretty strong will and have not felt down in the mouth for any long periods since you started to send parcels. You might give the following name to Lady Dodd's or some other parcel committee. Oswald Groening Barrach 7. Have been reading a great deal of poetry lately which to all accounts sells well in war time. I am also in the middle of Thackeray's Henry Esmond which I like very much. Please thank Margy for her little letter and picture from Petherton. Many thanks for the rock cakes. Really I don't know of any nicer cakes than these. I hope that Babs music teacher does not have the sauce to thump Viola's features, and also that Babs does not fire clay balls as I did at the she dragon Mrs Forbes. I wish Mother would be so good as to see that my tools do not get rusty. A little Vaseline keeps them well. I wish I could send Mother a shawl from Cairo but as I cannot I have a few little nick-nacks which I hope she will like. Mr M is really making the dust fly. Give him my kind regards. By the bye you do not say whether the Pauline is being sent. I much appreciated magazines (A long pause here to think of something to say). By the bye would you in your next letter give me a list of birthdays in the family and your wedding day. I can only remember Eileen's Midsummer Day. I see Allan has a new address. I have to read a paper on the 23rd in our Spanish and on a favourite topic of mine "That the life of Napoleon was beneficial to Mankind". I shall probably get howled down. We have very exciting debates at times. I have come to the conclusion that English people speak their language very badly which one notices at once when one attempts to speak Spanish with its broad but distinct syllables. From March 20th onwards do please send no more bacon, and other things as usual, 1 tin jam weekly. We eat more jam and fruit and less meat and fat in summer. You may perhaps be visited by Gray's father from Hinstanton. I believe he intends to drop into Harrods when he is in town. By the bye I hope you do not think me extravagant on £2 monthly. Am hopefully looking forward to possible summer holidays together this year. What do you think candidly Dad? I have not heard what Cyril Sprake is doing. I suppose Kenneth is still playing with the L.B.B. I think our proposed tour around certain interesting old towns and churches had better be transferred to Somerset or somewhere else. Keep cheerful. I do not wish you to send me any more things with Montpelier flavouring. I have enough. Well so long to all xxxxxx to Mother and Babs. Please give my best wishes to all. I should like to see Everyman or Land and Water occasionally if possible. Much love to all at home. Your very affectionate so, Geoffrey.

Barack 5, Box 12

25/1/1916

Mrs Pether, 13 Cravens Road, Harlesden

My dearest Mother, Many thanks for the many fine cakes etc. which you have sent me lately. The coconut flavoured rock cakes bring to mind recollections of the Sunday afternoon's tea at home. Did you get the menu. The Bhatz(?) arrived safely. Tonight (Monday) I am going to a lecture on Hindberg which I hope to enjoy. I now have 3 French hours, 2 German hours, 3 meetings of a Spanish circle weekly. Total expense 1.50M. I am also studying Psychology with a friend of mine a Dr Anderson. Parcel 65 safely received. Send no more stuff with Montpelier flavouring, have enough. The Pauline and Everyman not yet arrived. Parcel 63 arrived. I bought Schillers complete works for 7 M as an Xmas present to myself. Hope you do not mind. Some of his things are very fine.

I am writing by a rather bad light so please excuse calligraphy. I am sorry to say that while making a frame for it I spoilt the photo of you and Babs with your heads close together which you sent me some time ago. Could you get me another and also one of Dad. Please do not send Canpite but only little kitcheners. Was pleased to hear that Babs party was a success.

Do you remember the times when I played Punch and Judy at a similar festivity. I can imagine Stanley couching a lance (ie pocketing a supply of clay balls) to do battle for Eileen. Is Mrs Bennett recovered from her huff then. Hope you all received my Xmas cards. The Xmas fruit especially the Apples were top-hole. Many thanks indeed for the fretsaws. I do not need any more educational books. I have received a PC from Chubby of 5/1/16. Please thank him for me. Congrats on his promotion. Can I write to him direct over Switzerland or over GPO London. I do feel so disappointed at being out of it. Hope Mr M will be able to move things. Half the people are asleep. I fear I must ask you for another two pairs of those grey thick socks and also 2 thin pairs of Jaeger white natural wool ones. Mine having been most of them very darned are showing signs of exhaustion. I must also ask for another tin of Silver Pine foot power. Since I got rid of that corn I have had no trouble at all with my feet, others are less fortunate. I expect Allan would like a tin of Silver pine also. I always wear 2 prs socks. Cancel bread for J Fortes as soon as possible. Vnant Abele Barrack 5 correct. I believe there is a Lady Dodd's prisoners parcel fund. You might give them the name of Harold Cove, Barack 5. He already gets bread via Berne. Also Mr Revill Barrack 10. I hope to revive my music when I get home. I go to a good many excellent concerts which should improve my taste. You can only send Everyman by parcel post I believe. 1 Pair boots arrived by itself in a cardboard box and a few days after another pair turned up. Barrack address is always enough. The Pantomime here was fine. Candles etc safely received. Fear this letter is disjointed but have to answer about 15 of yours and Dad's on it. Do not let Babs get such a fearful bookworm as I was. Have received to date 222M. I spend about £2 or a trifle less monthly. As you have been sending milk, butter etc, the total monthly feed expenses have decreased since August from about 10M to 2M per man in our box. We now pay very little. I wish the Pauline would come. If I were you I should not let Babs start a language until she is twelve or 14. Half the children in schools start their French etc before they understand the grammatical construction of their own language. Am reading Barrows "The Bible in Spain" and also "Unfamiliar Japan" by Lafcadie Hearn. Both these are very fine. I have written to Fran B four times since August without being answered. I shall have about 50 books of my own and of Mr H Mahoney to bring home at the end. Well so long now. Please give my best wishes to all. Thank Dad for his nice letter of 9/1. xxx to yourself and Babs and love to all at home. Your loving son, Geoff.

Barack 5, Box 12
24/5/1916
Mrs Pether, 13 Cravens Road, Harlesden

My dear Mother, I had been a bit bored last week at not getting any post so was very bucked yesterday to get yours of 30th and Dad's, and Dad's of 25/4. My news from home now takes longer than parcels and the same time as home news from here. By rations I had meant army rations only. Many thanks for s.sticks arrived to day and also for the tongues. Please send pressed beef tho as it is cheaper. By the bye I use the s sticks and foils about 2 hrs daily and find it quite enough exercise and it does not cost much. As the tennis club is very overcrowded and the game expensive I do not wish to join. I believe but am not quite certain that I asked you for a pair of flannel bags in the letter of 25/5, Dad mentions soap and razor blades but not bags. I hope he has not forgotten as my breeches are going all over the place and it will soon be very warm. I try to be economical with clothes but I fear that I wear breaches out at an awful rate. I also humbly beg for a right hand fencing gauntlet, they are made of wash leather and cost only 1 or 2 bob. I should have loved to visit Brickett Wood with Dad and you and Viola, we hope for better luck next time. Do not send any more Tommy cookers', I am able to get stuff heated when desired. I think the following brief on outline of my average day may interest you. As you know midday here is at the old 11 a.m. which I believe will soon be the case at home. Really I find the innovation which started 1st May very agreeable. Rise 6,30, wash, dress; 7.0 roll call, 7.15 - 8.30 exercise in the aforementioned manner, 8.45 shower bath followed by dressing for the day and breakfast, usually from 10 - 11 I walk or go to some class or other, 11 - 12 exercise again when I teach 2 beginners. Then dinner the time of which varies, a walk or read or class or other amusement in the afternoon, tea at 5.30 then a lecture or a walk or read till 9.15 when there is another roll call and then bed at 9.45. I go to church alternate Sundays in the afternoon. By the bye let Cove be looked after by Lady Dodd's fund unless you prefer otherwise. I am now putting on weight

(thanks only to parcels) and feel much better in health and training than I have for a long time. I am hoping to get into a photo of the Old Heidelbergers before long but we are booked for some weeks ahead. Glad to hear A. Curtis is well etc. Today being 24th May we are still full of life and confident. The ball ought to start rolling soon. Hope the maid will make things easier for Mother. The Old Pauline's as I said turned up, to date and I was jolly glad to see them. Many thanks indeed. Really I shall go quite "soft in the nut" when we do clear. Glad to hear your birthday was a success. The concert at the A. H. must have been very nice. I also cannot sit down to anything very long in the book line, I don't know why but I prefer hurtling round to anything else. I am sending in my model of a box to an Arts and Crafts Exhib, to be held the 1st week in June.

I do not understand exactly whether Allan's style was bad or whether it is now becoming classical. Glad to hear Mrs Baker and old Tubby are still going strong. I told the tale of "beating the bounds" to which the latter was implicated to a couple of friends who were amused. We will have a lovely time when the whole bally show is ended. Poor Ken is not I fear a great success but I suppose he cannot be with ill-health. Thank goodness I am keeping fit. Am now reading a jolly fine book on Folk songs and Myths which I am sure will interest you. This camp, being as I have stated, one of the most curious collection of types, is a fine school of experience. Hobnobbing with men who lead all sorts of lives and all sorts of business in many different countries one gets a good comprehension of the Cosmos. Some sentence that what! Well good by now. Heaps of love and xxxx to Dad, Viola and yourself, your loving son,
Geoff

Barack 5, Box 12
6/6/1916
Mr Pether, 13 Cravens Road, Harlesden

My dear Dad, Mother's of 7/5 just to hand which shows you that letters are now nearly a month out the way. I have had a photo taken and will despatch a copy as soon as possible which may arrive before this does. I fear I am frowning somewhat as the light was rather strong. Top row left right are Dresden, me, Frank Catty, Norman Catty, and 1 unknown. This is the O.H. group. You will see Reynolds in duck suit seated in middle. I should have much liked to see the unveiling of the tablets in St Pauls. Many thanks indeed for the gauntlets, flannel bags, shoes, etc. They are really first class. I am not far off 5ft 10 now. I have not heard from Allan or Culling lately. Have they moved. I understand from the Paulines that things are quite rosy. Good business on the glorious 1st June. Parts of No. 76 have arrived but I am glad to say that I have been able to keep in good condition. By the bye, do letters take longer to reach you than cards. I am trying to read some of the best things in Eng, Fr or Ger literature of the 19th cent to keep in practice. I gave a short outline in French of the French politics 1816 - 1885 in class the other day which pleased the teacher much. You would laugh to see some of the class rooms and admire the energy which has created them. We have some 1st class educationalists here who work hard for a min nothing. I enclose a programme (please keep it) of an evenings entertainment given in our impromptu theatre. Andrews G A (who is a friend of mine, a schoolmaster from Bradford) and I helped Brown & Davies in a duel in the Florentine tragedy. They knew nothing about fencing and we coached them in 5 days to do quite a good stunt by memorising the movements, the whole being a great success. Yesterday I went to the 1st Spanish play given here which was very amusing. By the bye do not send any more fruit salad, as owing to the mixture of acids it easily ferments, we opened a tin a few days ago which was absolutely worked. Please send from time to time a little oatmeal. It is cheap and nourishing. Do not believe yarns about complete or temporary insanity of many men here. It has only happened in a few cases some of which would doubtless have occurred under ordinary conditions. I heard of a sad case the other day which I wish you would tell Mr M of. An old fellow in our barrack about 50 yrs old had sent his wife and daughter to England some 3 months ago. Now he hears that this poor woman has gone mad as neither she nor her daughter could obtain employment being pestered for birth certificates, evidence of nationality etc. All these are quite British tho' long resident here. Poles, Belgians, Servians etc would probably be overloaded with attention, but of course country women need no attention. Is there no charitable and organised body able

to help in such cases. His name is Turner and Mr M knows him and should therefore be able to put the authorities in a position to help the girl who has no blood relations in London. Please send no more sardines. Please ask Allan to write me. I do so hope that this year we may all meet at home in time for a little summer weather. I had a most amusing dream last night, about the 3rd in 2 yrs. I was floating over the houses of parliament holding 2 teapots full of gas which kept me up and could see the buses stop and people point at me on the bridges when suddenly the lids of the pots flew off, the gas escaped and I fell in to the Thames to awake with great relief. Heaps of best love and kisses to all from your ever loving son, Geoff xxx to Ma and Viola.

Barack 5, Box 12

19/6/1916

Mrs Pether, 13 Cravens Road, Harlesden

My dear Mother, Parcels 76, 77 safely received. I did not send a card home last week as I sent 1 to Arthur Chrichton congratulating him on his Military Cross and then the other 1 which I had intended to send home I sent to Cologne to ask for my music as I can now use a piano for 4 hours weekly with another man for 1M. each of us. I hope you do not think this unnecessarily extravagant as it will at all events keep my hands in so to speak. I was very surprised to hear that you had not heard for 3 weeks and cannot understand. Gray begs to acknowledge parcels 1-3 with thanks. Many thanks for r cakes and razor blades. We are having very wet weather lately. I will shortly send photo, which together with all programmes etc, I hope you will take great care of. I see Day fairly often but he is usually busy. Many thanks indeed for the leather gloves, they are just the thing. Turned inside out the left hand one works quite alright. Many thanks for eggs but really do not send any more as they are I know expensive, far better to let Viola eat them for I have nearly finished growing and have by now cultivated a tough tummy. If you could manage to send a little rice from time to time that is very nutritious and cheap for its value. I am able to get it cooked. Was surprised to get Dads letter from Manchester and glad to hear that he now does business there instead of elsewhere. I have ascertained that I shall not have to leave behind anything I value when we go home. I am sorry to hear that Viola was not well and hope she will not be growing too fast. The baskets for s.sticks turned up safely and I often have good fun with them. I am surprised to hear that Viola is so fond of my old books, all the better. I have not heard from Allan lately. How is Auntie Bessie. Really this place makes one horribly absent minded, I was so annoyed at losing the cake of soap you sent me. Thanks for Viola's little card of 9/5 with the little boxes. Do not imagine I shall be too learned when I arrive home. I shall not learn more than I forgot I fear. I enclose a programme of a Shakespeare evening we had in modern costume. The whole thing to my mind was quite a success. Only 2 of the 12 eggs were smashed. Did my daily timetable and monthly expenditure interest you. The Arts and Crafts Exhibition comes off next week and I have had been cleaning up my model. There is great and very creditable activity here in all sorts of things and I am sure that everyone is working at this that and the other. Andrews, a friend of mine, takes a class of ships engineers, captains and mates, 9 in all and all beginners in French. They work very enthusiastically and chaff among themselves if 1 of them makes a foolish mistake. Can you imagine that anywhere else. Your cards of 19th and 30th May and letter of 23/5 just received. By the by a certain Hon Arnold Kellenberger has just written me from Switzerland to say that he had repeatedly written to Coln for my address without answer. He now says that he obtained my address from Mr Cole in London and will help me any way he can. I must write him a card next week. Is he a business friend of Dads. I think he helped me get news to you when the war began. Am glad to hear Allan has written. Cove asked me if Harrods would be so good as to send him addressed acknowledgement card in each parcel. When I mentioned Mr Bass I only did so figuratively and not personally. Post from home is very irregular. I received yesterday your cards of 19 and 30 May. Uncle Nicholas is doing well I hear. I hope he makes progress in his business in time to knock off work before Xmas. How is Mrs Willmott, I had almost forgotten her. Pleased to hear Viola is better. Of course when I do not hear from you I often wait till they come before writing. Thus writing 1 week on Monday and the next week on Saturday nearly a fortnight can elapse. I try however to write regularly. Much love to all at home to Pa Viola and yourself, also kisses xxx your ever loving son, Geoff

Baracke 5
Box 12
7/7/1916
To: Mr Pether, 13 Craven Road, Harlesden, London, N.W.

