



*Love Letters*

*from*

*Private Robert John Daniel (Roy) Phelan*

*#3782, 46<sup>th</sup> Battalion*

*Australian Imperial Force*

*(A. I. F.)*

*While based at Codford Camp*

*to his sweetheart Annie*

*back in Mitiamo, Victoria, Australia*



*Special thank you to*

*Lorraine Phelan*

*for sharing Roy's letters & photos*



Private Robert John Daniel (Roy) Phelan  
46<sup>th</sup> Btn, A.I.F.  
& below  
On Leave in London  
(2<sup>nd</sup> from Right)





Private Roy Phelan (top right)  
Probably taken at Codford, Wiltshire in 1918 before he went to France.



Pte Roy Phelan, A.I.F. seated 2<sup>nd</sup> from right. Codford - 1918.

Codford  
England  
21/4/1918 .

Here we are at last. Landed yesterday at Liverpool and entrained at once for Codford. The bugles had us out at 3 AM and from then until 11 AM we were busy getting a-way from the boat down to the station. There was a troop train after train of Americans besides ourselves. It was going on for 7 PM when we arrived here and I can tell you it was cold. Early in the day it had been lightly snowing. We had to march a mile to our camp and then after fixing up for the night we had a good tea. It was welcome too as for the day we only had our iron rations which were issued before we left the boat. Lew is not in this camp but in another only about a ¼ of a mile away. I was over a while this afternoon to see him. Around here there are 14 distinct Camps. I think Salisbury Plains are about 14 miles away and London 4 hours train ride. We are allowed 5 miles in any direction from camp without a pass so I intend having a look around and then perhaps I will be able to tell you something about the surroundings. I think here they must go by the maxim 'The better the day the better the deed' for although Sunday we were inoculated and had dental inspection. We will be here at least from 10 to 14 weeks hard at training all the time. I hope Annie, you will not tire reading this ill-written letter, for I know it will require some patience to get through it. I will be posting one or two postcards so hope they reach you safely. Remember me to all. I remain ever, Roy.

Codford,  
England  
Sunday 21st April

My Darling Annie,

As you will know this card is for your own dear self. We landed yesterday Love and when I felt myself on land again my heart ached when I thought of my own dear Girlie away back in Mitty. How I wish that it only meant stepping in the train to go and see her. It seems impossible that you can be so far away Darling but as day after day goes by it comes home to me more and more and the more I dream of that day which is not very far distant when I shall be returning to my sweetheart again. Goodbye once again my Love and may God's blessing ever rest upon you.

From your own very love-sick  
Roy  
xxxxxxx

We will be here from at least 12 to 14 weeks so my dearest Girlie look upon that time as quite a holiday for me.

No 3782 Pte R J D Phelan

No 4 Camp 12 Train. Bat  
10 Reinforcements

46 Battalion

Aust. Exped. Forces  
Codford  
England

Sunday 28/4/18

Darling Annie,

Everyday I anxiously wait to see if there is any mail for me but so far I have been disappointed. I am longing to hear all about what you have been doing this long time. If dear I could only get letters every day or so I don't think I would ever be very lonely as my Girlie always writes me such long interesting letters that they nearly bring me home again to her. I was at church this morning for the first time since we left the boat. The sermon was on putting our past behind and with God's help forgetting it. Of course it meant our past sins but I could not help thinking of my past and the sweet times that will always linger in my memory. It would be impossible for me to forget the delightful times I have had when my dearest Girlie was by my side.

I will try and tell you Love something of Codford and our doings. There is no need for me to say that I am not improving at letter writing as that you can see for yourself but I know dearest you will excuse the many mistakes I make. We rise at 6, breakfast at 7 and fall in for first parade at ¼ to 8. Dinner 12.30, dismiss 5 and tea at ¼ to 6. Although we don't get overmuch to eat what we do get is splendidly cooked thus, in a way, making up for what we don't get in quantity. Each day before we leave the huts we have to put all our belongings away and now I often wonder Annie what you used to think when you would go into our room of a morning for very often I am afraid it was very untidy. Never mind Sweetheart, when I come back I shall be extra specially tidy.

