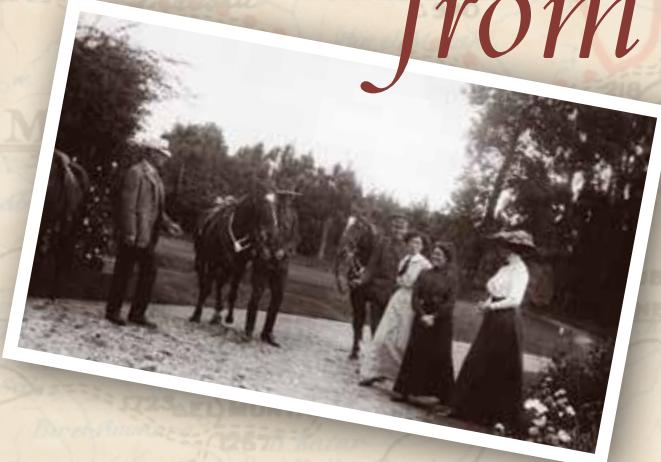




from Geraldine
to Jericho



John Barker and the Great War

EDITED BY PAUL S BARKER

FROM GERALDINE TO JERICHO

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to Jericho

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EDITED & PUBLISHED BY PAUL S BARKER

*In honour of John Barker
and dedicated to the memory of Stephen Barker.*



First published in 2017.
All text except for letters © Paul Barker

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Captain John Studholme Barker, 1917.

Preface

From an early age I grew up proud of the role my grandfather, John Studholme Barker had played in the Great War. I was very young when John Barker passed away in 1962 but my father, Stephen Barker, was an expert on our family history and he had kept his father's letters, photos, diary and memorabilia from the Great War. Later, when I wrote a biography for a high school project on John Barker's wartime story my father provided some invaluable oral history.

When Dad passed away in 2013 my wife, Karen Shaw, and I went through all the World War One material including transcriptions of most of the letters. I was well aware of my grandfather's role at Gallipoli – a campaign that had increasingly come into wider public consciousness. However, his story is far richer and spanned more than five years during which he nearly died of typhoid but went on to fight in the ultimately successful campaign that saw the Ottoman Turks defeated in the Middle East. More material turned up from my grandfather's collection – vital pieces of a jigsaw that has enabled his contribution to the Great War to be understood through both his photographs and the letters he wrote to his family.

On Anzac day 2015 a family reunion was organised to celebrate John Barker's life involving 10 of his 13 grandchildren and their families. This commemoration was very moving as we revisited John's childhood farm at Waihi and the magnificent homestead at Four Peaks near Geraldine in South Canterbury where so much of this story began. This commemoration became the prompt to tell John Barker's story which is remarkable in a number of ways.

Firstly, John Barker was amongst the first to enlist and sailed with the NZ Expeditionary Force in 1914. More than five years later in 1919 he returned home in the last contingent of New Zealand troops from the Middle East. It was a long war for him. Four of his brothers and one

of his sisters, Esther, also enlisted and served their country in the Great War. His brother Paul was killed in the second battle of Passchendaele in 1917. No fewer than eight of his first cousins on the Barker side of the family also served. It was a war that truly shaped a generation.

Secondly, John spent most of the war fighting the Ottoman Turks in the Middle East. Very few New Zealanders know of this phase of the war or the role that the New Zealand Mounted Rifles played. After the defeat at Gallipoli, the New Zealand Mounted Rifles were to perform outstanding service in a campaign that led to one of the most decisive victories of the war. This was the last major conflict involving horses who were integral to the Mounted Rifles' identity and mobility. Although casualties were relatively light by Western Front standards, more than 500 New Zealanders lost their lives in this campaign and thousands more suffered non-fatal injuries or illnesses.

Finally, this story relives the life of a man who spent five years in one of the most dreadful conflicts of the 20th century. In his letters we get to experience some of the feelings that this generation of men shared with their loved ones. These powerful emotions included homesickness, concern for his fellow men and the horses, the excitement of riding through the ancient world and the sheer boredom and tediousness of much of the campaign. Also there was a growing awareness of New Zealand as a nation distinct from mother England and an increasing scepticism of command earned by social position and not merit.

As the World War 100 commemorations proceed it is important that we understand and acknowledge the role that our ancestors played in all the different phases of the Great War. This book provides the story of one man and his family in this momentous period of our history.