Dear Dad, Many thanks for your letter of 11/6. I have discovered the 6th Pauline in the camp and we are going to arrange for a photo or a small feed. Do not send any more patent fuels for me or Gray. I do wish the attempted exchange will come off. The other solution is o good. Surely they can wake up after two years to arrange this. I want to join Allan. We have had much rain lately. Hope you get enclosed programmes. Could you send a little tea. I see Mr Bass is still running round and many younger. We feel this very bitterly. What a lot of soft idiots run things now. Write Mahoney my opinions. He is an old humbug he promised to write us often. I have acknowledged Nos. 69, 70, 73 a long time ago. They do not yet number the boxes. Many thanks for Euthymol flour cake etc., and also parcel of r.cakes and oatmeal. Parcel 78 all received. Have recommenced Spanish. Many thanks for razor blades. Please send a few raisons but stop parcels at once if we clear. We have Gray an hotel managers son in the box who is good at cooking. He begs to acknowledge receipt of all parcels up to 6. Advice card of 7 he has not yet received. I went in for a competition in France translation (Eng into F) at the camp school. I was given the 2nd prize, about 4M worth of books which I may choose myself. I was rather bucked. Send 1 programme to Allan. I cannot yet acknowledge the parcel with the tin of cream in it as the card is not yet here. It will be just right if you send not every 7 days a parcel but every 10, i.e. 2 in 3 weeks. I should imagine that Mrs K is rather shallow and frivolous. I have been looking forward to Brinkmann sending my music but it has not arrived. He is not or else cannot play the game with me. Williams gave a fine sermon at church last Sunday. Excuse the scribble I have only a stump of a pencil. Perhaps with luck I may be home before long. I cannot picture home in war time. By the by they are not numbering the parcels from Harrods so if the date is illegible it is very confusing. The bread for Revill is not arriving properly he has only had 2 or 3 lots. I had a couple of hours music last night. Andrews played the violin and I played the piano accompaniments. My only very weak point is time. I can read and finger fairly well. We have played thro' several quite difficult things for the 1st time quite well. By the bye who is teaching Viola music. I hope she is not learning from Mrs Bruckslaw. And how is Mrs Baker now. You would laugh to see some of the classes here half a dozen people for example will congregate under a tree in deck chairs. They are dressed in a strange variety of cool and airy costumes. The teacher under a huge Panama does courses on the verbs sev, essen, firm and so on. By the by will you tell me how you stand with Herr Arnold Kellenberger. Is he a friend of yours and who is the Mr Cole in London from whom he received my address. Well so long, your advice card has arrived and the parcel has not yet all arrived. Could you find out if the Spanish paper "Blanco y Negro" is obtainable in London and send me a few copies to read. Many thanks for Viola's letter. I fear I should be removed as dangerous if I started to build sand castles. I am quite hope, and expect you are also. Pleased to hear that Chubby Culling looks so well. Is Arthur Chrichton a captain or what. I suppose he is pretty busy now in any case. Do not send any more Kampite's, those dried fruits were really very nice. Is business good now. Will you please write to Mr Mahoney and tell him that I will do my best to get his things across but that if I cannot I will burn all papers etc and send the books somewhere where they can be kept. Much love and many xxxx to Mother, Babs, etc. Do not send me any more money as I can manage the music etc out of the £2 monthly. So long, ever your affec son.

Baracke 5
Box 12
15/7/1916
To: Mrs Pether, 13 Craven Road, Harlesden, London, N.W.

My dearest Mother,
I am sending a letter this week instead of cards as I wish to clear up this confusion about parcels. A parcel has just turned up with a legible date on it 24/6 and I have discovered that I am checking this of on the advice card No. 79 of 14/6. I must therefore ask you to get the

numbers put, not on the paper, but actually on the cardboard box so that I make no mistakes. I fear the fault is mine but checking is difficult owing to the similarity in contents, that is when I do not know the number. Was no. 77 sent off about 19/5. Many thanks for the sugar and cake. By the by the firm of Watmough & Sons Neptune Biscuit Factory Grimsby turn out 3/6 tins of 7lbs of No. 1 their biscuits which is I think cheap. The biscuits are very palatable and substantial and I should prefer these to any fancy cheese biscuits which are rather luxurious I think in these times. Of course the good old Campaign's are jolly good too which you send me. I have already acknowledged No. 73. Advice card No. 80 just turned up and have checked it. All complete. In Parcel 79 ½ of 1 No. 7, no 15, no 17 have not arrived. Things go well now. Please inform Mr Mahoney that I thought it best to burn his correspondence as it was very heavy and I had possible developments in view. Gray has now received No. 6, 7. By the by many thanks for the box of rock cakes and patent heels. They were put up on the American Xpres Co list, I suppose that is right for I have an advice card of theirs from Rotterdam of 10/7. I am as I believe I told you have 4 hours practice weekly. Do not send any Kampite's nor much tinned fruit. I find that fencing has called my warts into life again. Could you send me a stick of caustic. I surely acknowledged the grousers. I am having those heels etc put on next week. How is Allan now. You do not tell me exactly what exam Viola is going in for. Old Brinkmann has not replied or sent what I asked for. He is a gent for it costs him nought. I hope that you do not expect an acknowledgement of letters before 6 weeks or of parcels either as the cards have to arrive before I can check them. We are presenting a little French book to our teacher Morrison, who has had us in his class since Sept 1915. Hope photo arrives safely. Don't worry about anything which happens while they haggle about us. We are not downhearted. By the by I do not run round much with the Cathy's as we pass our time differently in this camp. We go for a walk occasionally when we meet. It will be fine to get onto grass again. There is scarcely a blade in camp. I think my languages are going quite well but at times one feels as if it was no good doing anything. Really I am at a loss to know what to say. Please get the Editor of the Pauline to send it to you as you as you can forward it with rock cakes when it will be more likely arrive and not be torn to pieces as was the last sent by post. Is it any good do you think if I study National Economy. I do not feel up to studying longer daily but would manage another subject without difficulty. I hope you enjoy life at Petheron. I should love to be there myself. I suppose Dorothy will soon have finished at Bristol. I suppose Allan is not likely to shift. How many apparitions has he. I fear I shall have to have another pair of breeches if here after October. As you know the sand here makes an awful mess of boots in a very short time. What is Mr Mahoney doing. He has not sent me the letter he promised 3 months ago. Well, so long now. Glad to hear you are jolly. Many xxx to yourself and Viola and best of love to Pa and all from your ever long son Geoff.

Baracke 5

Box 12

19/8/1916

To: Mrs Pether, 13 Craven Road, Harlesden, London, N.W.

My dear Mother, Yours and Dad from 20/7 up to 6/8 received. I was awfully sorry to hear of poor Arthur's death, but he played the game right through and could not have finished better. Please express to the Crichton's my sympathy, I fear they must be rather cut up. Chubby you tell me is missing but after all there may be a chance for him. Probably he is bagged, in any case write me as soon as you hear anything. Surely the photo I sent is not so unlike me. I hope to get into another one soon. By the by could you send me some Eno's fruit salt, I am a bit spotty tho' feeling very fit. I expect it is because of the tinned food. I believe people are doing something for us at home. I hope it comes off as I feel so fed up and useless at ties. I understand you hope to move. I wish we could as it would be much nicer farther out. Where are you going for the holidays. The bread arrives as a rule in fairly good condition. In yours of 25/7 you hope I am not getting conceited. Really I did not know I was. Mr Mahoney is pegging away splendidly. I make up three or 4 little parcels every week and give them to men who are short. Gray has received nos. 7 - 10. I only wrote once to Kellenberger but that is enough I think. The hair restorer and borax arrived safely. The Government have started to send parcels to about 150 men so I cannot give you any more names for the time being. The money arrangement is satisfactory. I now get 50M for £2. Mr K would be much obliged as I explained somewhat incoherently at the end of my last card, if you could make it balance date

for date. To the end of August I shall have had £23 ie its equivalent so if you could balance that and send £2 at the beginning of every succeeding month that would work well. So glad to hear Mrs F spent the weekend with you, I know it must be very nice for her. By the by did you send a parcel by the American Xpress Co. No advice cards have arrived lately. The latest is no. 82, and a parcel of 22/7 has arrived. I fear the music, real and imaginary of this place would annoy you more than the female gun's stunt. By the by please get the Paulines sent to you so that you can enclose them with rock-cakes. They are then more likely to arrive. I shall be able to leave my books in somebody's charge here if we go home. I hope they will not stay at the old hair splitting game much longer. Advice no. 89 just arrived. All safely arrived. I hope there is nothing in the way of pinching going on in the packer's room since as I told you nos. 9, 13 & 14 of No. 81 and nos. 7, 15 and 17 of No. 79 did not arrive. What is the best thing for spots. I cannot drop shaving as I get a very apparent crop every 3 days. I believe I told you my grey bags would soon be worn out. Of course I cannot help wearing things out here. I try to keep stuff going as long as is possible. Those gym shoes made by the North Bristol Rubber Co have bust up I fear. Thicker soled cheap canvas shoes but not Plimsolls are the thing. A kind of inexpensive tennis shoe. By the by, surely 15 in No. 79 must be 1 do. Not 1 doz. I have just been to an impromptu Saturday evening concert which was quite nice. As you see by enclosure the topics are popular. The talented d their best to keep the camp cheerful which is a matter of great importance. Have you heard from Allan lately. He might like to hear there is a chance of our getting out. As you say the mail is spasmodically irregular and I fear that in such times it is unavoidable. However, do not worry and remember I always write regularly. Many xx to Viola and yourself and love to Dad and all. Well so long, many thanks for the rock cakes. How glad I shall be to have some "home" grub again. Much love to Dad etc ever loving son,
Geoff.

Baracke 5
Box 12
1/9/1916

To: Mrs Pether, 13 Craven Road, Harlesden, London, N.W.

Dear Mother,
Yours of 9th, 10th, 17th, 18th of August to hand. Very many thanks for 4 photos; what a big girl Viola has grown. I perceive that Allan is getting very warm weather, fearful hot isn't he, but where is his moustache. (Yours truly shaves every 2 days). I only wish I could be with him with the pop-guns. By the bye would you be able to find out at the G.P.O. if I could write him via Switzerland, also as he sends me no new address tho' I believe he must have one my mail may not reach him. I suppose Mrs Willmott is not in difficult circumstances. Today, for a change, it is quite warm. I was so bucked to see you all looking so well in the photo. I should be glad of some music, but only old stuff you are tired of, as I might not be able to get it. By the by the steak and kidney puddings were found very good, that arrived in the Harrod's parcels. Shall be sending another photo soon. But which one did you send to Allan. The Swiss Bread now comes in very punctually. Jolly good news a few days ago, Allan looks a credit to Mellins. I certainly try to be as economical as poss. without stinting myself which would not be right. Any news of Culling. By the by I have just thought that jute fibre shoes would be the very thing for fencing as they practically last for ever and stand any amount of wear and tear. If you could send me them in large 8's they would be fine. Also some toilet soap. By the bye any thanks for box with eggs (not 1 broken) mustard, cakes etc. They were jolly fine and I shall make some picture frames for the photos you sent, out of the 3ply wood. Many thanks for Mrs Whitlock's best wishes. Please give her mine. My jacket which went at the end of the sleeves I have had repaired. Really though you do not have a jollification at Weston there is no need, even in these times, to be down in the mouth. But I know you are too sensible for that. Here we try to be as jolly as poss, we should be badly off if we didn't. The number of amateur actors, teachers, preachers and supermen who endeavour to keep the camp amused, instructed and wide awake, is positively alarming. There are naturally a few critics who complain that the camp is overrun with cranks but on the whole we get on very well. I believe we are known as a nation to have an appalling number of **societies Pro' & Auntie(?)**. Ruhleben has at least 50 societies, each of considerable size. Thus the Welsh, English, French, Russian & German literary societies! The French, Spanish, Ruhleben, New –

Dramatic societies, the Arts & Science Union, etc. etc. It is assumed that social development is at its height here when each man is a society all on his own – for the painless tho' necessary destruction of ill behaved mosquitoes The most interesting specimen of Camp lepidophera is described in the "Guide to the newly Interned" as follows:
Specimen No. 67107 Characterised by alarming and spontaneous extensions of the neck towards the source of any speech, largely and bleary eyed; flits from point to point. Is immediately attracted by any noise. Can be seen from morning till night swarming at various points, vulgarly known as the News - or Rumour Bug. Cannot be destroyed. Well there is not much more to say. I know Mr M is somewhat erratic but can one wonder at it after what he has been thro'. Lord "Charlie" sticks it. Tho' our people still play with gloved hands like old women and let their turnips go. It is somewhat boring to see how feebly they play. Just a lot of bluster dissolving into fizz. Many xx to all at home, to yourself, to Viola, etc. Much love to Dad. Hope he is quite chirpy. Things look much better now, I have heard quite often from Elma, Mc'Adam, always glad to do so. Well so long now. Hope my suggestion re money was favourable. Lots of love to all ever your affectionate son.
Geoff

Baracke 5
Box 12
14/9/1916
To: Mr Pether, 13 Craven Road, Harlesden, London, N.W.

Dear Dad, Altho' it is early in the week I will write my letter as I feel in the mood for it. As I believe I said before the photos were jolly fine and the eggs arrived in 1st class condition. Not one was broken and we enjoyed them immensely. Mothers of 27/8 received. I shall not want many things for the winter as I have most of my old clothes such as overcoat, jacket, cardigan, underclothes, puttees & wool cap in good condition still (also gloves). As I wrote in mine of 3 weeks ago, a pair of breeches, (same dimensions as last time) would prove useful. Also 1 Pr Scotch stockings. I wear a muffler, of which I have too & no collar. I believe I asked for 2 thin vests, all my winter underwear I have scarcely used as yet and it is as good as new. Perhaps my boots (2 prs) may not last right thro' the winter, but I will wait & see. I feel in fine condition (thanks to parcels & fencing). The latter is most fascinating. I shall shortly be sending you a photo of which I have the proof before me. Front row as you look at it left to right, Morrison, Thompson, West, 2nd row (sitting) Boot, Blumen, Lovell, Hall, Andrews & yours truly. Back row, Milne, Brown, Reynolds, Hatfield, Hahlo, Molony, Proctor. Morrison is my teacher of French in the camp school. Hall is the man who coaches us with foils etc. Andrews is a particular friend of mine. Reynolds was the master I used to mention at the College. I thought this group would please you. I do not look very haggard or careworn. Perhaps the drinking water at Weston did not agree with Stumpy. Why not give him lemonade, he looks very fat in the photo. I have not asked the Doctor's opinion as to my health. He would probably find me in good con. Do you mean Holyberg. He has not written me. By the by please balance up the money as I asked. I drew I believe £3 one month. I hope you kept my letter as I explained things very carefully therein. I fear I cannot tackle any other subject. During the next months occasion will be legion but the necessary conditions of warmth, light, quiet, etc. will be lacking or all too little. For work of course. The exchange gas bags are now beginning to quieten down. Uncertainty means suspense and bad tempers. Certainty, in either direction, is far better and conducive to good spirits. Of course if only – but you know what I'm going to say so I won't say it. Let us hear no more "expressions of sympathy from the noble lords". They avail us nothing. As I said to the month of September inclusive I shall have received equivalent of £25. If August 1915 was the first month at £2 you would have sent to end of September £28. I believe however that you have only sent £22 as you started later at your end. Please clear this up & balance up to end of Sept 1916 and oblige. From then on as usual. Fear Mr M is a bit cracked in the top story. By the by do try to get me a pair of large eights, jute solid shoes tho' I have nothing else to fence in. Those rubbers are worn right thro'! The pace is quickening obviously. So sorry to hear you had a lot of rain. So bucked to hear Uncle Frank is staying with you. I went to the Pirates of Penzance last week. I had never seen any thing of the kind before and enjoyed it very much. If you can recognise all the girls as boys you know in the camp you have done well. The make ups are fine. If you could get anything small & easy of Grieg or **Moszmovthi** I would like it. Please

enclose all Paulines with rock cakes. I think there is no harm done if I say that our steward was formerly on the "Brussels" and I grab him with the charity parcels I receive and 3 other men in part beside. Please send 2 cakes soap, large quantities are probably stopped. Well so long. Enclosed is school prospectus. Xxx Love to all ever your loving son
Geoff

Baracke 5
Box 12
28/9/1916

To: Mrs Pether, 13 Craven Road, Harlesden, London, N.W.

My dearest Mother, I was sorry to hear you had had an attack of tonsillitis but trust it is now better. You and Dad have been rather unlucky at the end of your holidays. Glad mine of Aug 19th pleased you. How often should I take the utrate to keep my blood in order. If we move I hope we shall go far enough out to be free from the encroaching houses for some considerable time. Still hope there is a possibility for Chubby. I believe many people have been bagged and then relations have not heard for some time. Ought I to write the Chrichton's. Cards are rather valuable to me. I wish you would express to them my sympathy. By the bye I am going to ask you for an indulgence or Pin Money. Not, to come to the point I believe that if you had the Illustrated London news sent to me by post direct from publishers they would be neither stopped nor returned as both sides have no objection to these things coming straight from publishers. Not for a newsagent but from publishers. I should enjoy them immensely if you could do it. Would you make inquiries. These things would be as nourishing as Ideal Milk. Hope Dad is better now. Has the photo arrived. I packed it carefully. I cannot remember if I wrote to Aunt Sarah. She is a Harding is she not. Things are certainly going well now. Do you think Xmas together poss. Frankly I believe K of Ks estimate to be more than likely. I am still working on the same old lines. We had an O.P. meeting in Ettinghausen's room some days ago. There were there Gillbert, E Highhauser, Barrett, Paget, Heather, Woodland & self. There was another man Boyd who could not turn up. I have not received any Paulines now for months so wish you would enclose with rock-cakes. That is much safer I think. Have not heard from Allan lately. I have framed the photo he sent me. I fence every day 2 hrs. The weather is beautifully mild for September. Hope you were safe the other day. No bally good at all. How is business' good, and to tell the truth I was very surprised that Dad was thinking of moving as I understood things had been very expensive lately. It is almost impossible to picture England now. The winter will be on us before long I fear but I am very well prepared for it. I think I can make my jacket last thro' the winter but I may later on have to ask for another pair of boots. For the time being do not send any. I do not hear many news from you of Wick. I suppose he is not going being probably more useful in his present position. Have they a nice house. Could you send me another photo of you then in the garden without that smudge across it as it spoils the effect. I suppose Allan gets no winter at all to speak of. I enclose programme of the show I went to last night. I hope you will send me some music. Any old stuff will do. I have bee practising a couple of Handel's sonatas with Andrews on the violin lately. By the bye do blankets wash well. I wish you would send me 4 handkerchiefs (white), the black silk ones did not last long. The washing was too rough for them. Please send me some English steel boot studs. The money affair is satisfactorily settled. I was able to show Mr K that he had made a mistake. Glad you gave Mr M my message. He has not written me yet. Was not Auntie Bessie with you at Weston. I have not had any mail today but I do not want you to write if you are not well. Has Dad any particular ideas for me afterwards. I am not keen particularly on the architect stunt. Parcel of 17/8 safely arrived but no advice cards have reached me lately. Gray's advice card for his No. 11 is not yet here. I have just read "The Card" by Arnold Bennet. This is the first modern novel I have read and I find it quite interesting. Please send less pressed beef and more rations and vegetables now the winter is approaching. Well so long now much love to Dad yourself & Viola x x etc. Could you send me my old book of Geometry if findable. Love to all, affec son
Geoff.