Codford is a very old village and some of the houses are quaint. They are mostly thatched with straw which is all overgrown with moss. The churches are of Norman architecture and some evening I intend going in to church. The village is partially surrounded by a Norman wall which is beginning to fall into ruins and in some places has almost disappeared altogether. There are a few shops but most of them are just temporary built for us to spend our money in and this we generally manage to do. Anzac Day was a holiday so a number of us went for a good long ramble around. We passed through a small place by the name of Wylie, but as it was even smaller than Codford there was very little to see. The trees are all just beginning to come out in leaf and when they do so the roads will look very pretty. The roads here are in splendid order but very narrow and not by any means straight. After all, Dear, I think if I send you a few post cards they will explain far better than I am able to do, and give you some idea of the place.

I have again changed my mind for now I am not going to apply for a transfer into the 57th as the 4th Division which the 46th belongs to has won a glorious name for itself lately and it is rather an honor to belong to it and Love you know how I like the word 'Honor'. There was a concert in the Y.M.C.A. a couple of nights ago but was only at it for a short time. The others said it was good so suppose it was. I did not think so though.

Once again I must come to a finish Annie Darling and ever remember that I am always thinking of my Girlie. Goodbye Sweetheart from your ever loving boy, Roy xxxxxxxx

Codford

No 12

England  
Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> May 18

My Own Dearest Annie,

I am feeling more satisfied and quite prepared to settle down to work now that I have heard from my Love. The mail was given out at dinnertime but when I heard my name called dinner did not trouble me, I was too anxious to get away to a quiet spot with my letters.

Annie Dear, if you felt honored by my writing the last night how much more so was I. For love when I saw how a number of the others acted I could only be thankful that I had a Girlie to write to as I am sure none of them could have had one or they would have acted differently

I am pleased Annie to think you liked the little brooch. Here again it is I who am proud also, to think of the one who wears my colors & should I ever feel discouraged all I will have to do will be to think of my brave & true standard bearer, Annie. I do envy Will; but God Willing our time is coming and I trust coming soon when my Cup of joy will be full to overflowing, and Sweetheart you are the only one who can cause it to be so. Perhaps Will could truthfully say 'poor Annie' but all the same I know Dear it would be a good photo of you for even now I have three & they are all just as my Annie looks. The best of all girls. Aren't you glad now, Love that you let me keep the proof of the one in which you are smiling. That day you must have been happy. I got the snapshot of Lilia & I. What do you think of it Love? We certainly look happy but I am afraid rather harum-scarum.

It will be a great loss for Mitty when Mr Plumtree goes for I feel sure everybody will be sorry he is going. After all I don't think I will go to Scotland but will visit Mrs Plumtree instead. I wrote a note and received such a nice reply from her. I will enclose a copy of it. The letter I sent home to Mother. Heard today that 30 of us may get our leave this week.

It would be a great shock to you to find Mr Stoker at the Kerang races. I don't know what he could have been thinking of going away at such a time. You will be a great help to Lilia, Annie and now she will at least have someone she can rely on. The concert coming on would make it all the more awkward as it alone requires a lot of time & work while you are the ones who have to do it all. I would like to be at it for I am sure I would enjoy it more than I do the concerts here. I did not think you would need a bigger car as even the small one looked big to me. I suppose now though you all like going for a spin & you keep your Father on the go. I can guess what a good driver he would be for anything in the mechanical line one could always depend on him to manage and do it well.

Lew has come across to see me so will have to stop writing for a while.

Tuesday. Lew and I went into Codford and while there it came on to rain and we had to keep under shelter for about an hour. Lew looks splendid & although we are not overfed we all look very well on it and soldiering seems to agree with us.

I intended finishing this yesterday but orders came out that the metal fittings on our equipment had to be polished. As none of it had ever been cleaned before it took me the whole night to do it. I have got even with them today though. This morning I was called out for dental, so around I went and after waiting about half an hour I had the impression for a plate taken. Then I got out and dodged the heas till dinner time, and inspection had passed. It was the same again this afternoon, he took another impression & told me to report but instead of doing so I have sneaked into the hut and am busy writing to you, my Love. The others are out in the gas room and will be about half-choked by this. It has started raining again and looks like as if it is going to be a miserable evening. The weather changes very quickly. In the morning it will be lovely and sunny while later it will be freezing. We still have our fire of a night and it is just the thing. Have a warm and then hop straight in to bed.

