

*Letters from  
Pte Charles Alfred Wilson  
A. I. F. 6832  
To Australia  
1916 & 1917*



*With thanks to Laurie Wilson - [Bonnie William from Dundee](#)*

*for permission to use the letters*

For God, King and Empire.

**THE AUSTRALIAN Y.M.C.A.**

PATRONS:  
HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR GENERAL  
SIR R. MUNRO FERGUSON  
THE HON THE MINISTER FOR DEFENCE  
SENATOR G. F. PEARCE



NATIONAL COMMITTEE  
YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION  
OF AUSTRALIA,  
ARMY AND NAVY DEPARTMENT  
ELIZABETH HOUSE,  
ELIZABETH STREET,  
MELBOURNE.

WITH THE AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCES.

Reply to No 6832

22<sup>d</sup> Batt

5<sup>th</sup>

Brigade 2<sup>nd</sup>

Sunday 24/10/16

Dear Dad & All.

I am writing a few lines to  
I say I am keeping well, we are now ~~many~~ in  
Australia, we have call in at two ports since  
we left, & we are not allowed to tell you the  
names of ~~at~~ them, the first port we call  
at we stopped there 4 days & I had a good  
look round, I send you a post card of the  
city so you know it was for the first port  
we call at, we have been ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~last~~ ~~two~~ ~~days~~  
- but only for two days, when we got in  
we ~~stayed~~ ~~for~~ ~~two~~ ~~days~~ ~~before~~ ~~we~~ ~~call~~  
in at the first port, & the last port we call  
in at we only stopped there for about 8 hours.  
I am going to try & get transferred to Best  
that is when we land, we are not allowed to  
where we are going, but I suppose you will be able  
to guess, I will send you a cable as soon as  
we land. We are getting better food on board  
now so what we are getting a fine & we have  
any amount of sports on board, ~~concern~~  
sports every Wednesday & concerts three times a week  
I have met two or three ~~claps~~ on the boat

For God, King and Empire.

THE AUSTRALIAN Y.M.C.A.

PATRONS:  
HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR GENERAL  
SIR R. MUNRO FERGUSON  
THE HON THE MINISTER FOR DEFENCE  
SENATOR G.F. PEARCE



NATIONAL COMMITTEE  
YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION  
OF AUSTRALIA,  
ARMY AND NAVY DEPARTMENT  
ELIZABETH HOUSE,  
ELIZABETH STREET,  
MELBOURNE

WITH THE AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCES.

Reply to No 683 Coy 22 Batt 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade 2<sup>nd</sup>

*London 26/1916*

from Frank on Wed. Dad I will write  
as soon as we land & I will be able to tell  
you more about the trip as we are not  
allowed to tell you the names of the  
ports we have call at. The first plenty of  
drill on board, so the days don't seem very  
long. The first we call at we had three  
or four route marches through the city &  
I also met a chap by the name of Tom  
at the first port he was the chap that  
I enlisted with. I met him in the Y.M.C.A.  
it was a bit of luck to strike him  
there as he left Melbourne before three  
or four days before me. I was only  
with him for two hours when we had  
to report back to sea. Well Dad  
I think I have said all the news  
that I can think of that is present  
Wishing you all a Merry Christmas  
& a Happy New Year

*6832*  
*God bless*  
*22<sup>nd</sup> Batt*  
*Your loving*  
*son*  
*Charlie*

# 1916

The first letter is dated Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> November 1916 (on the voyage to England):

*Dear Dad and all,*

*I am writing a few lines to say I am keeping well, we are now many miles from Australia, we have call [sic] in at two ports since we left & we are not allowed to tell you the names of them, the first port we call at we stopped there 4 days & I had a good look round, I sent you a post card of the city so you know it was the first port we call at, we have been having a lovely trip so far, only for two days which we got it very rough, that was two days before we call in at the first port, & the last port we call in at we only stopped there for about 8 hours. I am going to try & get transferred to Bert – that is when we land, we are not allowed to say where we are going, but I suppose you will be able to guess, I will send you a cable as soon as we land. We are getting better food on board now to what we are getting at first, we have any amount of sports on board & concert sports every Wednesday & concerts three time a week. I have met two or three chaps on this boat from Frankston. Well Dad I will write as soon as we land & I will be able to tell you more about the trip as we are not allowed to tell you the names of the ports we have call at. We get plenty of drill on board, so the days don't seem very long, the first we call at we had three or four route marches through the city & I also met a chap by the name of [illegible] at the first port he was the chap that I enlisted with, I met him in the YMCA it was a bit of luck to strike him there as he left Melbourne three or four days before me, but I was only with him for two hours when we had to report back to boat. Well Dad I think I have said all the news that I can think of that the present. Wishing you All a Merry Xmas & a Happy New Year.*