Baracke 5
Room 1
12/10/1916
To: Mrs Pether, 13 Craven Road, Harlesden, London, N.W.

My dear Mother, Jolly pleased to hear you are now downstairs and much better in health. I am very fit tho' the winter is now setting in. I am sorry that I forgot to ask you for a cap when I asked for clothes. Please send me one in some quiet colour (grey) size 6 $\frac{3}{4}$. I hope the old grandmothers in office will push our question. "Funnily enough" I cannot remember if I wrote to Aunt Sarah or not. Has Allan grown a moustache. The acid has cured my warts. Those rubber soles etc which Dad sent have now done 2 months good work and I can notice no wear whatever. Mr K's money question is settled to everyone's satisfaction. He had made a slight mistake in his figures. I received Mr Mahony's letter. Many thanks. Do not bother about the music. It is not worth the trouble. The photo you referred to was the one which showed my face on the horizon so to speak was it not. So sorry to hear that Dad was also in bed. Hope he is now alright. The O.P.s' Dr Ettinghauser & Barrett are going to learn fencing from Andrews and me. Glad Dad's business is good. I believe he can get things at home that used to be made elsewhere, is that not so. My winter outfit will be first rate. I have warm clothes in plenty. My jacket I am having mended and it is probably good for some time to come. Fear I shall not be able to send answers to papers thro' but there are several good people here who will do so for me. Many thanks to Mr Gibson for helping you. I am not so spotty as I was a few weeks ago. Do not bother about the Illustrated. My information was incorrect. It cannot be done. I have just rearranged my bed today. All my photos I have put around the head of the bed where I can see them and it looks jolly fine. I often make picture frames and have discovered that diluted Indian Ink makes a fine stain, throwing up the grain very well. Finished with beeswax because it gives a fine effect. Please send me another lump of wax, also reel black cotton & reel of whit thread. I enclose two programmes. Parcel 88 all received. I trust you have received the letter re boots which I was able to send thro' quickly by the kindness of the committee. I have not told before that I have been for some time in Room 1 of our Barrack. We are more comfortable than in our old box. I forgot to tell you that I have started Chemistry (theoretical of course) but I may do some practical later on only a in a very small way of course. By the bye please send my Hall & Knights Geometry Parts 1 - 4 if you can find it. Please thank Uncle Frank very much for the apples he is sending me. So sorry to hear that Auntie is no better. Am now reading "Under the Greenwood Tree" by Thomas Hardy and find it very good. Revill is no longer receiving parcels from Harrods except the Overseas Club ones. He can only send the ordinary acknowledgement cards as you cannot expect a man who has 4 cards and 2 letters monthly to do any more. However I can assure you that all parcels received are appreciated. Parcel arrived today of 20/9 with "drugs and food" on outside. I could not find the drugs except lemonade which might be described as such. Really I can think of nothing interesting to say. Did you go to the firework display you wanted to. Well so long now keep up your spirits we are all doing well. Many xxx etc to Viola yourself and love to Dad. Hope he will write me a nice long letter. Glad to hear Allan is still well. I suppose he will not be moved yet much love over your most affectionate son Geoff.

Baracke 5
Room 1
27/10/1916
To: Mr Pether, 13 Craven Road, Harlesden, London, N.W.

Dear Dad, I have safely received your mail up to 16/10. I have been told of a few parcel arrangement which will speed up the delivery of parcels. It seems to me an excellent idea. Hope you enjoyed your little trip up north. Please thank Uncle Frank for the apples he sent. They arrived in first rate con and are jolly nice. Expect my clothes will turn up in a few days. Glad you like the photo, am sending another one soon. I had a letter from a Mr Davies of the Board of Education, he is sending me some books' what, I do not know. Fear you will have to send Xmas pudding. However, for the last tie I hope. 3 is a lucky number. Please send Xmas things no later than when this reaches you. Do not send me any presents as I might

have to abandon them when I leave. Gray would be glad if you would include no more biscuits in his parcels but send vegetables instead. Fear or rather I am glad, that I am not a 45er. The old gas bags will do nothing for us. One silly feeble bluff has shown that. Could you send me a stick of tartar remover. The water here contains a lot of lime which seems to adhere to the teeth. I had Allan's letter of 17/9 yesterday and was very bucked. I think I shall set up shop as a costermonger after the war while the claims of the trams or drivers life may receive my attention. Something really exciting you know – what! Could you send me 1 flannel shirt for the winter. Just an ordinary shirt. I take 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ collars. When you say that I do not pass any remarks about the food you send I hope you do not think I don't appreciate it. I do, but you always choose such suitable grub that I can really make few suggestions. Do not forget to send less pressed beef to me during winter. The British Government sends pressed beef which we have about 3 times weekly for dinner. Do not send so much. Do not send any Kampit or anything similar as I can get my grub cooked quite easily. We have a cookhouse run by Mr Revill. Please ask Mr Mahoney to strike my name off the Mayoress' parcel list. I do not want them as I have plenty, and it is not easy to fid people who are short now. I enclose programme of show I went to last night. By the by my friend's name (see photo) is Andrews not Adams as Mother wrote it. R L Brown is 2nd from left in photo top row (see programme). Have you ever read Thomas Hardy's "Under the Greenwood Tree". Please send me some candles. I feel certain somehow that tho' we may not be together this Xmas we shall be the next. A well known individual (now dead) made a prophecy of this nature. Allan says that he expects to move, he seems to have been out of it rather in the last 15 months. He is not bored. His playthings should be very interesting, I shall wish for full details upon my return. I take regular exercise still. I often feel surprised that I was not keener on it when I was younger. Of course I did not have much opportunity. I was sorry to see that Mr Elan was died. He prepared me for confirmation as you remember. He is a character in a book called "Sinister Street" written by an O.P. Compton Mackenzie. Well so long now, I'm fearfully uninteresting tonight, I suppose I must be tired. By the bye. Can I wash the feathers of my pillow. Thank Elma McAdam for the letters she writes me. The phrase "hen party" is absolutely foreign to me. I presume it has nothing to do with poultry. This pencil is wretched and I'm right on the edge of the table. Much love xxx etc. to Ma and Viola and self. Keep smiling; love from your affec son Geoff.

Baracke 5

Room 1

11/11/1916

To: Mrs Pether, 13 Craven Road, Harlesden, London, N.W.

My dearest Mother, Many thanks for the two lots of rock cakes which I have received this week. Could you send me a winter shirt, similar to those 2 you sent me last winter. As I have to send my clothes out to the laundry in winter instead of having them washed in camp, on account of the impossibility of drying, I find that I need 1 more as the washing takes a week to come back. Will certainly write Victor but have lost his address. The clothes Dad sent are jolly comfortable. Uncle Frank sent some jolly fine apples. Yes, I am also of the opinion that you will not have to send Xmas puddings after this time. Reynolds is spare but he certainly has enough to eat. I hope this new arrangement will not prevent you from sending the parcels from Harrods according to requirements. I have heard that a few standard parcels, A, B, C, etc are the basis of the idea but I presume individual tastes are considered. I never touch salmon or sardines for instance. By the bye do tell Mr Mahoney to tell the Mayoress to stop the parcels to me. I am absolutely tired of them and never asked for them at all. Always the same thing, sardines, dog biscuits, rotten jam always the same and a few odds and ends. I should not care to be a Tommy being fed by her fund. I should die of N.V.I. Have been feeling particularly well lately. Really never before have I been able to get so much open air exercise, I cannot help thinking what a mistake so much home work is. Parcel 91 safely received. Yes larger and fewer tins of army rations are better than several small ones. The music you sent was a jolly nice collection. Is George Flint, Allan's old friend, from Westcliffe. His waltz is quite pretty. So glad Dad is "in the pink". I wonder if he would like to fence, I think he could manage it. Do not send Gray any more sardines, cold meat, biscuits or salmon. How is Harry Whitlock. I should like to hear from him. Really it seems that tie flies. Fancy Viola having to go to another school soon. Please give Dad the small present I am sending him for his birthday with lots of love and many happy returns from m. I fear I could

not send anything else nor can I write anything on it but he will of course understand. Really I cannot get enough time in for Spanish so dare not touch Italian or Russian. Gray did not get his advice cards from the 13th to 15th parcel inclusive. However, do not bother if the things are mixed up. If you make Gray's parcels similar to mine they will be just what we need. Flour is certainly quite useful. We are able to make cottage pies with flour and our potato ration mixed up for the crust and army rations ainside. I hear tho' that flour will be stopped after the first. Did I tell you that Barrett & Dr Ettinghauser, both O.Ps have now started fencing. If Dad would send me a well balanced Italian foil (the handle only) for Xmas I should like it very much. Do not get a too heavy one, nor a French foil or an epée by mistake, the handle should be this shape. **Drawing of a handle.** I think this explains itself. Mr Hall as you see is in the centre of that photograph. He is the man in the black vest. Do you get the programmes which I send occasionally. By the bye with the blade in the foil should balance on the finger at the spot shown by the arrow, if this is not the case refuse it. Do not send the blade as that would make the packing awkward. I can get plenty here. I am getting on fairly quickly with my Chemistry. I am glad to have this opportunity to learn it. Do not send much at Xmas except for a few dainties. Has Captain Cowan joined up. Do I understand that Viola Eileen Semolina Pether Pether has become a member of a gang of banditti, -----, a tough, a; for shame. Well so long now, Do give Dad my best love. I wish I could get home for the celebration. However, I will not be absent next time. Xxx to yourself and Viola. Love to all Dad etc. Thank Elma McAdam for still keeping up the letters. I find them quite interesting. Your affec son. Geoff.

Baracke 5
Room 1
21/11/1916
To: Mr Pether, 13 Craven Road, Harlesden, London, N.W.

Dear old Dad, this letter will, I hope, reach you on your birthday. I must apologise if it arrives later but have tried to time it properly. May happy returns on the 9th December. Really I do not think I shall be away from home next Xmas. Then we will have some celebration I guess. I was very bucked with the clothes you sent me but found that they were rather on the small side. I had them altered and then they were fine. You know I am getting a fair size now. I hope Viola will give you the photo I sent. Some of them look fearful toughs don't they. We had snow yesterday which has now turned into a slushy mess. Things seem to go nicely on the whole though our new friends are not enjoying themselves. I hope to write Allan a letter some day which I may be able to get through as an extra. I have not heard from you for a week. I suppose that a big firm like Harrods will be able to send parcels as usual. I went to the production of "Everyman" an English morality play about 500 years old last week. The costumes and the colour scheme were the designs of a pretty big artist in camp and were really very fine. It was the best thing seen here from the artistic standpoint. I hope you will be cheery and happy this Xmas; do not worry about me, I shall enjoy myself and make the best of circumstances. Oh would you ask Mother to send some elastic tape for garters. Also please send the cap. Parcel 91 safely received. As you know owing to lack of suitable space and lighting and above all of silence we find study very difficult at this time. Please send no more dried vegetables to me or Gray as they do not seem to be of much use. The drying seems to make them stringy and rather tasteless. I have heard that the bread sent us from Switzerland will shortly stop in favour of bread from Copenhagen, is that so. The latter is really better and not so stale. Yes flour is quite useful. Please send G and me a few candles weekly. How is Viola? Is she going to be in another show at Xmas for the soldiers. Have you heard from Mr M lately. Am now reading "Eugenie Grandet" by Balzac. A really wonderful book about a miser and his family. He economises o candle ends, lumps of sugar etc., quite a wonderful drawing of a miser. The music room is temporarily lost to us as there is a violent squabble between two cliques (yes cliques even here) for ownership and the professional musicians wish for the lions share and are opposed by the many amateurs viz Andrews, myself and others. Quite an intrigue but it keeps us going. Do not send me brown but black boots. All my brown boots are black as an Irishman would say. I was practising fencing the other day with 3 shirts and a sweater on in deep snow. I bought the sweater here and regret it. Have had to have it darned all over. Glad to hear that Mother visited Mrs Forrester some time ago. Is Allan allowed to use a sunshade or blinkers. It must be annoying in the mirage

to image there is a chair to sit down on and then to bump hard on the sun. Poor fellow. He must learn how to sit down gently so that he may not dent any of the beautiful little plants. The Japs who did the ju-jitsu at the exhibition we went to knew how to do it. Do you remember the slapping of thighs. No, I am not yet 45 deo gracia. Do write me a letter on Sunday if you can manage it. It is a funny thing to come here raw from school and to go out a semi grown up. I shall be awfully queer, have seen nothing and done nothing. Much love again and many happy returns once more. Love and xx etc to all from your ever loving son. Geoff.

Baracke 5
Room 1
14/12/1916

To: Mrs Pether, 13 Craven Road, Harlesden, London, N.W.

Dear Mother, Yours of 26th and Dad's of 19th Nov to hand. When Dad says no more parcels from home I suppose he means thro' the local P.O. Surely Harrod's parcels are inoffensive and above suspicion. Auntie Prillie told me you had been rather bad but am so glad to know you are now quite in condition. Do not bother to write me if you are feeling queer. I have ordered a Xmas copy of the camp mag to be sent to you and 1 to Allen. Am sorry to say I cannot enclose any more programmes. I expect Babs more of the theory of music than I do by now. I went to the piano shed for my hour yesterday morning but I was too cold to do much. We have just arranged to get a small stove when playing will be possible without much dancing about to keep warm. Yes the boots are fine but I have a funny shaped foot. 8's are long enough but rather narrow. Large 8's broad enough but too long. I think I ought as you suggest, to send a card to Auntie P and Elma McAdam so do not expect one next week. What is Victor's address. Hope our people do not stop too soon, we are against it, don't mind a longer stay if necessary. Apparently you do not hear from me regularly tho' I write every week, either at the beginning or, if I don't hear from you, at the end. Did Mr Gray see Dad at business or at home. I hope Allan does not get bored. It's rotten doing nothing. Yes the old Canon wants to have a few squibs tied onto his coat tails from time to time. I have often thought that a theoretical knowledge of elementary Chem. Would be useful so am taking the opportunity. Hope my apparently infantile demands for odds and ends such as thread beeswax etc do not cause you much trouble. You know I can fool about for hours making little things and materials thereto are essential. You see I bind up my broken foils with waxed thread. What nonsense, theatre going is an essential relaxation from time to time. I hope all at home are determined to see the job thro'. What is Dad worried about, don't let him worry about me. So Dorothy is engaged. Yes I do not consider a Varsity training of much use to girls. All the school maam people are liable to be too exact and rigid. Of course there are exceptions. Their ideas too are much governed by pedagogic convention, thus:-

S.M. You speak German do you not?

Ordinary Male - O yes, I was 3 years in Germany

S.M. – Then of course you have read Goethe

O.M. – Oh no, never cared for him or Schiller.

S.M. – Then you cannot possibly know the language.

Observe that to be a German scholar you must have read Goethe. To be a speaker of English you must be able to recite Shakespeare by the volume. A fallacy. No I never knew Henry Hebditch. Do you spell his name with a haitch. Perhaps a little lettuce patch in the garden would help. If everyone did so it would make a difference. By the bye please get Dad to send me some English steel boot studs (square heads). They only put a few in my boots and once the holes are there the studs must be renewed when worn. They must be steel to last any time at all for the ground here is ruinous to boots. The coarse sand wears away the leather. Am reading the "Egoist" by Meredith and hope to read "Ordeal of Richard Ferval", "Wuthering Heights", "Jane Eyre", "Adam Bede", "Romola" and a few others soon. Shall be restarting Spanish in the camp school next term. We had snow last night and the ground is fearfully slushy now. Your post is very late lately. By the bye will you be allowed to send "Paulines" in future. If you sent them thro' Mr Davies of the Board of Education, Whitehall, they should arrive safely. Is there any chance of Allan being moved to his pal Plato's place. Have you ever heard anything definite of Chubby. They still live at Bushey don't they. Well so long now. Heaps of love to you and Viola and Dad and love to all. How are the Butlers. Hope you will have had a merry Xmas when this reaches you. Much love to all from your ever loving son Geoff.