Now that the water is on you will be able to grow flowers. Even when there was no water Dear, you always managed to have some out, and the garden always looking well. From this out the flower-show ought to be a big affair. Mrs Willis will be sorry she is not there to run it, as she thought she did the first.

On Sunday I was at the usual church and afterwards stayed to Communion. It was the Padre's last service to Aust. troops before he returns again to Australia. He gave a good sermon but all the time one could not help envying him, and thinking how lucky he was. His name was Chaplain Hope and I think he comes from Tasmania.

I think Sweetheart this is about all the news for the present. so will close.

Goodbye my dearest Annie  
With the fondest of love  
from your ever loving boy  
Roy

While coming through the Panama I threw one or two cards over with a note asking for them to be

posted. Did you ever get them, Annie?

No 13

Codford  
England  
12/5/18

Only a short letter this time Love as news is rather scarce & I have a good few things to do. I was on guard yesterday mourning at 11 AM and coming off at 11 AM today. Out of each guard the 3 best dressed men are chosen, two as runners and one mess orderly. I happened to be one of them and was chosen as orderly. About the only advantage in it is that you get as much as ever you can eat and you get your night's rest. It is all a lot of rot for the more trouble you take in getting cleaned the less chance one has of getting chosen. They pick out the first three they see without going to the trouble of examining the men.

I think Love I will have to give up eating lollies as over here they are very dear. ½d sticks of chocolate are 1d and any ordinary kind from 8d to 1/- per 4ozs. I am glad I did not start smoking for tobacco is another very expensive item. It is all 10½d per oz and Capstan cigs are 5d a pkt. On the boat they were only 2d. Bread is about the only reasonable thing. I have seen it is 4½d the 2lb loaf. Yesterday I received a post card from America saying that a couple of letters I threw over while coming through the canal had been posted. I hope one reached you Dear as then you would know that we were coming to England almost as soon as we got here.

A tennis club is being formed in camp and should it get going I intend joining it. The sun does not set until after 8 so that even after tea there is a fair amount of daylight. Now that you are in the store Sweetheart you will have very little spare time for tennis, painting or anything else.

I thought ere this we would have been away on leave but it was postponed and now I hear we are getting it this week. I hope so, but while away often & often will I wonder how my Girlie is. Wouldn't it be just lovely if my Annie was over even if it was only for a week. I know we would have a great time together while it lasted.

We did a short route march of 6 miles Friday. As we did not have packs it was just a nice walk. Better than a days drill. Two nice girls in a buggy followed us up and at each halt they started selling cakes and lemonade. They did a brisk trade and should think they would be sorry when we got back again.

Another draft of men is expected any day and I am hoping that a couple of my old mates from Toolleen will be with them. If they come to this camp I will get them to put in for a transfer to the 46<sup>th</sup>. I Picked up an Australian paper the other day and saw by it that recruiting had greatly improved. There is plenty of room here for hundreds of men. About half-a-mile away there is an Aussie camp without a man in it.

I was to a concert in the Y.M. Friday night. Some of the singing was good but best of all was a French girl who did conjuring tricks. She was very witty. A couple of the boys (or diggers as she called them) were up on the stage helping her. They thought themselves smart but she soon brought them down a peg.

I am hoping to hear from you again this week Darling. The mails do not travel half fast enough to suit me for if it was possible I would like to hear from my Love everyday.

Once again 'Au Revoir' Sweetheart,  
with heaps of love from your ever loving boy  
Roy. xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Codford  
England  
1-6-18

My Own Darling Annie,

Last Sunday evening I received four letters from you Love, numbered 3 to 6. I knew there would be one or two for me but 0 it was a very pleasant surprise to find four in my packet. In all I got 13 letters. You are so very good Love to write to me so often, but of course you know how I appreciate them. Some of the other boys throw fun at me when I get away to read them but all the same they envy me and wish they had so many.