*I remain Your loving son,*

*Charlie XXXX*

1st. G. A. W.  
22<sup>nd</sup> Ramps 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion  
2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade A. I. F.  
Lark Hill Camp  
Durrington Wood

Saturday 3/17

Dear Dad & All at Home

Just a few lines to say  
I am quite well up to the present, I have just come  
back from leave from London after four days I had  
a good time but if I have the luck to get another  
four days leave, I would not spend it in London  
because it is over run with soldiers, soldiers from all  
parts of the world, if we want to enjoy ourself  
it is better to get out into the country, but there  
is a draft of soldiers they had a draft to  
go to France last week but we picked up about  
it because they were sending us to France  
without any leave, so they took us off the draft and  
we are on our leave to London. We have been in London  
6 weeks now, & I have not received any letters from  
home yet only one from Jim, I have received two  
letters from Bill, & five from Jean up to the present  
I am having my photo taken over here so as  
soon I get them I will send you one of them  
I am not having them taken until tomorrow I  
am sending by this mail views of London & I  
will by the next mail views of Salisbury



I am also sending by the mail some cigars  
and which I have saved since I have been here  
they can share them up between them self. It is  
terrible cold here lately, it has been snowing & rain &  
we have been drilling in it without our overcoats.  
I am going to try & get transferred into the motor  
transport, next week. We have had a few deaths  
out of this company, since we have been here, for  
three weeks we average one death a week, so you  
can guess how bad the weather is here. I don't  
think there was a fall in the temperature what the  
paper said say over here. Just about five miles from  
here is the ~~Chestnut~~ (Spreading Chestnut) under  
which the village blacksmith stands, there is only the  
blacksmith shop there now. Tell Dad & all at home  
I think I have said all the news at present  
hoping this letter will find you all in the best  
of health as it leaves <sup>me</sup> at present, I will now  
close with love to all at home.

C. J. Remain  
Your Loving Son  
Charlie

X Y Y Y Y Y  
X

# 1917

The second letter was written from the Lark Hill Camp, Durrington on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1917 just over 2 weeks before his death:

*Dear Dad and All at Home,*

*Just a few lines to say I am quite well up to the present, I have just come back from leave from London after four days I had a good time but if I have the luck to get another four days leave, I would not spend it in London because it is over run with soldiers, soldiers from all parts of the world, if we want to enjoy ourself it is better to get out into the country, were [sic] there is not as many soldiers. They had us on a draft to go to France last week, but we kicked up about it because they were sending us to France without any leave, so they took us off the draft & sent us on our leave to London. We have been in the camp 6 weeks now, & I have not received any letter from home yet only one from Jim, I have received two letters from Bill, & five from Nean up to the present. I am having my Photo taken over here so as soon as I get them I will send you one of them, I am not having them taken until tomorrow. I am sending by this mail views of London & I send will by the next mail views of Salisbury. I am also sending by this mail some cigars card which I have saved since I have been here they can share them up between them-self. It has been terrible cold here lately, it has been snowing & rain & we have been drilling in it without our overcoats.*

*I am going to try to get transferred [sic] into the motors transports, next week, We have had a few deaths out of this company, since we have been here, for three weeks we average one death a week, so you can guess how bad the weather is over here. I don't think this war will last much longer to what the papers say over here. Just about five miles from here is the (Spreading Chestnut) under which the village blacksmith stands, there is only the blacksmith shop there now.*

*Well Dad & all at Home I think I have said all the news at present hoping this letter will find you all in the best of health as it leaves me at present, I will now close with Love to all at Home.*

*I remain Your Loving Son*

*Charlie XXXXXXXX.*