P.S. Please send rice and tapioca or any similar stuff in parcels, tin mustard, stop G.Syrup.

Baracke 5
Room 1
14/12/1916

To: Mrs Pether, 13 Craven Road, Harlesden, London, N.W.

My dear Mother, It is a shame the way your post is delayed. Have just received yours of 4/12. I am very surprised that you have not received the 2 photos I sent home some time ago. I have received a lot of stuff from Harrods sent on 29/11 but articles 3, 5-10, 12 in No. 93 and 2-4, 7, 20, 24 in No. 94 have not turned up. Everything seems to be in confusion. Do not send any cocoa, I propose to do French with Andrews and possibly in the school next term, Spanish, German, Chemistry and English as usual next term. I had to stop music for a month because of the cold. I have fits of industry and slackness when nothing can be forced. Hope you had a very happy Xmas and New Year. I fear I shall have to ask for another pair of tennis shoes with rope soles (same as before). I fear that I am always asking Dad for expensive things so if I go the pace too much with shoes and things, do tell me to ease off a bit. I received 3 cards and eventually a topping parcel from Aunt Prill. It is jolly good of her. I am not allowed to ask you, in future, to send messages to a third party when I write so do not think my letter strange. The pudding you made we had on Christmas day and it was jolly fine. Not too heavy. Hold old is the Gunning's boy. All my cousins seem to be getting married. I say do send me Victor's address. I expect the poor chap feels lonely and he never made many friends. In connection with the parcel from Birkenhead I shall withdraw my bill for the abolition of maiden aunts. I hear that old Catty is trying to stir the dust up for us. I went to the "Mikado" on the Friday before Christmas. The show was excellent. I feel stumped for something to talk about today. Have just started Wuthering Heights by Charlotte Bronte. I feel bored to extinction today. It's only because of the weather I suppose. Some of the Red Cross parcels have arrived already. They are not bad but 1 a week would be quite insufficient to live on. I wonder if it is realised how absolutely we depend on what we get from home. Government ought to pay compensation afterwards to relatives who have practically supported prisoners here. It is not fair to ask a family to supply a prisoner and feed him. I believe Dad will still be able to send stuff thro' Harrods. Please get him to stop the tinned fruit and only send the dried stuff. It is far cheaper and nicer and we are able to prepare it. You say that Allan sends all sorts of messages. What are they? I hope Dad will be able to slacken off after being Grand Master for a year. I suppose Church bazaars must be held in order to raise money. Tell me, are there no Xmas cards out this year. If not it seems that there is a little economising done. Do people spend money riotously on nick-nicks still. I wish Dad would not send any more tinned chicken. My appetite alarms the box at times. I scoff a plate of porridge and 3-4 slices bread and butter for breakfast. Expect Dad had a very busy time at Xmas. Suppose business as usual, Will be dropped soon. They ought to be as far as poss or as far as it is necessary. I must apologise for the awful Xmas cards but there were only these 2 kinds printed. Hope you have heard from me at last, have just received yours of 14/12. Hope you have a lot of work for me to do in the garden when I come home. Are you growing vegetables? "Andy" Reynolds my old master is going strong, he has just had a few little poems published in the camp. It is a pity they cannot get someone more efficient than the old Canon. With reference to parcels I cannot detail the stuff despatched 29/11 as it is so numerous. Where do the Gunning's live. Was Allan in the affair the other day. He has been rather bored with the inaction. By the bye the camp officials have stopped the Swiss bread. In future the bread is to come fro Denmark. Please ascertain whether the money you sent to Berne which is still unspent will be automatically transferred to Copenhagen. I hear that 18/0 a fortnight exclusive of cost of bread has been demanded of the relatives of prisoners. In some cases the relatives are in rather straightened circumstances. What happens then. The first lot of parcels were in part addressed to people who left here, in some cases, 18 months ago. As if lists were not obtainable from the Censors and the Foreign Office. What organisation. Will very many xxxx to all at home and love from you affectionate son. Geoff.

Baracke 5

Room 1

12/1/1917

To: Mr Pether, 13 Craven Road, Harlesden, London, N.W.

Dear Dad,

Have arranged to start golf and have been nominated to be a member of the club. Barrett an O.P. has given me 3 clubs and that is all I need or can use here. Could you send me a few balls. There is some restriction regarding the export of rubber and a large number are not allowed. Gray recommends the "Chemico" ball price 1/0. Do not buy anything dearer. If new balls are not allowed used ones will do. Have received Victor's address. Account of installation was missing. Have heard from Mr Carmichael, Granny Whitlock, Elma McAdam. Apparently Xmas cards were banned this year. Could you send Gray in his parcel 2 sets of those patent soles. Mine are still going strong. The decrease in thickness is very very small indeed. I can recommend them. I fear I have not described our Xmas day at any length. It went of very well. We had a good dinner, splendidly cooked, tho' perhaps Ma would have disagreed on that point. I never told you that the previous Xmas the chipped potatoes were defatted by rolling in one of my old shirts. I do not understand Mother's remark about the teeth and acid. I have not become a secret imbiber of sulphuric or nitric acid. Do not send another pillow. Music books arrived long ago and acknowledged at once. Danish bread now arrives regularly. Yet another year and we may be laughing over the inconveniences of internment. Jolly good idea of sending chocolates. How is Dr Armitage. Your pudding was fine. Yes, sorry cakes are off but never mind. Surprised Dad's birthday letter did not arrive. I never imagine for one minute that you do not execute my commissions promptly. Feel they must be rather a nuisance. Some fellows lament to me here that their mates cannot be bothered to send such trifles as beeswax etc. How easily some people are bothered. The photographer is not very skilful as you may judge. I am at present very well indeed. I went to Communion early on Xmas morning. Herr Kellerberger was good enough to send me some jam but I cannot spare a card to thank him. So glad Lerta is not seriously ill. I suppose the new parcel scheme will eventually right itself. I was told that toothpaste was stopped in one man's parcel. We infer that prisoners teeth to not need cleaning altho' they eat the parcels we send. What silly red tape. I believe the committee met eventually to debate the point of tooth-paste. Would you like to fence when I come back as well as play golf. A man can fence until he is a hundred. We seem to be in for a spell of cold weather, the snow is a few inches deep and looks like staying. Am reading a book called Aywin by Watts-Dunton. Quite a strange tale about the Welsh & Gypsies. Have you ever read the Bible in Spain by Borrow. It's not a pi book and you would find it very interesting. Saw the Mikado here at Xmas. I feel surprised I never saw these things at home but I always disliked the idea of going out. Mr K is the tallest man in the group at one end as far as I remember. I have heard that in numerous cases the wives or other relatives of those interned here are in difficulties, financial and otherwise. I understood that Mr Mahoney had been instrumental in making arrangements so that prisoners returning home would be offered any assistance they needed, on landing. Finding jobs for them, medical attendance, new clothes etc. Could he not go a step further and inquire into the wellbeing of relatives of prisoners. Government gives soldiers' wives separation allowances. Why not something similar for needy relatives of civilian prisoners. Sorry to hear of Capt Cowan's death. Do not send any more music. I saw the "Marriage of Kitty" two nights ago. I am endeavouring to read as many of the English classics as possible. I have dropped the Matriculation idea as the Maths worry me too much here. I consider that the main thing is to arrive home tolerably fit and the other things can take 2 places in order of importance. My languages I still continue, also Chemistry. Morrison is slowly getting better but his nerves are all rotten. We are all pretty highly strung the Bishop said was best able to judge. However, my daily fencing, and golf which will soon being, send me tired to bed, so I usually sleep well. Must close now with very much love and kisses to Mother, Babs and yourself, ever your affectionate son, Geoff.

Baracke 5

Room 1

21/1/1917

To: Mrs Pether, 13 Craven Road, Harlesden, London, N.W.

Dear Mother, Please excuse somewhat dirty paper as I had to borrow owing to scarcity of paper of last few days. Dad's letter of 7th to hand. In future I am going to number and check dates of my letters etc so as to see how they arrive, this is No. 1. Please acknowledge as such. Altho' I sent a card yesterday I write this today as I feel in the mood for it. I do not always write on the same day of the week but I write at least 1 card or letter weekly, with a few exceptions which I tell you of from time to time. Are not the foils obtainable or are they not allowed. I must try to get one here. It seems to me to be better for things to be sent from home then bought here for by this system not much money need leave the country and personal effects have to be obtained in any case. Of course foils may be considered a useless luxury, out of place in such times. But something is learnt with them which is an asset. I hear that such things as toothpaste have also been stopped. That is a case of false economising. But I will not bother you with these trifles. Parcel 98 of 14/12 containing 13 articles to hand. Also one of 22/12, 1 box of 7 articles and one of 30/12 also 1 box of 11 articles. Please number boxes when not quite so busy. We had a temperature of -15C or 27 degrees of frost Fahrenheit early yesterday morning. This weather does not try me in the least. I wear a vest shirt sweater and jacket if I am going to walk about and not dawdle and find that quite warm enough. I often remember little bits of home, i.e. some ridiculous storybook in which one hears that "little Billy sails his shops while Jack and Mummy have a dip", I remember reading that to Babs. Perhaps the same would now offend her ladyship if read to her. She must have altered quite a lot since I was home. Taffy is going the pace and doing things jolly well. Hope you do not overwork. I did a little washing today. I had perspired daily while fencing into a red footer vest and thought the washing of the same would be advisable. I put it into a bucket with a pillow case, sprinkled lux on top and poured hot or rather tepid water on top. The wretched colour ran out of that vest combined with a little dirt and fastened itself on the pillow case, refusing to budge. The pillow case is now a delicate shade of pink, quite retrousee, like pink tulle or chiffon, the stuff ball dresses are made of. Apparently the direction on the Lux were wrong. Allan has not written for a long time. I have developed a liking for poetry since I came here and read quite a bit. Have just read a queer book called Aylwin by a man called Watts-Dunton. One character in the book represents Rossetti. I hear that Bishop Bury is publishing a book re us and others which you might like to read. You know people here get fearfully absent minded and forgetful, so much so that they become a bore and nuisance to themselves and others. The only way to my mind to retain full possession of ones faculties is to work and live as usual. There is always something to learn. Of course the slack ones stand up among the multitude and say "much learning maketh thee mad" "look after the body and the mind will look after itself etc" but these people are only stating the old canting half truths. Brains are not so easily destroyed by sufficient use being made of them as of no use being made at all. Dry rot sets in. For this reason the majority of the camp I am glad to say, learn something or at least try to. Of course old women here draw vivid pictures of the sorrows of a student trying to work with noise, cold, bad illumination etc to contend with. A new version of "A hopeless dawn". But the thing can be done and the greater proportion of those who have "gone soft in the top crust" are the do-nothings. The idle about gossips, would be generals and statesmen etc who argue all day long over playing cards, war or some other topic. Excuse the venomous of this tirade but as I say I feel in the mood. The man who is a victim of circumstance should try to beat circumstance. I say is Dad in the furnishing department now. Have just been looking at the group of yourself, Babs, Dad and the dog. Suppose you could not take a similar one minus the blur across your face. Well love to all from your ever loving son Geoff xxxx to Babs, self, love to Dad, etc.

Baracke 5

Room 1

Saturday 9th February 1917

To: Mrs Pether, 13 Craven Road, Harlesden, London, N.W.

Dear Mother, Yours of 20/1 to hand and Dad's of 14th also. Do not worry about the cakes, I know very well these things are stopped. Glad to see you realise usefulness of vegetables in garden. Everyone should do so without exception. This is the time for a boy like Kenneth to put in a lot of spade work. From now on it is a case of sticking it. I do not think you have any

reason to suppose that the new situation will affect delivery of our parcels. Funny thing Allan sprained his ankle at about same time as I strained tendon of my right foot. Quite cured now however. Hope he is. For about a week we had an average temperature at 9a.m. of -20C. At night time as low as -29C. The last is about -20F being the lowest registered here for about 50 years. It is remarkable that this cold is not at all trying. At least I did not find it so. The thaw has just set in. Mr Davies of Brd of Education Whitehall sent me some papers which keep me employed. So glad Dad is not worried. By the bye please stop porridge, mutton chops and biscuits. They are not suitable in hot weather. The mutton is so fatty. Yes do go to the meeting and take Dad with you. I believe I am right in saying that Morrison may soon be sent home. The only pace that can cure him properly. Could you send me some sulphur pills. I have a lot of little boils, not very painful but annoying on my forehead. Sulphur is supposed to be good. Carry on as usual with other foods, rice especially good. How is Dicky Butler. I washed my hair brushes yesterday, the water was not exactly white when I finished. I have had some fairly good skating but this thaw will finish it. Am glad to say that I am now a months allowance in hand. This of course is due to the temporary stoppage of music. The stove has not come but the thaw has which is better. Have had rare fun with fencing lately. Old Hall is a jolly sporting old dog and has taught us in fencing what would have cost about £150 outside. He is also an expert of ju-jitsu and boxing. However one thing at a time. What has happened to Douglas Chichon, is he in **XXXXX(?)** I guess that Silas K will make some endeavour to be useful. Am reading Chaucer at present. We are sending a card to the O.P. club. Yes it must be funny having a lot of girls in the drawing room. I should not let Viola do too much Latin. I fail to see the sense of it. Apparently Allan is not keen on going back to the civil service. He suggests some sort of out door life, in the colonies or even at home. I do not know I am sure. Wait and see is the best thing to do. Young Gray is always complaining of bad eyes, headaches, liverishness and other ailments ad infinitum. He went to some ridiculous Quaker school, his mother died when he was about 6 and he is as stubborn as a mule. Mr F and I try to get him to take regular exercise and have a good sweat from time to time but all to no purpose. He does no study and all my appeals etc to him to work, read good books etc are useless. If I were his schoolmaster I should bally well beat him. He seems to lack interest ambition and driving energy. It seems to me that the whole educational system needs revising. I have a fearful lot of books here. I hope that I shall be able to get home those I particularly value. We hope to get an O.P. group taken this spring. Will Mahoney speak at this meeting. He and old Smuts have been trying their best for some time. As an afterthought please stop mutton chops for Gray and sliced bacon also. Ham as substitute would be good. Dried cabbage and haricot verts McDoddies continue parsnips and carrots stop. The two former are nicer than the latter. In a few weeks I must ask you for a pair of grey bags. As you gather I get thro' 1 breeches suit, 1 pr flannels yearly. Not so bad eh. Feel almost empty of information. Hope to read Diana of the Crossway and Meredith's Letters to his son. Got permission to send Allan an extra letter but have not heard from him for some time. Everyone must buckle to in these times. It is a case of sticking it. I will guarantee to return home in good health and as much up to scratch as possible in headwork so long as things continue per usual. I do not think the country has any right to expect us to do without apparatus for games etc. There is enough extravagance at home in some circles to make our small expenditure justifiable. Why should they stop golf balls and tennis shoes. Love to Dad Viola and yourself xxx affec son Geoff.

Baracke 5

Room 1

Saturday 24th February 1917

To: Mr Pether, 13 Craven Road, Harlesden, London, N.W.