Dearest Annie I know how lonely you must feel at times but Love as you say if God is our Helper & Deliverer we will never be defeated. Then add "The Lord of hosts is with us" & "Through Thee will we push down our enemies". With such assurances it would seem to lead on to victory and that Dear we trust soon. Never worry about me Annie and even although I will write every week perhaps at times you will not hear from me regularly but do not be anxious Darling for very often our letters are delayed for as long as a month or more. Just to fancy that I have had six letters from you and you will be just about receiving my first. I am the lucky one this time Love. You would be disappointed after Miss Kelso telling you about the letters they had received and then not any coming for so long after.

You have been a very busy girlie Annie preparing for your concert & Anniversary. I knew long ago everything would be a success for never yet has anything the Sims taken up been other than a success. Harold was unfortunate meeting with an accident and then having to have the doctor. It would upset your arrangements too. It would take Harold P. some time to get in to the run of things but anyhow he would be a trier. I should have liked to have seen you girls, especially my Annie for I am sure she would make a fine soldier and a brave one too. You must have looked a fierce lot armed the way you were. I am glad we have not got to meet you for we would not be able to survive (your looks) long. I am sure Mrs Plumtree & Mr P. will feel very honored and am sure they will as you suggest put the money to good use. Am sure the Mitty folk will be sorry to lose him and the Rochester people will be rather pleased to have him. I have written to him Love but cannot say very often.

Mrs Miles will be anxious but Annie what is the use of being so we cannot make any difference and I cannot bear to think of my Annie worrying, although I know it is no use me telling her not to. Always hope for the best and everything will work out for the best for "God worketh all things well". I am hoping to meet Walter & Ern some-time or other. I guess if we do we will gossip for an hour or so about all the people around Mitty.

You would know a lot about the shop Annie having always managed so well out at Pine Grove. Which do you find the busiest place Love, Mitty or P.G.? I think when I get back I will find Annie sitting on Lilia's stool in the office. I am sure Lilia will be pleased to have you to help her.

I do not remember saying I would expect a piece of cake from Alice's wedding but I will now Annie, so don't forget to send it along. Please give my congratulations to the happy couple.

Yes Love, Mother was down to see me off and I would have loved you to be there also. It was hard saying 'good-bye' but still somehow or other we always like to be together as long as we can don't we Dear. It was always with difficulty that I used to drag myself away from Chelsea.

What a crowd you had for tea Dear. If they were as rowdy as our lot are each night I don't know how you would manage, what with talking and tin dishes rattling you cannot hear yourself trying to kick up a row. I have written a couple of cards to Harold so shall expect to hear from him. What is Garnet doing these times?

You should have let me get your watch fitted for you Annie. When you mentioned it I should have kept it when I had it and got it done without you knowing. You always told me Sweetheart I always had my way but am beginning to think it has been the other way around and not I but you who have had your way.

Yes Dear, Harold came over with us and it was only the other night I found out what camp he is in. He is a few miles away but will try and get across to see him one of these days. I think I have told you of our meeting on the boat in another letter.

The car seems to get plenty of work but Annie in the ones who go out I do not see you mentioning your-self very often. I can just imagine Charlie learning to drive. It will be right into his hands.

Thanks so much for the snapshots Dearest. They are all very good indeed and Love as soon as I saw them my eyes became rivetted on the best little girl there is in the world my Annie.

Now for a little camp news. Last Friday an officer and a pilot were flying in a plane and they landed at the N.Y. camp over the way. Major from their camp said he would go up in the officer's place and they were up about an hour when the machine met with an accident and it fell to the ground. Both were killed. I was across with Lew and saw the plane. It was a total wreck, smashed to pieces.

The day after we came home there was a general mobilisation but a few of us had an easy time.



We only had to load up the transport wagons. The other boys had to go out on a tramp with full marching order up, tin hat & blankets etc. We had a nice walk this morning of a few miles but did not mind it in the least as we had very little to carry. You will wonder I am writing today, Saturday Love. Well tomorrow I am on Codford picquet and will be out of camp nearly all day so I thought perhaps I would not get time to write. Last Sunday I went to church with one of my mates down the village. We had a very nice sermon, although I think I have heard nicer ones at Mitty. I was glad I went as it was my first experience of an Eng. country church.

The other night were out from 9 to 10 and for the whole time we had to drill in our gas masks. It was rather funny as we did not know how to manage them and the glasses soon became smeared and we were unable to see. We were bumping & pushing each other about and the officers thought it great sport. We didn't.

I am afraid Darling you will miss some of my letters as a chap was caught with some two thousand odd in his possession. He was in the post-office and goodness only knows how long he has been at the game. I am glad I posted most of yours in the Y.M.C.A. so trust they reach safely Dear. In case the one in which I have asked you to address mine to Mrs Plumtree does not I will put it again in this. Address either to or in care of Mrs Plumtree, 44 Ingledew Road, Plumstead, Kent, England. Once again Au Revoir, with fondest of fond love from your ever loving boy

Roy

Codford  
England  
9th June 18  
My Darling Annie,

No letters from you this week so all I could do was read the precious ones I have, over and over again. Do you remember the budget I had before I had before I left Love? They still get their turn and though old so much the sweeter.

You can't guess who came into this camp Friday, Love. I was busy doing my best to darn a hole in my sock when I walked Harold McGregor. He had just come over from Park House camp. All the men in the A.S.C. who came over on the Nestor have been transferred into the infantry and what's more into the 46<sup>th</sup> battalion. Harold says he is going to get back into the A.S.C. He may but am afraid he will have a hard job unless the doctor says he is not fit for the infantry. It seems funny doesn't it Dearest comparing Harold with me and then classing me as the fitter of the two.

When we landed here there were only about 50 other men, now there are over 1,700. It would seem as though this is going to be made the central camp for troops are still coming in from all directions. Yesterday we had our usual morning walk of a mile or so. It was a lovely morning and I quite enjoyed the tramp. Next week we will have a band and then we will be some boys when we get them marching along in front of us.

I was down into Codford yesterday afternoon. One can hardly get through the village now, for soldiers. Go into any shop and you will find at least two or three. There is a big New Zealand camp close by but think we can beat them in numbers.

In our hut 16 of us mess at the one table and as we are not overfed we decided to each put in 6d a week for the purpose of buying a little extra. Another boy and I were detailed to do the buying. We could not get anything in camp so we went off down the village and here Dearest our troubles began. The first store we went into had neither butter, cheese, jam or syrup. The second had butter but we could not get it without a coupon and it was only 2/6 lb. At the third they had both syrup and butter and honey. The syrup we got as it was only 1/10 for 2 lb while honey was 2/6. Coming home we called in at the bakers and got two large loaves of bread. I thought we would be able to procure nearly anything we wanted but have changed my mind since I tried. Even the bread and syrup went very well and for once we were nearly all satisfied.

We had an open air service this morning as now there is such a crowd of us they cannot get a building large enough to hold us all. We had the band to play the hymns and considering it was their first appearance in public they did very well. After the service I went down to the Y.M. for the Communion. Annie Darling it is on this Sunday I have time to think of my little Girlie so far away and how my heart does ache when I remember how long it will be before I will be back with my Love again. During the week Love they keep us busy and sometimes I almost wish we had something to do on the Sunday as well. Today I went along and saw Harold and we had a long chat about good old Mitty, and then decided to go over and see Lew. We got there alright but found him away in the hospital with the measles and we could not get any word of him. I don't know how we have escaped as now there are only 30 of us out of isolation. Harold has been up before the doctor and has been classed fit so am afraid he will have a job to get out of the infantry. Dr Gaffney of Bendigo is the camp doctor. He came over on the boat with us and came here about three weeks ago. The boys do not seem to like him extra well as instead of putting them on light duties they have nearly always to go out and drill as usual.

You will be thinking we like walking Love when I tell you that next Saturday if we can get a road pass three of us are going to walk to Salisbury. No soldier is allowed travel by train or I guess we would not be thinking of walking. It is between 12 & 14 miles so don't know how we will get on.

I have just about run out of news Darling so will have to close. While in London four of us had our photo taken but I have sent it on to Lilia so Sweetheart I am hoping you will not be jealous. I must get another taken one of these days and it will be for my sweet Love. It will not be such a great while now before we will have to think about going to France but Annie Darling always remember God will take care of us and we are safe in His keeping. We get treated fairly well here Dear, yet all the old soldiers tell us there is nothing to be frightened of in France and we will be much better looked after in every way. A large draft went over today and to have seen them Love you would never had dreamt they were off to fight. They all looked so happy and cheerful, you would have thought they were going to a picnic or something. So you see Sweetheart after all this affair is not too bad or at least not as bad as some would make it out to be.