Dear Dad, Although this is the last day of the week I feel fearfully void of information. However, will do my best to finish this. Parcels of 18th, 22nd and 29th Jan to hand. Of course I cannot say if anything is missing tho' one box did not look quite full. Perhaps that was only because the paper had been taken out. Yours of 28th Jan Ma's of 30th, Allans of 28th also to hand. I hear there is some difficulty in getting balls, bats, etc. thro' for various games. However if no stuff is allowed to come out I shall have to carry on fencing and start jiu jitsu

instead of golf. Of course we know that tonnage has to be economised but surely a few golf, tennis and cricket balls, which are a good means to the end of keeping healthy, are not so very bulky. There seems to be an appalling lack of gumption in certain quarters. A prominent divine comes to us and says, "take exercise, mental and physical keep healthy, be good and do not use strong language". But under the circumstances a paper chase or a walking tour are quite out of the question as a means of keeping up the "morale". People who get heavy, fat and liverish soon get depressed. Excuse this scrawl but have strained my wrist. Am having 4 Spanish 3 French 2 German and 3 music hours a week. I am also reading all the classics I can get. Cannot understand why my Xmas cards did not reach you. By the bye do not think that I address my aforementioned complaints to anyone but red tape friends in power. Do not bother to write when you are very busy. Go heavily on the rice, tapioca, sago and first start this summer. Per unit of volume this is very nutritious food and not so expensive as tinned meats. Send no more mutton chops, oatmeal, or fish of any sort except haddock. Of course dried peas, beans and spinach carry on. What you are sending under the new system is still comfortably enough. Gray has not received any parcels for about a fortnight now. Send no more cocoa or coffee. By the bye I maintain that rice requires soaking before cooking, the others of the box say not. Am I right? Went to see "Lady Windermere's Fan" last night. It was jolly amusing. Some of the fellows here take girls parts very well. We had "The Bells" last week, a regular blood and thunder. Andrews saw Irving in it the last time he played it. Have been taking sulphur with golden syrup to get these boils down. It seems to work alright. The frost has not yet broken tho its only minus 3 this week. Shirts not yet arrived. Give Lester my best wishes. Beeswax arrived safe. Please send hobnails for books. There were about a dozen instead of 50 in those boots I last had. You see soling and healing costs about 10/- and then the leather is bad so nails are a great saving. Uncle Frank wrote me a jolly nice letter. The Xmas cards were designed inside and printed outside. This sounds as if one said born on the earth, buried in Mars. Two worlds so near and yet so far away! Teams in the gallery eh. My latest remarks annoys the sensitive feelings of the box. Par example. Reggie "My dear Ethel do not eat beans, they are indigestible". Ethel "But why not I had some last Sunday" Hereupon I remark "No don't one of my maiden aunts died of eating beans." Groans! You ought to read "Miss Esperance and Mr Wychbody" by Mrs Allan Hawker if you ever see it. I shall never be able to use a pen after this. Have you been to the meeting yet. Don't send my anything for my birthday. Hope you still find financial arrangement convenient. All square here. Well no mail today so I'll continue. Do not, in the course of the next few months, send me very expensive foods. The articles I have previously mentioned are I believe easily obtainable and cheap. Have just started "Jane Eyre". It has just started to thaw and the place is in a fearful mess. If you ever want to see mud come here in winter. Have you ever thought how lucky it was that you did not come here as you intended. I often curse myself for being an ass but of course no man can foresee the future. Allan is sending me a photo of himself a cheval. He must have done well to be a captain at his age. Well so long now. Much love and kisses to Viola Ma and yourself. Hoe Ma's hand is better. The vegetable garden stunt should be practised by everyone. Taff is undoubtedly doing well. Much love from your ever loving son
Geoff

Baracke 5
Room 1
Saturday 4th March 1917
To: Mrs Pether, 13 Craven Road, Harlesden, London, N.W.

My dear Mother, The order of the week has been alternate thaws and frosts which are a nuisance. Have just received yours of 15/2. Ten days ago yours of 29/1 arrived. In the meantime I had nothing in fact the whole camp experienced the same thing. I saw "Eliza comes to stay" last night. It was quite funny. By the by Gray received a parcel of 23/1 and 26/2. He had not had one of a previous date farther than that which arrived on 3/2. I have not received any bread for 3 weeks now. Could Dad drop them a card. Am glad you are going to lay out the garden. I guess that the show will finish this year. Uncle Frank wants to have me at his silver wedding in August so must make arrangements accordingly. Do not imagine for one moment that the cold tries me. On the contrary I like it. We have 3 flower pots in our room. 1 containing hyacinths the others tulips. The hyacinth is now in full bloom and have a lovely scent reminding me of your garden. It is of the AUVERGIE variety, perhaps you know it. Am reading Addison's Spectator Papers. They are very amusing, especially the descriptions of Sir Roger de Coverley. Apparently Allan is rather unsettled as to what to do after the war. He does not relish the idea of a stuffy old office and I cannot say that I do. I suppose Ken will join the new organisation as the other think was too rigorous for him. How is Viola getting on with her work. I should never like to see her grow into the school maam or "Miss Ward Type", with glasses and an unnecessary knowledge of Latin and such things. If she can cook. Play the piano, speak French and dance and knows a thing about English literature that is all she needs. I suppose I shall have to learn dancing again. It is always giving me a headache that's the worst of it. I lamed two girls for life by treading on their feet at the College when we had a dance at carnival time. You would have laughed to see e hopping round like an intoxicated elephant. Sorry my writing's so bad my wrist is still stiff. By the bye please send my razor blades and a toothbrush and hobnails as soon as possible. I bought 2 brushes last week. 1 broke in half as usual as I used it the other leaves about a thousand bristles in my mouth every time. Result 1.80M and 2 brushes wasted. It is therefore as you see better and cheaper to send me these little things. The hard weather is as a matter of fact just what we want. Took Mr Heather an O.P. to the theatre last night. He invited me to tea some weeks ago. These little invitations go a long way to making life bearable. A certain Mr Lough had so I'm told a few caustic remarks to make about us here. It may interest him to know that practically no Danish bread has come in here for a fortnight. Do you not hear from Mr Mahony at all. I thought he would have something to do with the meeting. Things look very sorry at present and we all fee confident here. By the bye if there is any difficulty at all be sure to send me the cheapest foodstuffs. More marmalade and less jam would be quite a good line. Ask Dad to see whether Gray's parcels have been despatched regularly. As I said they have been most irregular. He only had two in 5 weeks. We are now only 3 in the box, Forrester Gray and I. K may come back but we hope not. We did not get on very well with him. Cannot understand why you never received Xmas cards; all the others arrived I believe. I am afraid the designs were beastly sentimental but I did not make them. We are having the "School for Scandal" next week. If some bread turns up I shall invite Reynolds, Andrews, Grant and perhaps another one to my birthday. It is jolly rotten having to grow up in a place like this. However I am able to pick up a lot of miscellaneous knowledge and experience of human nature, which is always interesting. Some of the old seamen are great. There is a Devon man a captain about 70 who can kick his fee in the air as high as his head. He is of extraordinary strength for his age. Well so long Mother, best love to self Viola and Dad. Xxx etc. Pencils bust somewhat close. Ever loving son. Geoff

Baracke 5
Room 1
Saturday 17th March 1917
To: Mrs Pether, 13 Craven Road, Harlesden, London, N.W.

My dear Mother
With luck this will reach you just before your birthday as I wish it to do. Many many happy

returns of the day. Viola is to be instructed to kiss you for me. Do not bother about these new parcels, the quantity seems to me exactly suitable to the average of ones requirements. Please stop all tinned mutton chops, mutton cutlets and any greasy food of any kind. Have been awfully bucked with mail lately. Although it comes in reversed order very often, e.g. I received yours and Dad's of 25th, 21st, 18th and 4th Feb in Order given. Glad you went to the meeting. Can never read dates of despatch on Harrods parcels. The last 2 parcels have contained acknowledgement cards which I have despatched. The spring is now coming along altho' it freezes at night. Please send campaign biscuits from time to time as bread is irregular. I was awfully bucked when the cake arrived. The last bacon in paper was sent 29/11. Almost every parcel however contains a tine of sliced bacon which is cooked and can be eaten cold. Could you get Dad to include 1 monthly bottle of lime juice each for us. Received P.C. from Aunt P. many thanks. Victor C has not answered my card. Am very optimistic, the weather is getting better. Harry Whitlock is doing jolly well. My arm is now healing fast, looks alright but did not feel particularly rotten. It is jolly good of you to take so much trouble to get the foils through. They will undoubtedly be superior far and away to anything we have here. Balance as I explained is the great thing. It will be jolly good fun teaching Pa about it. So glad to hear Viola plays well already. My Spanish teacher had been hors de combat but we have now started again. I am able to make great use of the books sent me by Mr Davies of Board of Education.

Have been much amused by the Spectator Papers. This last suit has lasted well. Have not had to have seat of breeches renewed as with previous pairs. Shall have to ask for pair flannel bags in a few weeks. I will send dimensions. My legs have got much thicker with the binging. I feel in A1 condition, thanks only to parcels. Yes the room is quite cosy. O by the bye do send steel boot studs. Soling and heeling costs 8.50 m and even the old uppers are used which wear out in 3 weeks. Have forgotten to number letters after No. 1. I do not see much of Roger. He is in with a rather swell clique of people I do not much care for. Not that he is not a jolly good fellow but our aims and interests never meet. Besides he is in another part of the camp. Do you still go to the tennis club or is it now a vegetable garden. We often have that stuff for supper that you had regularly from Gill's. it is often very tasty and palatable, I find. I do not anticipate spending another birthday here, in fact my estimate is exactly half that. Our little cash down stunt was quite good. Yes the financial arrangement has been alright this end. Glad to hear that Aunt P. is enjoying her stay. Did Dad inquire into the case of J. Askew, seaman, whom I mentioned some time ago. He is now receiving a few parcels and would like to know if he owes them to Dad's acting on his behalf. A lot of the simpler people here do not like or are not able to look after themselves in this respect. No I did not imagine that Mr Catly was by any means the only one acting for us. However we are but pawns in the game. Hope you will celebrate your birthday in a suitable manner. Do you remember the trip we made with Babs to some little wood past Watford. I enjoyed myself that day very much. Herr B. is now home again, he is discharged. Well much love to all at home xxx to yourself and Babs. By the bye is Dad still a member of the golf club. He does not describe his preliminary operations at all. How are the Butlers. Is Dicky well. So long now must send Viola a card soon.
Have not been as interesting as I hoped. Geoff

Baracke 5
Room 1
Saturday 24th March 1917
To: Mr Pether, 13 Craven Road, Harlesden, London, N.W.

Dear Dad,
The pair of shirts despatched 3/1 arrived yesterday for which I am much obliged. Many thanks for sending pair of foils. It is still freezing at night time altho' to-day it is comfortably warm in the sun. I feel awfully bucked with life, I suppose it must be the weather and everything in general. Mr K is back but will probably not stay long. Gray started to teach me golf yesterday. Of course there is not a blade of grass on the "course" but we have great fun. I have now quite recovered from the effects of vaccination and my wrist is not painful now, as you see from my improved calligraphy I hope. By the bye my poor old breeches parted in the mist and the repair is not very effective. They were rather small you know and gave inside both knees months ago. Now the climax has been reached with the hole in the seat. The

jacket is however as new. I fear you will think me awfully hard on clothing of all kinds but remember we have no skilled Mamas for repairs. I am carrying on with Spanish, French and German. The piano had to be taken to pieces and dried before it will be fit for use again. Received Viola's card safely. Her Majesty is indignant at my suggestion, perhaps she reads the A, B, C, picture book now. Do not send a seater if you can stop it in time. I hope the hobnails will come soon. By the bye please do not send any more cocoa or porridge. We cannot eat porridge in hot weather and we have about 5lb of coca in stock. Some months ago our box gave 15lbs to the sanatorium. There is very little drunk here as it makes most people come out in spots and boils. Would you ask Ma to have a reel of that same kind of twine put in my Harrods parcels once a month. It is unobtainable here. Am glad to hear from Allan from time to time. He has promised me a photo of himself a cheval. Victor Culling has not answered my card. Things seem to be going very well now. Sorry to hear that you are not going to grow veg. I should if I were you. We have that stuff pretty often you have from Gill's for breakfast. Will you send campaigns again. My bread comes alright now but Gray and Forester get none. Have just started Jane Eyre. I am going to a French play next week. Have not received mail later than of 25/2 as yet. It is coming in backwards. What is Viola able to play now. Mother would like Anita's Dance and the Dance of the Elves from Peer Gynt, Greig. Are your duties with the Masons very onerous now. Will you be able to send me 2 or 3 golf balls. I have bought 1 here. Yours of 14/2 just to hand. I hope to be home in time to go to Uncle Frank's silver wedding. Which golf club do you propose to join. There is none at Park Royal that would be handy. I suppose it is being reduced to grow vegetables. I do not know how to finish this. I suppose you will stay at home at Easter. I am going to see John Masefield's "Good Friday" on that day. There is some talk of Bishop Bury coming here again. How is Archie Curtis. We are all very well and confident. Apparently what happens to the mail here, is, that if a batch arrives, the newest dates are given out first. This is the severest winter here for years. It should have finished in the ordinary way about a month ago. I suppose you never meet Mr Catty. A fearful lot of fellows here do no work. They will regret it when they find themselves backward or quitting. As I told you I believe, I check the barrack's post on alternate weeks and take it to the censor every day. As soon as possible I shall start fencing immediately after the roll call at 7 a.m. The morning and evening are, in the height of summer, the only decent times for strenuous exercise. I also do half an hour Swedish drill before getting into bed, much to the amusement of the other people in our room who consider me rather peculiar in some of my ideas. However I have put over 2 inches on my chest since I started fencing etc. Much love to Mother and Viola xxxe tc. Too. Hope you will write me only when you are not feeling tired but then d nice long letter. Love from your affec son. Geoff.

Baracke 5

Room 1

Saturday 31st March 1917

To: Mrs Pether, 13 Craven Road, Harlesden, London, N.W.

My dear Mother, This letter will not, I fear, be interesting for I am in that curious state of fidgetiness contemporary with the approach of spring. Perhaps Allan was busy a few days ago or is he farther off. Don't imagine that I was in the slightest bored with the non arrival of the foils for my birthday, on the contrary. I had really not thought any more about them and was in consequence bucked to hear they had been despatched. How extraordinary that the Xmas cards were so long en route. Did you think my writing so very decadent now. I am reading the first volume of "Sinister Street". It is by an O.P. and curiously enough mentions old Elam & Walker under other names. Mail is slowly dribbling in, e.g. yours of 11/3 to hand. I was awfully bucked to hear of the proposed move to High Barnet. Yes, do grow vegetables. I think we should under the circs. Please get Dad to stop mutton chops. They are so greasy. I am trying to arrange a Pauline photo. Yes Mr K. is back but is likely to leave soon, deo gracia. I received parcels PB 32177 today. I feel abominably absent minded at times, of course you often told me I was a "dreamer" when I was at home, but what matter. Have had a preliminary round on the golf course, which by the bye is about 300 by 150 yds and had an average of ? Gray is going to coach me however on swinging and driving. I had my first boxing lesson this week too. If our people handle the reins well this year it should finish soon.

Do not take exception to any slanginess of Allan's. It will pass of under the enervating influence of civilisation. In the great democracy of Ruhleben, the haven and refuge of sub committee's and councils, language is, to say the least, highly coloured. Do not send me the sweater if you still are able to stop it. The following are the measurements for the grey flannel bags I regret having to ask for. Please do not get them any smaller as I have grown a lot lately. By the bye do not send any more cocoa. If there were a surplus of anything here it would be cocoa. You see very little is drunk and no one can stop the supply. It always turns up smiling. Those shirts arrived just in time as I had already abandoned one and another started tearing up the back the day the new ones arrived, probably from jealousy. In winter one has to send things to the laundry to be washed, not with soap but with chemicals which destroy the fabric very soon. This is owing to the lack of dry place to dry things in. In summer it is different. Every week my washerman comes, I give him the clothes and a lump of Sunlight and the deed is done. In giving these measurements I am careful this time to give them in inches also.

Crutch to ankle 76 cm = 30" about
Outside length 107cm = 42 ^{1/8}" about
Waist circum 87 cm = 34 ^{1/4}" about
Thigh circum 60 cm = 23 ^{5/4}" about

Please check these figures carefully to avoid mistakes. It would be better if you would go to the Central Committee in person as they would then not be 2 ½ - 3 months on the way. I say so as I have heard this from fellows here whose friends have sent them things. I shall start taking shower baths again as soon as it gets warmer. Who are Viola's playmates now. Is it still so difficult to discover really suitable little girls? Does she now look with disdain upon small boys? The party I demonstrated Punch & Judy to are probably dispersed to various schools etc by now. By the bye Allan has not yet mentioned the receipt of the Mag I sent him from here. It is curious but I find that I prefer Spanish to French. I also find it easier and much simpler in grammar. Do hope you will enjoy your birthday. You ought to take Babs out to the country for the day. Excuse writing I am in a rather uncomfortable position. Love and xxx to yourself Viola and Dad. Hope you are as cheerful and confident as I am. I have a bet in that its over in September, Love affec son.
Geoff

Baracke 5
Room 1
Saturday 14th April 1917
To: Mr Pether, 13 Craven Road, Harlesden, London, N.W.

Dear Dad

From today on no more acknowledgement cards for parcels will be allowed from here. At the suggestion of the central committee, London, the parcels office acknowledge the receipt of so many parcels from England, Denmark etc. I received 2 boxes marked PB 35222 yesterday and one marked PB 3177 about a week ago. They arrive very irregularly however, as there is difficulty in transport. It is quite cold again and very dirty. Reynolds took me to a concert last Sunday and Litz's Hungarian Fantasy for Orchestra and Piano was played. It was jolly fine. Yes the shirts arrived safety (see previous letter). Do stop the mutton chops, porridge and coca. We have huge stocks of the same and we are not very fond of them. I feel very optimistic and hope to be home this year. I am writing a long essay in French about the people in Harry Whitlock's part of the world and also in Allan's. I feel very inquisitive about the new house at High Barnet. Is it high or low lying ground, is it detached? Is there a garden? What is the neighbourhood like? This infernal dust is blowing all over the paper. Please send hob-nails as son as pos. As you know the whole place here is sand and the camp roads are made of ashes. So you can imagine what boots have to stand and what the dust is like. We had a small flower show here a week ago and some very pretty blooms were to be seen. The camp is going to try to produce its own vegetables this year and a part of the field has been dug up. I have to pay 25 pp for a pair of bootlaces now. Could you send me some, there is room in my weekly parcel. Am glad to say that the scarcity of bread is over for the tie being, however you may as well send a few biscuits as I suggested. Not fancy ones

but good, substantial ones. I saw John Masefield's "Good Friday" last week. It is very remarkable, a kind of modern and improved Passion Play. Please send Sunlight from time to time. I suppose the Palines are being sent to you now are they not. Am just finishing "Sinister Street" written by an O.P. Compton Mackenzie. It is a very interesting book and a lot is said about St Paul's, Mr Elam etc. Of course other names are used. I am going to see the Yeoman of the Guard this week in fact tonight. Allan has not written me for some time now. I suppose he is very busy. He promised me a photo of himself à cheval. By the bye I cannot understand why Victor has not acknowledged my card. I hope I have not offended him. I expressed a hope that there might still be a faint chance for Chubby and perhaps he thought it bad taste on my part. You see one cannot quite see things here in a normal perspective. I am very anxious to know what caused him not to answer me. Please get Ma to inquire. Of course my card may not have arrived. I do wish this weather would settle down, it has been neither winter, spring, nor summer for the last 3 weeks. I suppose Allan has no certain idea of what he will do after the war has he. I went ratting twice this last week. We had great fun Reynolds myself and a man called Crossland. The first time we caught two after we had shifted about a 1000 railway sleepers which will presently be a road and the dog pounced on them. Reynolds afterwards dissected them and it was jolly interesting altho' they were rather badly mauled. The muscular nerve and other systems correspond very closely to those of a human being. The next time we went without the dog, which was being washed, and caught nothing. You may hear of some people leaving here to go out and work. I shall not be one of them. I do not feel that a change of scene is essential in my case. I have an extensive programme of work and sport for the summer and there is a large number of books which I must read. Did Winnie Sprake marry the man with the peculiar jaws who always sat on the edge of the chain and rubbed his hands together. Please send Gray from now on coffee and tea in alternate parcels and tea to me occasionally. Please include some Players Navy Cut cigs 100 monthly in Gray's parcels. I am reading a book about Jiu-Jitsu now. Apparently that stunt we saw at the Exhibition some years ago was merely the wrestling of the common people and not the proper thing as practised by the Samurai. Love and xxx to Mother Babs and yourself your loving and affect son. Geoff

Baracke 5

Room 1

Saturday 21st April 1917

To: Mrs Pether, 13 Craven Road, Harlesden, London, N.W.

My dear Mother, I should have written you yesterday in order not to make a long interval between the arrival of my previous letters and this one. As we had the barracks cleaning and whitewashing I was too tired to do this justice so I waited until today. Parcels to hand recently are two of 30/3 marked PB 37382 and 1 of an illegible date marked PB 36303. The weather is still cold with rain and snow and hail. I had a card each from Margery and Kenneth. Please than them. Dad's of 19/3 just to hand. Those foils cannot arrive for some time as things take over two months sent thro' the central committee. The 2 shirts took 2 months, 3 weeks exactly. If the 3 people in the room go out to work I shall either get Reynolds to come and live with me or he and I will try to find some other place. It appears that Allan is at last getting something to do. You know I cannot remember whether I have ever been to High Barnet. I rather think not. I fear I cannot help Morrison in any way as he is not in the camp but in the Sanatorium in Berlin. What is Mr Andrews like. I am going to the "Merry Wives of Windsor" next week. I do not think you would much like looking after 200 men in Box 5 you would have your work cut out to flick the dust off the "furniture" ie breees, tins, etc., in the 27 boxes. I now realise what you were doing when you rushed around the rooms flicking away dirt that I could not see. Do not let Dad write me when is at all tired, not that I do not enjoy his letters! I had the piano for 3 hours today, 1st time for about 4 mths and it was still rather cold. Reynolds says I ought to practise more scales but one has to consider the camp. Some of the sailors express their disapproval by throwing tea leaves thro' the skylight. I got some down my neck once. Of course one quite sees their point. I hope you do not violently disapprove of Allan's slangy expressions, if you do send him a note berbale. Did Winnie marry the man with the deep voice and the bloodhound's jaw. By the bye do you know whether the Shamrock raced or not at the time when the war started. We are having an O.P. group taken tomorrow morning. Woodware, Heather, Ettingham, Barrett, Gilbert, Boyd, Paget and I in order of age and time at school. I will send some copies him if I can.

I shall start Ruskin's "Crown of Wild Olive" tomorrow.

Do you think Viola has remarkable talent of any sort for music. A fellow in this barracks went out and was good enough to look up the Brinkmanns they were all out except the old lady but she was very fit and hoped to see me again one day. I should like to see them later on to thank them for their kindness before I came here. Yes, I suppose business will put a little more solidity into Margery's head. By the bye do make absolutely certain that Viola knows the essential elements of English and its grammar, thoroughly, before she is heaved into the chaos of French. I shall examine her myself when I get home to see exactly how she stands. You know I went up to the binomial theorem in algebra without being able to simply an ordinary expression, luckily old Cathy found it out. Likewise I was asked to give person plural of Pluperfect indefinite of some French or Latin verb without having the faintest notion of what I should say for it in English. A child of 10 – 14 saying "she might have had" nether bothers to think and probably never could know unless told, what tense she was using. By the bye did not Ralph Gardiner think of taking Holy Orders. Forester mentioned something about you sending some cigs to him in my parcels but it is not allowed is it. No I do not carry basins. Funnily enough! Do not mind rules and regulations they are beneficial on the whole. Do let Viola play with anything she likes out of the cupboard except the tools. Hope you had a happy birthday last Wednesday, very many happy returns. I hear that Bendle is now in France. Have just discovered Viola's letter of 26th on my bed. Yes I am glad to hear they are having garden competitions apparently. Miss Stonham was "squashed". I hope she was not seriously injured. Well so long! That photo was taken today Sunday but may not be very good as the weather was bad. Went to church in the afternoon. Love to all xxxx to self and viola. Love to Dad, please tell him to write particulars new house and proposed decorations. Affec son Geoff

Baracke 5

Room 1

30/4/1917

To: Mr Pether, 13 Craven Road, Harlesden, London, N.W.

Dear Dad, After a week without mail I had the luck to receive 4 from you and Ma yesterday. I received 1 box containing 8lbs of 7/3 today marked PB36303. Our last photo was not very good so we are having a new one taken next Sunday if the weather is fine. So glad to hear Allan will not get a little more to do. How about Ma not wishing to move now it is possible' I really think it will be a great advantage especially for Babs. It would not have been very nice for her to spend 2 hrs daily in travelling assuming she went to St Paul's Girls' school. The school starts again next week. Today we had the first fine day for weeks. Is High Barnet high as the name might imply. I assume from your letter of ¼ that the house is detached. I do not expect the foils for another 3 weeks or month. As I told you things sent thro' the central committee take from 2 ½ - 3 months in reaching us. I am told that no more photos may be sent us from here so it would be better to keep back the photo Allan promised me in case it should be lost. Did he ever get the letters I wrote him about 2 months ago or the Xmas number of the camp mag. Fear it may be rather a trial to you at home for next few months but you assure me that it is not too serious. Yes I hope the peas will flourish. Poor B lost his 2 brothers. Viola will have to teach me my dancing again, I believe fencing helps to remove that clumsiness which is a drawback in a china- shop. Have been reading a small collection of G K Chesterton's poems. He is on the O.P. Committee you know. Was a bit queer last 2 days, my beastly glands swelled up and I think I must have caught a chill but Reynolds looked after me almost as well as Mother could have done and I am now convalescent. If you remember my glands were swollen for a day or so the last spring I was at school. I would just enjoy a good row today, the sunshine is really fine, of course the winter has been quite phenomal everywhere. Up to now information has been very conflicting as to Morrison's state of health, for that reason I ever said much about it. However I believe you may assure the lady Mother met that he is better and his condition is improving but he probably needs home to put him quite to rights again. I am glad your busy season is now over. I suppose you will start the advice cards again. By the by, do not let Viola write backhand, it is fearfully affected. Who is the lady referred to as Beatrice, I do not remember her. Apparently ladies are no longer called after the virtues, the late Victorian maidens, Fresight, Indomitable, Perspicacity, etc., no longer bother us with their offensive perfection. Instead the vulgar hoardings are

marshalled in their battalions to supply Emmamelina, Thermonita, Wheatona, etc., not to mention Violina and Ellalina? The celebrated Italian singer Turpentine Paraffino might even sign opera in English for the vowels, so numerous in his own language would be supplied by an English embellished with the above. I do hope Mother does not overdraw the honor of life here if any, she must not worry herself on any account. Personally as long as things pan out to your satisfaction and mine I shall be enabled to stick it without any melodramatic chest beatings, head dashing against the walls or anything of that sort. Not that such would be likely even under the most provoking circumstances (except in grand opera) where the heroic and unhappy prisoner befriends an insect (genus louse) in his cell to the accompaniment of stringed instruments (Aremolo) and impales himself on a darning needle or tin opener at the decease of the same (drum rumblings and trombones). This is mainly nonsense as you perceive but please excuse it, the kernel is quite sound and I suffer from a lack of news. Should like a detailed description of the house as soon as poss and schemes for decoration. Xxxx to Mother Viola etc love to all. Hope to hear again soon ever your loving son Geoff.
p.s. Please send some bootlaces.

Baracke 5

Room 1

11th May 1917

To: Mr Pether, 13 Craven Road, Harlesden, London, N.W.

Dear Dad,

Mother's letter 20/4 just to hand. So glad my letter arrived on her birthday. It never rains but it pours (parcel PB39653(6150 11lbs arrived 6/5 and 2, PB39653 with 2 sticks shaving soap, dentrifice etc the following day. Further foils arrived yesterday with having suffered en route and I am immensely bucked. Really you must have gone to a lot of trouble to get them, they are better than anything we have here and their balance etc is very good, they lie so well in the hand. Thanks awfully they pleased me tremendously. We have just formed ourselves into a club and have applied for affiliation to the Arts and Science Union, a group of highbrows from whom we hope to get better accommodation. Mr hall has been president and I am treasurer but we have no treasure as everyone supplies his own things. So glad to hear you are moving to Wandsworth Villa or whatever it may be. I fear I alarmed Mother about the bread, it is now coming in regularly. By the bye owing to the difficulty in obtaining coal we shall not be able to get things cooked without great difficulty so please send nothing which needs lengthy cooking to either of us. Send no more dried veg, and in consideration of circumstances no more flour. Further stop beans and dried peas until we say start again; asparagus and spinach in small quantities would be good but we can get some veg here in summer such as lettuce cucumber etc. Carry on with rice and army rations and other things but stop mutton and mutton chops as they are too greasy for summer. Wheat is good but stop oatmeal of all varieties. Excuse these rambled sentences, Gray is now better as he can get out into the open, the buds have just broken and the vegetable world is celebrating the delayed advent of spring. The sun however is quite hot and I have started to brown. We had an excellent rice pudding today which we cooked on our stove according to your instructions. We usually make them hard and have a little golden syrup or jam with them. Cocoa au lait mixed up with the rice is also very good but to-day we sacrificed a whole tin of milk and had a runny one. I fear that my writing degenerates from day to day. Yes the shirts arrived safely 24th march. It would be very nice if Viola could learn the violin or the viola, the sooner she starts the better if she learns the rudiments of the piano. I believe the last letter and camp mag I sent Allan must have been lost. I am reading Les dernieres annes d'Alexandre Dumas. I will despatch photo of O.P. group in about 5 days. We are going to send the editor of the "Pauline" a copy. The second group was taken with the extra man who was not able to come to the 1st photo which was taken when a slight rain was falling. I should advise you to plant veg in the new garden. If everyone did so it would help. So there are only girls in the tennis club now, I hope they do not fail to make themselves useful and not waste their time in frivolous trifles. Everyone should do something however little. I am of the opinion that large consignments of mail go off in each direction about every fortnight as your mail reaches me more or less in lumps. Morrison's condition is still improving. Yes my arm was healed a week after it had been done. Did anyone try to pass off French foils on you, these are much more used in England than the Italian but are much inferior in all respects. Grant, Andrews and I took Hall the "Mrs Dane's Defence" last Wednesday and it was a very good show indeed.

You will probably be inconvenienced for a month or two but then an improvement will start. A mosquito made a frontal attack on my leg the other day and scored heavily, the result is that I have broken off diplomatic relations and march round the room with a big exercise book seeking whom I may devour. Parcels now come in more regularly, is it to be attributed to the rumoured arrest and putting in clink of 3 men from Thelwe Place. Love to Mother Viola and self from your loving son Geoff.

Baracke 5

Room 1

Saturday 25th May 1917

To: Miss Pether, 13 Craven Road, Harlesden, London, N.W.

Dear Viola,

As you observe we are now allowed to write in ink and I hope I shall not lose patience with this pen by the time I have finished. It is not easy to use after being two years out of practice. I have lately ordered a copy of the camp mag for you which I hope may prove interesting, also some photos of the O. P. group. The full group (3 copies) is left to right, standing – myself, Paget, Gilbert, Boyd, Barrett;

Sitting: - Dr Ettinghausen, Woodward, Heather. Put one copy in your room as a small present from me. Please look after the photos and mag which I shall have bound later on. A week ago I heard that Allan had been wounded and I have heard nothing since. I do hope it is nothing serious. I distinctly remember acknowledging care of 5 medicaments last year, which I understood were sent by Aunt Prillie. The foils Dad sent me are topping and the blades of surprising good quality. Have received advice card of American Express Parcel, probably trousers, shoes etc. Parcels coming in very well. What is the new address, you cannot imagine how interested I am. Have lately received parcel PB40541. I do not know whether we ought to have flour sent under the circs, unfortunately the Copenhagen people have only sent 1 loaf per man weekly to the camp for the past 3 weeks and we therefore have to fall back on biscuits and make pies with pastry from time to time. Many thanks for golf balls, they are quite good enough for here, Gray himself uses them. It is a shame that my mail should take ten weeks to reach you. It will be of interest to some people to know that the central parcels committee have no objection to one's receiving 50 pairs of boots in the year, if however you want some leather to repair some boots which are getting thin it may not be sent. Camp soling and heeling costs about 8.50 M, scraps are used and the repair lasts about 3 weeks. Which shows what a lot of harm a few well meaning but stupid people can do. Some economy? It would be well if this fact were widely known. I now get piano for 1 hour daily. K is out again and we have a jockey called Hamshaw in our box. Not a bad fellow at all. Yes we are able to get good cheap lettuces, radishes etc during summer. We had 1st salad for tea yesterday. I made some mayonnaise which looked quite human. It helps the corned beef (standard parcels) down quite well. Some fellows in camp (Horticultural Society) are also growing veg in vacant spaces. Do not send me any medicines. As I previously stated all parcels from Denmark England etc are acknowledged en bloc by parcels office here which means that so many hundred loaves from Denmark for example are acknowledge without name being mentioned. I am reading some of Huxley's lectures. We have now had a piece of ground allotted to us for fencing by the Arts & Science Union. We had been squabbling with the school for 2 months as they objected to us near their premises. Now we are firmly established and none may say us nay. Am now able to get razor blades. Please ask Dad not to stop sending sunlight. 1 small bar fortnightly and 1 cake toilet soap fortnightly as my stock is low and soap not obtainable here. We had a magnificent thunderstorm last week. The lightning was superb. I hope you will have an enjoyable birthday. Why not go to the zoo. Mothers of 27/4 just to hand. Am very glad to think you will soon be moving, to judge from your letter Allan is not badly hit at least I hope not. He has been lucky up to the present in being where he is as it must be very interesting. I saw Mrs Dane's Defence last week and it was very amusing. The weather is now delightful, I shall be quite sunburnt very soon, the summer is much in fact infinitely better than the winter here. The mosquitoes are annoying but I believe one gets inoculated and immune so to speak after a time. Well do trust you will like the new house, so glad there is nice country in the neighbourhood. Finances alright here. Xxxxxxx to self Ma and Dad from your ever loving brother Geoff. P.S. Is this your 10th birthday.

Baracke 5
Room 1
Saturday 2nd June 1917
To: Mr Pether, The Rest, Bedford Avenue, High Barnet, Herts, England

Dear Dad, This will probably arrive when the din and confusion of emigration has subsided; when the nomad is no more, when Mrs Slade, Welford, Cullingford and the rest of them no longer trouble our domestic peace, and the garden is bare of half-bricks and stray cats. On second thoughts Welford or his satellite may invade our new demesne, but what matter. Behold the mistress of the household shall stand upon the chimney pots and cry "O trams, where are thy gongs;; O Shakespeare Avenue, thy Urchings! For there shall be instead of these the cow bells in the fields and urchin substitute shall be represented by pixies in the woods". After this there shall come the millenium and new wall paper and fish glue. Thus ran the prophesy of a sage, interned!!