Goodbye once again Darling and may God ever bless and keep you safe.

With many many kisses and much love

from your own ever loving boy

Roy.

No. 19

I think Love you had better address some of my letters in the old way until I find out which is the better way.

Codford  
England  
16/6/18

My Own Darling Annie,

I am as happy now as the day for once again a mail has come in and I have had a portion of my share. That is to say Love your letters numbered 8 and 10 have reached here so that I am still anxiously looking forward to receiving the missing numbers. This time my packet contained 8, 3 from home and the other 3 from a cousin & Auntie. It is strange Dear that my 3 lots of letters have all come on a Sunday. I am beginning to think it is a good omen. When I opened the card Love I could not help smiling for it was just the other day I was down the village and got two cards to send you. They have such nice verses on them and Darling they express my thoughts exactly. Thoughts that I cannot put on paper for Sweetheart it is you and you alone Dearest that I think of and dream of as my own sweet little Girlie. The girls here all have their boys also and they tell me I can easily get one but so long as I know my Annie is waiting for me I shall never, never trouble them. It was very kind of Ern to send you a little extra love and I do hope Dear you appreciate it. It will be my sincerest hope that his words will prove to be true about my not seeing much of the war for I am sure I am not anxious to have to do any fighting. You ask me for my opinion about the Sunday School, Dear. Well I think you have done quite right Love for although perhaps I should not say so I always thought that since Mrs Plumtree started teaching the school began to decline. I don't know why it was for I am sure she was one of the best of women, yet I feel there was something lacking in, perhaps I should say, our management. I feel sure the two Dorries would not get on very well and will be very sorry if they try to carry on, on their own. If Mr Nicholls had been a married man it would have perhaps been different.

I would not mind getting back to Mitty for a meeting or two of the M.F. S. Although not many used to turn up last year we used to have a bit of fun some nights didn't we Annie. If Mr Nicholls is going to take an interest in it he should be able to help a lot.

Fancy Alice being actually married. I was telling Harold this afternoon and he was quite surprised. It was the first he had heard of it. It was rather unfortunate the dinner was delayed but your Father stepping into the breach would save a lot of bother. In a case like that he always seems to suggest something.

Mr Phillips was not far out when he said it would take us about 8 weeks. It took us just on 7 weeks and 2 days. I think Love I am repeating a lot of things for sometimes when I am writing I am not sure whether I have mentioned such & such a thing before. I know though Love you will not mind hearing the same thing twice.

Yesterday another boy and I got our road passes and at 1.30 we started off on our walk to Salisbury. We arrived there at 6 and as the distance turned out to be 15 miles and we had lunch on the road I think we did very well. I should have said that in the morning we did our weekly route march of about 6 miles so that we had just about a full day. We intended going through the Cathedral but as it was not open we could only see it from the outside. For the rest of the evening we just kept on the move and had a good look around. They have a lovely Y.M. and old hotel converted. It was here we stayed the night and we were up at 5 this morning and had to meet a car, at 5.30, which for the large sum of 5/- landed us right into camp at about 6.15, before the others were out. We did not mind leaving so early as we were really A.W.L. for our passes were only made out till Saturday midnight. It was a hurried visit yet I thoroughly enjoyed it and if we get the opportunity intend going again.

I was at church again this morning and we had a very big crowd. Nearly 1,000 soldiers in the one building. We had a beautiful sermon but the words which in my mind stood out on their own were 'For he that loses his life saves it and he that saves his life shall lose'. What a great promise this is Darling to think if we live and die for Christ we shall be saved. What is death for those who believed but a passing from the world into a better, and yet I think I can truthfully say we all dread the word. Sweetheart it is for us to believe in God for He worketh all things well and it is my firm belief it shall not be very long before we will all be homeward bound again. What joyful news it will be. I can only wish I was able to say it now.