Do not imagine that I am getting soft in the top crust. I have just received socks, handkd(hankerchiefs) and grey bags; all just the thing but I hope the censor has not stopped my shoes. It's absolutely imposs to get any here. PB 41672 (one box) PB 43049 of 15/5 (1 box) and 1 box PB 43049 marked 103 all safely received. If they are going to send 15lbs weekly in standard parcels they ought to cut out their corned beef and their fish (especially latter) to a great extent. Scarcely anyone here can eat fish as it seems to affect all digestions and the corned beef is pretty bad. We have 13 tins that we cannot even give away. Rice etc would be a jolly good thing for standard parcels. Please stop beans in our pcls as we cannot cook them, they take too long. I was jolly relieved to hear that Allan was not badly hit. I shall try to get an extra letter thro' to him next week. We have had several violent thunder-storms lately and torrents of rain. I have had several games of golf lately and had quite good fun. I fence every evening and go to bed quite tired and therefore sleep well. We have a gramophone in our room occasionally and it is playing some jolly fine records at present. Needless to say they are always bones of contention, especially the bad ones. Mr K is not released, only on leave. As Mother asks me I must confess to having stopped growing up. I now grow along. I have three small test tubes in which I am growing 3 peas you sent in a parcel. One is to be fed on sugar and iron, another on sugar only, the third on iron only and we shall measure results. No, I shall not play tennis as golf and fencing are all I can manage. Reynolds came to lunch with me today (Sunday). B has been at home some time now and will probably stay there. I cannot understand why my letters should be 10 weeks on the way. Those socks arrived just in time; sailors here darn quite neatly but make the part affected so strong that the surrounding give way under the strain. Elma McAdam tells me she saw Viola having a friendly struggle with another "young lady" in Nicolls Road. The odds seemed about even says our correspondent. "Stick it big'un, go it little'un" yelled the crowd, at least I suppose so. Will you be able to get to business easily from here its on the Midland isn't it. People who look at my photos admire that one of Babs standing "at ease" but you had better not tell her so or she may hold her nose too high. If you remember the cloth my bags are made of I should be obliged for a small piece to patch seats with in a few months time. My breeches were patched by a tailor with a most conspicuous patch which I am sure I have seen some extraordinary Hebrew wearing in camp. As a result I have taken a violent dislike to them. Of course he did not wear the patch as such but we might say more correctly that the same formed part of his garment. Please carry on with lemonade as you are sending at present. It is as good as lime juice in bottles and not so likely to smash. Why not change the name to Ye Nook or The Remainder or (x-y) when x represents the whole y the number taken from same. The Rest suggests an inn. Hope my Bong is intact. Well so long, much love to all. Am glad to get more letters from you now, am looking forward to excessively detailed description of new house, decoration, etc, Viola's new school etc, Country and all love affec son Geoff.

Baracke 5
Room 1
Friday 15th June 1917

To: Mrs Pether, The Rest, Bedford Avenue, High Barnet, Herts, England

My dear Mother, Dad's of 14/5 just to hand. I am sorry to say that all the things he mentions arrived safely with the exception of the parcel containing shoes, patent soles and hobnails. I am rather in a fix as to shoes for fencing and have made a very sorry attempt to manufacture string soles. If it should turn out that the said shoes have been kept back by Central Committee it might be pointed out to them that I have not had boots or shoes sent since last August. It is ridiculous to allow sports materials to come out without the footwear to make their use possible. However I am always complaining I fear. If same do not turn up I shall write to Kellenberger in Switzerland. He would not mind I think. Hope Viola receives the card I sent her. Mr K would be very much obliged if Dad would pay on the 1st of month as he did earlier instead of towards the end. He seems to be rather fussy but perhaps it puts her out. The vest was eminently suitable. I pity your operations previous to moving. (see previous letter). Am sure it will do you good to get further away from factories and the like. What about Dad getting to business. I am being tried for a small part in Hamlet but I do not know if it will come to anything or not. I played 5 holes with a man called Macness against two other men who should have beaten us, Macness is one of the worst players in camp. I won the 1st and 2nd holes, Macness won the 3rd, we lost the 4th and on the fifth together; I was rather bucked especially as our opponents looked quite annoyed. Only two letters this week and no English parcels, they are held up somewhere in Holland. The Danish people are now sending some different bread, somewhat better than the last which is a relief as we eat a lot of bread. Yes I borrowed some trousers till my grey ones arrived. The foils are really A1. Hope you were not inconvenienced recently. I expect Mrs F would like to visit you when you are settled down. Are there any numbers etc in the address. Why does not Culling write. Allan has not written for 3 months. I feel very bucked lately and most confident. Do not worry ever on my account. The summer we can stand quite well although the heat is great which does not worry me. The dust is annoying to the throat and nose but we do not have strong winds very often. I give as follows a list of publishers who are permitted to send books to prisoners of war which it would be useful to note for any future occasion:-

Wyman & Sons, 29 Breems Buildings, Fetter Lane, E.C.

W. H. Smith & Sons, 186 Strand.

Simkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co Ltd, 31 Paternoster Row.

International News Co., 3 Bream Buildings, Chancery Lane, W.C. and a few other unimportant firms. I do not suppose I shall ever need anything in the book line but the list might be useful. We had a temperature of 83o which is quite a lot for June. I feel most uninteresting to-night. So little to say you know and the only thing to say is not of vital interest. Have just finished Stevensons Travels with a Donkey. I like his yarns very much as the man himself is interesting. Do ask Allan to answer my letter of about 29/5 and to acknowledge magazine if it arrives. I have borrowed a fountain pen to write this with. We are able, as I have previously stated, to obtain lemons, lettuces, cucumbers and radishes in the camp. I suppose you will not see the Butlers very often now. Will you still be near the Chrichtons, I suppose so. I have 2 or 3 cold showers a day as it is jolly hot and I perspire in bucketfuls. Hope to receive detailed description of the new home before long. I suppose Allan will stay where he is. Will he be better soon? Has Viola started the Violin yet. It would be as well for her to start as soon as possible. Is Dad very busy now or not. Sorry to hear of Burbidge's death. Xxxxxxxx to self Viola and Dad love to all etc., your affectionate son Geoff.
P.S. Do not write in pale green paper, my medical man does not recommend reading from such an anaemic colour.

Baracke 5

Room 1

Saturday 29th June 1917

To: Mr Pether, The Rest, Bedford Avenue, High Barnet, Herts, England

Dear Dad, Rejoice for I have just found a Waverley nib, the only reliable nib as far as I am concerned as you may see. I regret to say that up to the present the shoes, patent soles etc have not turned up altho' parcels of 5/6 are here already. I am in a bit of a hole as my boots will soon need repairing as well as my shoes. If you send latter it will save money as soling and heeling costs 20/m and even then is not very good. Please send per American Express for safety's sake. A lot of people have complained lately that their shoes and boots have not

arrived which may interest the central committee. I understand that no more soap is to be sent privately but that the government will send en gros. I hope they send washing soap as well as toilet soap as we cannot get things washed in camp unless one gives the men soap. Washing at the laundry is very dear and perishes the clothes as chemicals are used. I have lately received parcels viz 1 Box. 5 ½ lbs of 21/5. PB 43151 cheese, 1 yeloban, milk, ½ lb sugar. Also 1 box 6 lbs of 5/6 PB 45227. Pcl No 104 with 1 tin milk, 1 tin cream, ½ lb butter, 2 tongues. Also of same date etc box with Harris Saus, BHH Pears, Boiled Beef, Goose. Jam, Pkt Peas. Also 1 box 8lbs PB 44501 of 26/5 1 yeloban, Belgravian Army Rat 1 piece cheese, 2lbs rice, 1 Marmalade. Red Allan's letter of 25/6, Yours of 25/5 to hand. Sorry to hear that you are in such confusion, hope by now you have settled down. The Hamlet last Monday was fair I believe but 4 scenes out of 17 and plenty of Hamlets lines were cut owing to limitation of time available. I was almost inaudible as I had never rehearsed on the stage and imagined I was loud enough. It went down alright tho' and we are giving a repeat next Monday. How any rooms are there in the new house. Why don't you describe it in greater detail. I believe we are being discussed again but have grown wise enough to avoid getting interested in anything but a certainty. They have floundered enough as it is. Am glad Ken will be able to join as he must have felt rotten being out of it all this time. Good luck to him. Mail to home is very bad now. I certainly like the black and white wallpaper idea or French blue with Chinese yellow is quite pretty or perhaps cream. Allan seems to think he has a chance of a regular commission but don't you think he will find a private income essential. I never hear from Culling and cannot understand it. I feel jolly well and cheerful. It is very hot and thundery today but I enjoy sunshine. I was thinking how fine it would be to be at some quiet little fishing village with a canoe, good bathing, country walks and churches or castles. We must go to some of the big cathedrals etc when I get home. Salisbury, Ely, etc. We have hopes of something being done for the 45ers. Gray has had two parcels posted 26/5 not containing half the weight marked. I had a share in, the other 2 ½ lbs of sago and a tin of sausage. Will you have to be longer en route to business or not. I suppose the Masonic stunt takes a lot of your time now. I think the 15 lbs parcels are enough for summer but in winter people eat a lot more to keep the cold out. Please answer these little questions as I find it all of interest. I suppose Wicks Drew is still at home, a useful man I suppose. I find that my fingers are getting a little more pliable for the piano and that the ordinary piece (not Beethoven or anything classical) up to 4 or 5 sharps and flats causes me no trouble as far as reading goes. My timing is still erratic. I have a lot of programmes of camp concerts and must show them to Mother one day as I have ticked off most of the decent things. Is it a big school that Viola is going to. If you get this by the first week in September wait till October 1st and then send me a pair of breeches. I can carry on with my two jackets and wear them out during the winter. Preferably dark brown of durable material and strong seats. Kind of walking or golf breeches but without baggy knees. Excuse brevity love to all etc. affec son Geoff xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Baracke 5

Room 1

Wednesday 25th July 1917

To: Mrs Pether, The Rest, Bedford Avenue, High Barnet, Herts, England

Dear Mother, At last I have had some mail from home vis yours of 9th and Dad's of 7th ultimo. I received 1pr boots and nails to-day. Is this a mistake or did I ask for them. I remember asking for leather which arrived safely but course the boots will be jolly useful a little later if we are still here. A lot men are in a very nervous and excited condition as they feel that they are so to 'speak hanging on the brink of release. Do not fear that I am allowing my hopes to be raised to any height from which any sudden descent might leave them bruised and shaken. I have adopted the Kismet attitude and carry on as if nothing might happen which is to my mind the only possible attitude. Do hope the new home is "comfy". We have a new man, Carpenter, in with us instead of Hamshaw and he is a very amiable man about 37 and of good conversation and an equable temper. I have still 2 Spanish lessons weekly and swing clubs fence etc as usual. Hall is showing us a lot of jiu-jitsu stunts and they are jolly interesting. Reynolds condemned me to 3 weeks scales and arpeggios which were a fearful bore while it lasted but he says it has improved my touch a lot. I am reading Vanity Fair and enjoy it enormously. Hope you have vegetables in the new garden. That sort of thing must be kept going. Do not let a recent disappointment depress you. I dare say you will find the

new house somewhat strange for dusting and cooking etc to begin with. Have received of late 1.5 lb box PB 46994. Also another box same date 19/6 with tapioca etc. Also 1 box PB 47753 of 23/6 with brisket beef etc. 1 box of 2/7 PB 48373 cheese etc; 1 box, 6lbs of 7/7 No. PB48486 bacon etc and 1 box with foots aforementioned. We have some sweetpeas in our room which remind me of home. The final lot of bread arrived last week. We had 6 loaves, 3 ½ uneatable. Biscuits already here will I hope be given out soon. Is Viola 9 or 10 now. So glad to hear Ken has joined, it will do him a lot of good. I have another photograph of myself and Reynolds which I may enclose in this or the next one. You might send 1 copy to Aunt Prill, 1 to Uncle Frank, 1 to Allan and keep two or three. Let Viola go strong on the music stunt, the Violin would be a good idea. I dare say she is more brainy than I am at that sort of thing. A little theory of the triads leading notes and dominants modulations etc should help her a lot. Reynolds has shown me a lot of simple helps to the piano which a great many teachers ignore or do not know. Do let her play good stuff and not spoil her ideas with Air hole tingle music. Read H A Vachelli's book, called "The Other Side" and you will see what I mean. A lb box No PB 48486 with toilet soap etc just to hand, further a 9lb box of 2/7 No. PB 48373 with sunlight etc to hand. I am glad the toilet soap arrived as I often have two baths daily and it goes pretty fast. I feel indignant at circumstances which force me to be a prisoner at a time when other people are being useful. Parcels as now arriving are quite suitable but hope I shall not need them if we are shifted elsewhere. I have not yet received any mail from the Rest so will hold this back no longer but answer the next news that arrive next week. If we do go anywhere from here I shall try to keep up my work with Hall as we have not put in 19 months solid work at it and a few more or good grub would give better results. I would not mind staying in a camp at all and on second thoughts I do not think it would be right to live outside at any expense to you at home. Mind you, I am not particularly excited as the latest opinion seems to be that we have not much chance. I am enjoying Vanity Fair very much. Vegetables, and quite good ones too are grown on the camp and provide the only supply I believe. We fetch dinner as a rule twice weekly and make dinner the other days with cold tinned veg and meat. I made a fine pea soup last week. What has happened to Victor, he never writes me. Glad to hear Dicky Butler is chirpy. I am debating whether I should start Russian if we are here for the winter but if I do not do enough of the other 3 languages a new one would be silly. Xxx Love affec son. Geoff

Baracke 5

Room 1

Friday, 4th August 1917

To: Mrs Pether, The Rest, Bedford Avenue, High Barnet, Herts, England

My dear Mother, Three years ago this show started for which reason a letter written to-day is after all "the thing". Have just received yours of 14/6, the first from Barnet and am jolly glad to you are "comfy". Mr Carmichael wrote me to say that our new house was very nice, perched at the top of a hill, etc. The private parcels of biscuits are just beginning to arrive; meanwhile we get them from the Relief in Kind Committee of the camp which had 4 weeks supply sent on block from home. Glad to hear that Allan is well again and back at his post. I enclose herewith 3 photos, the bump over Reynold's right eye is not natural or due to a fight but merely the havoc caused by a very David of a mosquito whose aim was unfortunately good. 3 more copies follow in next letter. I look rather too civilised for the camp and do not wear a collar every day. It is abominably dusty to-day, this morning I played in the golf competition and made one of the worst scores namely 10 holes for 70. Due to the dust and careless stupid mistakes I fear. It is the worst score I have made up to the present. Of course 69 looks much better, as it is I take off 15 strokes for the handicap. If you have planted veg, I suppose Mrs Drew got the others. Victor had not yet written to me. We have a camp flower and vegetable show in the Y.M.C.A. tomorrow. This paper is much better for writing in ink. So glad to hear in Dad's of 8th July that Viola is making progress with the swimming. Keeble has 3 months extension of leave. Y the bye the soap just arrived in parcel of 7/7 in time. The dried apples were jolly nice. Acid drops or fruit salts I always enjoy. Sorry Viola's letter was returned, my fault I fear for insulting her majesty. Has Mrs Forrester been to see you lately. Do describe some of the decorations of The Rest. I am very interested to know. Mr Carmichael seemed a bit fed up I thought. Has the war hit hi rather hard! I hope not. Things must be difficult for a great many people no doubt. Some men here are absolutely "bust" to

use a colloquialism. Is the soil good in the new garden. I suppose no playroom is allotted to me now. Will you be able to find suitable friends for Viola in the immediate neighbourhood. How are the Butlers. I hope we shall not lose sight of them as I like them very much. The fencing has been going better lately. It is jolly hard work and when you are off form you really are off. As an aid to quick thinking I know nothing better. To my mind it is amore vigorous exercise than rowing which is saying a lot. By the bye as butter is short send dripping. I am still reading Vanity Fair' Becky Sharp & Captain Dobbin are interesting characters I really think Micah Clarke has pleased me more than any of the English novels up to the present. Has Dad any ideas as to what he would like me to be when I get home. I have thought in a vague way of a lot of things. I am still doing theory with Reynolds. Hope the conference if it has done nothing else as far as we are concerned will be able to get our mail speeded up. Three months for an answer from England is rotten and inexplicable to me. It is very warm and thundery, I can stand hot weather quite well but I abominate dust. Quite satisfactory lately on the whole. Do you ever hear from Harry Whitlock. Send one of those cards to Uncle Frank and Auntie with my best wishes and congratulations for their silver wedding. Sorry I could not send it sooner and of course at least 2 must be in a group. Of course that's an Irish way of saying what I mean. I do not think Allan will shift from there do you. Glad he got my letter safely. Keep my letters as they will be an interesting souvenir to me afterwards. I suppose you would not be allowed to send a photo of the house. Do not bother tho'. Xxxxxx love to yourself, Viola and Dad. So glad to hear from anyone always. I am quite happy and very confident. Love etc from your affectionate son Geoff.

Baracke 5

Room 1

Friday, 10th August 1917

To: Mr A Pether, The Rest, Bedford Avenue, High Barnet, Herts, England

Dear Dad,

I was very bucked this afternoon to receive yours of 2nd and Mother's of 2nd and 4th ultimo. The photos arrived safely and I was very pleased with the. The dog seems to be very good fun and must be quite companionable. I received the first parcel of biscuits last week. Barnet seems to be jolly fine to judge from a map I have just seen. It is pouring with rain for the first time for weeks. I bought some peas and cooking apples today. The peas were the first raw fruit this year. Glad to hear Allan is back at the old job. I fear that the healthy ones here will not benefit in any way tho' it seems that 3 years loss of liberty we ought to get as much consideration as officers etc who have only had 18 months. Still we must not grumble I suppose. Please try to reduce the amount of tinned stuff in parcels as much as poss. A lot of people here have stomach trouble and will never get really well till they are ought of it tho' I am not bothered with it up to now. I suggest rice, tapioca, grape nuts, force, wheat, scotch oats, but no sago as it goes off too quickly. Also no tinned fruit but dried fruit if pos, golden syrup for sweetening same. Milk and butter or margarine must of course be tinned, do not go too strong on the meats, if anything the contrary. Dried peas and dried veg if poss. McDoddies turnips, mixed veg, parsnips, carrots are not much good. The other things are alright. I am sorry to have to fill my letter with so much talk about food but hope above list will help for winter. Do not send any mutton chops, cocoa, sardines or fish. I enclose with this 3 photos. I was very interested by your description of the internal arrangements. It must be rather jolly fitting up the house to your own tastes. Is Ye Nook now uninhabited. I wonder if they will let Allan's photo' come thro'. As the other came I see no reason against it. No, I have quite forgotten the hunting frieze in the old dining room. Did you keep the piano, I hope so, it had a fine tone. Electric light must be fine. Did you keep the very firm chairs in the dining room. Glad you have a new bookcase. I have a few books here that would be quite the thing in a bookcase. What happened to the little library Allan and I had. By the bye I often see books coming in by letter post or rather as parcel post direct from publishers. If I fancy any book I cannot get here I will write you. Mr Fr G have not and will not go. I may try to shift to live somewhere with Reynolds later on as I want a change. You know you always called me a would be blue stocking and the truth is that I do like people who can discuss all sorts of things and whose society is stimulating. My boxmates are not of this sort tho' decent enough in their own way but the atmosphere is rather dull and superficial. I get my money regularly, about 64m this month which is ample for my requirements. Yes the boots will be jolly useful. I am waiting a bit till my present pair wear out (piece torn out) I shall get them

soled and nailed.

Bit torn out) on the table, so excuse the writing. I think it would be as well after all if you sent me a jacket when you send the breaches for winter wear. Do not send one too small. My present one is starting to go and is too small with winter under clothes altho' it fits alright over a shirt. I shall not need anything else. The rest of my clothes are in good condition. The jacket measurements are as following tho' I cannot quite follow them.

Back 8 20 ½, 32. Chest 35 ½, neck to wrist 18, full length 31. If you think there is a reasonable chance of our clearing out before the winter do not send this. I shall only be able to send you a card next week as I have to write to B. Mother must not be depressed because I cannot be present at the opening ceremony of The Rest. By the bye since I have been here at Dad's expense for 3 years, nearly and parcels are quite essential it would be a good plan to note expenses with a view to compensation by the government. Xxxxxxxx (Bit torn out) self, Viola & Dad. Keep cheer (bit torn out) about me. Loving son. Geoff

Baracke 5

Room 1

Saturday 25th August 1917

To: Mr Pether, The Rest, Bedford Avenue, High Barnet, Herts, England

Dear Dad, After last weeks flood of correspondence this week has played me false. I have received this month a 10lb parcel No. 50337 of 19/7, an 8lb pcl No. 51316 of 26/7 and a 7lb parcel No. 51316. Also 2 pcks of biscuits. I hope they will not send me lunch biscuits only as they are not so interesting as cabins & campaigns. Biscuits soaked in water I find are rather good. Please send dried fruit again and no tinned fruit. Do not send salmon, tripe or wedges of cheese as the latter are off by the time they arrive whereas small cheeses keep in good condition. Could you send egg powder, some chaps get bottles of Virol in the winter and find it very good with biscuits. I have all necessary equipment for the winter. I hope Mother is not worrying about me, I sometimes fancy she is. Could you send me a cotton gym vest (white) I have one but it cost me 7 bob and is tearing a bit. Stop sending washing soap as I cannot get washing done in camp in winter owing to lack of facilities. Please send Scott's porridge oats as soon as this arrives. This variety is more suitable than others owing to ease of preparation. Send no cocoa as we have enough to last 6 months or more. Please send tea regularly as poss. Excuse all this talk about food but it will soon be time to change to winter diet. Do not send mutton chops as they are really too greasy I suppose you only hold office with the Masons for one year. I may send another photo of self soon. Hope you do not mind all these photos. I am reading an interesting book on English architecture. I hope the old men and sick will get away soon. They have been kept on the jump long enough now. Is the garden so steep that an Alpenstock is necessary. They are now sending sensible boots to the camp like the pair you sent me. Previously charitable old ladies had sent them soled light call-paying boots that expired after a few weeks wear. The mosquitoes are not troublesome indoors this year. The biscuits are quite enough to live on with a comfortable margin for a reserve. Am very sorry to hear that Colin was hit. Hope he is now recovered. I did not know he was on Shank's pony. I bought some nice tomatoes today. I am learning to play the piano by ear from Reynolds who has really the finest ear in the camp. He can hear anything the slightest bit out. I was very pleased to get Viola's card of 17/7 I still hear from Elma McAdams and am always pleased to get news of Harlesden. Viola's letter of 22/7 to hand,. I note with surprise that, among other things presumably correct "She might have said" is Feminine Gender. I get to point out to the honourable member that when I was at school a sentence or verb had no gender. Does the modern movement in education account for the change. I had a game of golf to-night which ended in a draw. I am reading a book by W. J. Locke called Jaffery. I have not heard from Allan lately. Have you already joined a golf club. I think it would be a good thing for Viola to start the violin after a year or two at the piano. Could you find out for me whether Egerton Castle "Schools and Masters of Fence from the Middle Ages to the Eighteenth Century" is very expensive. Bell & Son are the publishers and the size quarto. I was wondering if you would send it me for Xmas. Do not do so if it is at all expensive. It is the only book I know of which treats of the Italian foil. I hope that it will not be stopped by the Kaiser. Nothing must be written in it, but any one of the newsagents I listed

for you some time ago would be allowed to send it direct. So glad to hear business is good. Have you formed any plans for my future. I suppose everything is very problematical. I feel very cheery and well. Perhaps things will not last so long now. How many rooms have we now at home. I shall be jolly interested to see the internal arrangements. Yes, electric light is a great improvement. As I am perfectly fit I shall not go away from here I fear, or rather I am glad to say. It is better to be fit after all. Xxxxxx to Viola, Mother and love to self and all. Confound this nib its really awful, affec son. Geoff

Baracke 5

Room 1

5th Sept. 1917

To: Mrs Pether, The Rest, Bedford Avenue, High Barnet, Herts, England

Dear Mother, To begin with I apologise for the writing as the pen is wobbly in this holder. I have not heard from you of late but I expect the English mail will be in soon. I am rather surprised to hear that Victor is running after the girls as he never struck me as a lady-killer. I have just been looking at a book called "Character and Handwriting", glancing at the above I feel sure I must be quite a hopeless person. By the bye Reynolds having heard about Viola's musical performances feels sure she must be like Stella in "Sinister Street". He is sending her a little poem which will I hope amuse her. Perhaps she could find time (in the interest of practising), to answer it. Please ask Dad to see if things are alright with Gray's parcels. They have not been coming well of late. Do his people send him the minimum or does he get a decent allowance. Please send his winter parcels similar to mine but do not send him Virol as you are sending me. I think I need it for Reynolds says I need something of the sort as I am growing a lot still. We are getting the last few days of summer weather now. By the bye would Dad please send me a towel. I only want a hand towel, a fairly rough one. You see when I have my towel washed I have to go without a bath for 1 or 2 days as it is the only one I have. Mr K is now back again but not in our room. The money arrangement continues as usual. I wrote a card to Aunt Prill last week. I thought she would like to hear from me. Yes I do not doubt that the relief from St Michael's dreary performances is considerable. I am very pleased to hear that Kenneth is getting on well with his crowd. Please do not buy that book by Castle if it is at all dear. Reynolds would like me to assure you that if I am queer again he will violently assault me. The camp theatre is now open again and will help us to kill the long winter evenings. They are giving "If I were King" and I believe it will be rather good. Please ask Dad to send no mutton chops this winter as they are too greasy. Gray had today 6/9 received two pcls of 7/8. He had the last one of 20/7 on 16/8. It appears that Mrs K is frequently moving about. I suppose you would not be allowed to send me a small photo of the house and garden. How is Harry Whitlock getting on; I never hear anything about him. The biscuits are arriving to time. I have ordered a book on German Gothic architecture which may interest Dad when I get home. I dare say you have heard that young Cathy has taken a scholarship at St Paul's. I suppose they are sending the magazine home. Have you ever learnt to play chess. A lot of chess is played here in the winter. We are having some grammaphone records tonight. The Toreador's Song from Carmen does not I fear stimulate me for letter writing. How is business now. I expect Dad gets jolly fagged sometimes being so short handed. By the bye can dates be used at all in puddings. We put them in rice sometimes but they are rather flat. I have kept this letter till the last day of the week to see if I should get news but none have arrived so I must close. It is very warm today as it always is at the end of the summer. Do not bother about sending me advice cards again. Today I received 1 pcl No. BP54384 of 14/8 containing beef, bacon, peas, tea and sugar in good condit. I have found it an awful job to say anything in this letter, perhaps I shall be more loquacious next week. I hope to send you another photo soon. If you think I am sending too many photos I will stop them. They cost 30pf each. Love and xxx to self Viola and Dad. Keep cheery. I feel sure that next summer we shall have our holidays together somewhere. I should just fancy a swim.

Now.

Affec son Geoff

Baracke 5
Room 1
Friday, 28th Sept 1917
To: Mrs Pether, The Rest, Bedford Avenue, High Barnet, Herts, England

Dear Mother, Yours of 28/8 and 4/9 and Dad's of 27/8 just to hand. It is a good thing you have been able to find a school for Viola which is better than the other one she went to. We are still having very warm & enjoy weather. I have agreed to take a small part in a show which comes off next November. There is no talking to be done which is an advantage as I have not a large voice. Not it is quite clear that the neutral country stunt does not apply to the whole of the camp so I shall probably spend the rest of the season out of town. I have lately received 2 pcls No. PB 55240 one of 6 the other of 9lbs containing butter, beef, ham, beef rations, rasp jam, ~~bacon~~, cheese, pineapple, rice, salmon, pineapple and milks. Further cheese, milk, bacon, sausage, rations, beef, dried fruit and plum jam, in 1 box of a parcel sent on 3/9. Please do not send salmon as we cannot eat it. It may interest the central committee to hear that 4 of us in our box have 23 tins sardines 11 tins salmon, 19 tins of dripping and 10 tins herrings which we shall probably never eat. This applies with a few exceptions to the whole camp. It is all very well to eat these things once in a way but after 3 years of tinned food ones stomach is unable to stand it except in the smallest quantities and at rare intervals. It makes one savage to see so much stuff turning up in parcel after parcel which can never be used. The pig-headed idiots who send the stuff in spite of repeated protest fail to realise that useful time space and weight is thus waste; why do they not send less of this stuff and more meat paste or baked beans in their standard parcels. Good dripping is a good substitute for butter (altho' it is not all good) but too much in summer causes boils. I suppose I ought not to let myself go like this when many people have far greater cause for complaint. By the bye I think shoes as a change from boots would be nice (see previous letter) if you have not already ordered same. I am getting tired of heavy boots and as my ankle seems fairly strong will try shoes I think. I am sorry I have such a queerly-shaped foot. I never hear from Allan now. Will carry on later when I have more to say. Am sorry to hear you have not had very good weather. I quite agree with Dad that as far as we are concerned we have not the right man in the right place. Plenty of people with superfluous energy get up and sympathise with us/ a fig do we care for their cheap sympathy. I have been fed up with golf lately. To use Mother's expression it's rather "finnick". When one is off form its an awful bore. Yes I remembered that Dad and I went to Canterbury. Forrester knows the town very well. You say that I look the same but greatly altered in my photo, surely that's rather Irish. From the top of this page I have been writing on a box so the writing is rather bad. Morrison is very much better but undoubtedly needs some attention at home, which he may get shortly, to put him quite right. Surely you remember that Reynolds was a master at the college. I have invested quite a lot in apples lately as they are good for the blood. By the bye I am going to write to B for my tennis racquet for next year. He sent me my bags the other day. I will ask you to send me a flannel shirt later on. Do you know Mr Mahony's address. I still have charge of his books which I will bring him home at the end of the war. I shall shortly be sending you another photo. Hope you will not think you are getting too many. Ask Dad to send small quantity of soda so that we can cook beans and peas. Quite unobtainable here and essential as water is hard. Yes I practice 3 times a week. Hope it will not be too cold this winter. We get some magnificent cloud and sunset effects here. Better than any I have seen elsewhere. You should read "The Newcomers" if you have time. I intend to read it soon. By the bye did you ever get my Xmas card. The Pauline have not received our photo have they. This letter is very uninteresting I fear. Hope you have not been annoyed of late. The Fair at Barnet is apparently of ancient standing to judge from the encyclopaedia. I have had a colossal thirst to-day as we had some tongue for breakfast that was rather salt. Victor Culling never writes me at all. I cannot understand it. Halls the light has gone out. Xxx etc to Viola, self, Dad and love from your affect son, Geoff.

Baracke 5
Room 1
Friday, 5th October 1917
To: Mr A Pether, The Rest, Bedford Avenue, High Barnet, Herts, England

Dear Dad, Mothers of 7/9 to hand. Yes I wonder if Harry has met Allan. I hope so, I am sure they would get on well together. I sent you yesterday some photos which I hope will arrive safely. So sorry to hear Mrs W has died. She was a very nice old lady. I experimented the other day, quite unintentionally. I chopped up some corned beef, added oxo cubes and soup squares and some dried mint and boiled the lot at the cook house. Deliciously vague odours were given off. On eating, the flavour was thought rather peculiar, it was in fact as I had put in camomile leaves in, mistaking them for mint. The results were not serious. I am going to Shaw's Candida tomorrow night. I am advised by a lot of people not to start Russian yet as it is an exceedingly difficult language to learn involves stopping nearly everything else and gives no results for the first 18 months. The difficulties of such a language here are practically insurmountable if one does other work of any sort. I received last week a parcel of 3/9 with 5 pkts Campaigns and ½ lb butter. Please do not send any biscuits in pcls as the biscuit rations we get are more than enough. An acknowledgement card for pcl No PB 48373 of 2/7 has just come back to me from England. I had sent it off as it reached me to Mr Pether, Furnishing Drapery c/o Central Prisoners of War Cmttee, etc. They say it is insufficiently addressed. I cannot be expected to know the new postal districts of London can I? The weather seems to be breaking up now. We have had rain the last 2 or 3 days. I should much like to hear from Allan if he has time to write to me. I feel particularly chirpy today for some reason or other. What is Viola able to play on the piano now. Our Chinese play in November will be great fun I imagine. I am one of the stage hands who shift tables chairs etc in view of the audience to represent boats, woods, etc. The name of the scene is sung out by the 1 man chorus at the back of the stage. Thus a length of bamboo held by one of us represents a tree beneath which the villain awaits the heroine etc. The idea is that we should be absolutely impassive and blasé and move about indifferent to the actors and the world at large. I still get my Spanish conversation lessons and the use of the piano. There may be a chance of heating the piano shed in the winter and lighting it as well with luck. I suppose you are very busy now being so shorthanded. Please send Gray more grapenuts and similar foods and not so much meat as he cannot eat tinned stuff owing to the state of his stomach. I hope they will shift the 45ers and unfit quickly. Do you like the garden. It will be jolly fine having apple trees and pear trees as fruit is very good for us. I buy as much as I can here altho' its rather dear 90 pf a lb for apples but they are good ones. How is Uncle Frank. Dorothy has not been married yet I suppose. Does Uncle Tom thing of coming across. I suppose he is too old etc. This letter is very uninteresting I fear. There is not so very much to say you know. The Paulines are sent to you I hope. They have not yet answered Barrett's letter in which he advised the sending of the photos. Victor Culling has not answered my card. Parcels are coming in fairly well, very well as far as the biscuits are concerned. Do not send tinned fruit as long as dried fruit is obtainable. Please do not bother to send that book if it is very expensive. Will you be Grand Master next year as well or is it against the rules. I have a tremendous lot of books that I must read on my shelves. I read a lot of poetry when I can get it. There is to be a French play given next week to which I am going and a Stindberg evening shortly. No advice cards have arrived in my parcels lately. Have they been stopped. Apparently Mother is very fond of the new home now. I thought she would be, of course sentiments attach to the old one. Much love and xxxx and to Mother Viola and self your affection son. Geoff. P.S. Excuse uninteresting letter.