Lew is still in hospital but seems to be getting on well. We are going to try and see him next Sunday as by then he ought to be out of isolation again.

Another draft of about 50 men marched out this afternoon. It is not a great number who go each week yet I suppose every man counts. Do not count too much on what Mr Phillips says as I think it was winter when he was over and things have improved a great deal by this. It to a certain extent is as you say Love about the front, but just you wait awhile. The Americans are just beginning to get into action

and when they get into full swing there will be something doing.

Tomorrow morning we commence our 8th week of training and are going on to the rifle-range for the week. I am looking forward to a jolly good time as I am rather fond of shooting. We have about miles to walk to the range so expect we will be taking our dinner with us.

I think it is about time I came to a close again Love or else I am afraid I will be tiring you with my badly written letters. Goodbye once again my darling Girlie. With fondest of fond love

I am your ever loving boy  
Roy. xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

No 20 is a card of views

No 21

Codford  
England  
23-6-1918

My Own Dearest Annie,

More letters yesterday but only one from you Dear. No 7, the one in which you enclosed Edie's snaps & letter. No 9 is now the missing link and am living in hopes of it coming along. If you could only see us after our letters Love you would think to use the expression one hears here "run hot". As soon as the mailman shows his head he is mobbed.

You look very nice in your costumes, Annie. I only wish I had been there to see you all. Any photo I receive of my Love I always treasure up and guard with almost jealous care for Sweetheart they are far too precious for all eyes to see. Some of the snaps are very good aren't they? You would have a busy week-end with both your Mother and Lilia away, but guess your Mother would have no holiday either if you had not been out to P.G. since the harvest. How do you manage in the store now Dear. Do you still go in in the afternoons or have you got into the whole day yet?

Alice will be quite a woman of the world now she is married and settled down. You would have quite a good time at McKays and Darling you say you wished I had been there. I can only add to the same wish for whenever you mention anything it always brings to me many sweet memories of the times we had together.

You will smile Love when I tell you our hut has at last been isolated. One of the chaps caught the mumps and is now in hospital. We thought we were going to get off scot-free but the old saying about the proud shall fall came true. Not that isolation makes much difference though for we go about as usual. Again you will smile Love when I tell you that today I was on sick parade but didn't know what was wrong with me. My mate was going on so I went with him to keep him company. I finished up by telling the doctor my left eye was rather sore so he said I had better go to the eye specialist. As he is at Fargo I will have a nice days holiday. It is some distance away and you go by train and spend an hour in Salisbury. It will do me very nicely. The only thing I missed church parade, for the first time when I could have gone if I hadn't acted the goat.

We completed our course on the range Friday. The first two days I shot extra well, the third day it rained and it took me all my time to hit the target, and nearly as bad again the following days. If I had only kept going as I started I might have got a few extra days leave as about 5 of the best shots get it. A couple of weeks ago I won 2/6 in a company shooting competition but I won't tell you how far I was down the list. When we were on the range we used to take our dinner. A whole sandwich of bread & margarine and sometimes we got tea. Lovely stuff it was too.

We had a route march again yesterday the same old track in the same old way. I told you Annie a band came with us but this last time our company has been right at the rear and if the wind happens to be blowing the right way we bear the drum now & again. That's our share of the sweet music.

News is rather scarce this time Love, so will have to finish. Harold wishes to be very kindly remembered to you all. Is Will still the constant visitor he used to be? I wish I was he, this is too far away from home for me. If I could only see my Love every week this job would be quite a holiday.

Goodbye Darling and may God ever bless and keep you safe from all harm

With fondest of love  
from your ever loving

boy

Roy

XX

No 22  
Codford

England  
30/6/18

My Darling Annie,

Another week gone by and my much longed for letter has failed to turn up. I am beginning to think Dear it has gone astray.

This morning we went over to an open air service at the 57th camp and I stayed back for the Communion. The Chaplain always prays so nicely for all our loved ones and for the men at the front.

I have had a very busy week starting on Monday, by going down to the range at night and doing our night shooting. Flare after flare was sent up and then we were supposed to try and hit the targets. Sometimes we did but more often we didn't. It was rather pretty when a number of flares were up at the same time. Everything would be lit up like day, for hundreds of yards around. It was nearly one o'clock when we got back and none of us were sorry to get to bed. We were told we would not have to fall in until 9 o'clock so we decided to sleep in. About ¼ to 7 a sergeant came in and told me I had to be ready for Fargo at 7. I might say I was late but managed to catch the train. We changed trains at Salisbury for Amesbury, and landed there about 9. We then had a walk of 5 miles. On the road we passed within a few yards of Stonehenge and a little further on an American flying school. Stonehenge is nothing much to look at, just a few old rocks standing on end and they have the cheek to charge 1/- to look at it. At the flying school were aeroplanes by the dozen and when coming home I counted 16 planes in the air at the one time. They evidently have an accident now and again for I saw one chap who had both his arms broken while starting up an engine. It back fired and he got tangled up with the propeller.

The 46th had a three days bombing course and through going to Fargo I missed a day and of course that day they threw live bombs. The next day we fired rifle grenades and that's enough for me for I told them I had done my throwing. We had an exciting minute or two when a livie dropped at our feet and we had to do a get. We did not get too far away but fortunately nobody was hurt. Next week we take on the Lewis gun.

Friday, brigade sports were held on the 'Pimp' and we were all marched up. Some of the races were decent but I didn't not stay long. There was a polo match a short way of so I went over and watched them play. A chap would want to be a good rider before he took polo on for some of the ponies follow the ball like dogs and it is marvellous how they twist and turn without falling.

Annie Darling I am afraid I made a slight mistake on my card when I said we were not going over to France for awhile for heard that a draft will be going over next Sunday but don't know yet whether or not I will be on it. In any case I hope I am for I am about tired of this place, Love. Even after we get there it may be a month or more before we even get near the trenches, so Sweetheart do not be anxious about me or for that matter at any time as I feel sure I will not meet with any trouble so long as I put my whole trust in God.

must finish now Love,  
So with a heart full of love to my own sweet Girlie  
I am your everloving boy  
Roy



## ROBERT JOHN DANIEL (ROY) PHELAN

Robert John Daniel (Roy) Phelan was born at Balmattum, near Euroa, Victoria on 9<sup>th</sup> October, 1897 to parents William Robert and Margaret Anne (Maggie) Phelan (nee McKernan).

Roy & his family moved to Mitiamo in Victoria & Roy worked as a grocer at the general store owned by the Sims Family.

Roy enlisted with the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) on 8<sup>th</sup> October, 1917, the day before his 20<sup>th</sup> birthday. Private Phelan, 3782, of the 46<sup>th</sup> Btn, AIF, left Melbourne on troopship *Nestor* on 28<sup>th</sup> February, 1918 & disembarked on 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 1918 at Liverpool, England.

Pte Roy Phelan was marched into 12<sup>th</sup> Training Bn at Codford & remained at Codford for around two & a half months.

Pte Roy Phelan left for France on 8<sup>th</sup> July, 1918. He was badly wounded in the head by shrapnel on 18<sup>th</sup> September, 1918 & transferred back to England for convalescing. After several months convalescing, Pte Phelan was finally able to return to Australia, leaving England on 19<sup>th</sup> April, 1919 on the *Marathon*, returning to Australia in June, 1919.

Pte Roy Phelan was entitled to the British War & the Victory medals.

Upon his return to Mitiamo, Roy returned to working in the General Store, which was owned by Annie's (whom he sent the letters from Codford to) family.

Roy Phelan married Annie May Sims (daughter of Charles William Sims and Euphemia Yeaman) on 6<sup>th</sup> September, 1922 in Mitiamo, Victoria, Australia. Annie had been born on 27<sup>th</sup> May, 1898 in Pine Grove, Victoria, Australia. Roy and Annie Phelan took over the management of the shop.

Roy and Annie had four sons (one died young) & one daughter.

After the Second World War, Roy & Annie moved to Bendigo & they ran a delicatessen for a while, then Roy worked as a real estate agent.

Roy was over 70 years of age when he retired.

Annie Phelan died on 13<sup>th</sup> April, 1982 in Bendigo, Victoria & Roy Phelan died on 24<sup>th</sup> September, 1897 also in Bendigo, Victoria.