Author's Note

From Geraldine to Jericho tells John Barker's story through his letters and photographs. John Barker was an officer throughout the Great War. He started as a Lieutenant (Lt) in the original Officer Corps of the Canterbury Mounted Rifles (CMR) and was promoted to the rank of Captain in December 1916. Towards the end of the war he was promoted to Major. His perspective of the war was heavily influenced by his officer status which in his case included periods of active front line service and the inevitable paper work and record keeping that was required of him. These duties meant that he had a good grasp of the campaigns and this, coupled with his eye for detail, meant his records of events, dates and people were very accurate.

All his letters in this book were written to his mother and sister, Doris, who were living at Waihi near Geraldine. John wrote to others in his family but, if these still exist, they are not known



A letter from John to his sister Doris.

to members of the wider family. It is likely that John wrote other letters to his mother and sister, such as when he found his brother Paul had been killed on the Western Front. However, these letters were not kept with the others that have been passed on.



John's mother Emily Barker and youngest sister Doris Barker.



Canterbury Mounted Rifles leaving Jericho for the last time on the old Roman Road to Jerusalem in October 1918.

Many letters were written some time after the events he described, while others were written in diary form recording events as they unfolded. Most were written in pencil in his Field Message Book. Nearly all the letters are still in their original envelopes – stamped and postmarked Wellington, Cairo, Malta, or Alexandria and passed by the Censor. On the back of the envelopes were postmarks from Geraldine and Woodbury recording when the letters arrived in South Canterbury usually 6–8 weeks after they were posted.

Letters have been transcribed as true to the original form as possible. Obvious spelling mistakes have been corrected as have certain place names. Some words which were indecipherable have been deleted and acronyms or abbreviations have been spelt out in full for ease of comprehension. A small amount of text has been omitted where it is hard to follow or lacks readily available context for the reader. Attempts have been made to identify many of the men he served with who are mentioned in the letters. While all care has been taken to correctly identify people in the

footnotes, their accuracy cannot be guaranteed. Troops with common surnames which have not been able to be positively identified have been left without footnotes.

John Barker kept a large photographic collection of his time away during the Great War. He carefully recorded events, names and places on many of the photographs some of which were compiled in several photograph albums. We hold over 600 negatives which are from the 1916–1919 period and these were almost certainly taken by John, or by someone using his camera. The photographs taken at Gallipoli in his collection are most likely ones he bought or exchanged while in Egypt. There were Kodak photographic processing laboratories in Cairo and Alexandria which sold copies of photographs of the campaigns to soldiers. Some of these shots, particularly of Gallipoli, appear in other publications or collections. If John had taken a camera to Gallipoli in 1915 it is likely that it went missing along with most of his personal affects as he was evacuated off the Peninsula.

John Barker also kept a comprehensive collection of maps of Gallipoli and the Middle East. He kept detailed records of the location of many of the battlefields including allied and enemy positions. His accounts of dates and events have proven to be very accurate. John had a great eye for detail and clearly spent some time collecting and reconciling information throughout the War. This included a notebook with the names of the men from the 8th South Canterbury Regiment who were killed during the Great War and where they died.

While John Barker never intended any of his writing to be published he did leave a vivid and insightful account of the five years he served overseas. I am grateful that his family had the good sense to keep the letters and photographs and that these have been passed down. They have provided fantastic source material. I hope he would be pleased with this account which has brought life back to those fateful years.



John's "dog tag" which accompanied him throughout the war. As well his name, rank and Regiment details, it recorded his religion (CE: Church of England).

List of Abbreviations

ADC	Aide-de-Camp
AIF	Australian Imperial Force
ALH	Australian Light Horse (or sometimes just LH)
AMD	Anzac Mounted Division
C in C	Commander in Chief
CMR	Canterbury Mounted Rifles
CO	Commanding Officer
Col	Colonel
Cpl	Corporal
Cpt	Captain
CYC	Canterbury Yeomanry Cavalry
DHQ	Desert Head Quarters
DSO	Distinguished Service Order
EEF	Egyptian Expeditionary Force
GHQ	General Head Quarters
ICC	Imperial Camel Corps
KIA	Killed in action
Lt	Lieutenant
MC	Military Cross
MG	Machine gun
NZEF	New Zealand Expeditionary Force
NZMR	New Zealand Mounted Rifles
OBE	Officer of the Order of the British Empire
OR	Other ranks
TBD	Torpedo Boat Destroyer
WMR	Wellington Mounted Rifles
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

ONE

John Barker's Early Life

LIKE MANY NEW ZEALANDERS who fought in World War One, John Studholme Barker was from the third generation of his family to have lived in New Zealand. His parents were first generation European settlers born in New Zealand and both sets of grandparents were prominent figures that arrived in Canterbury from England in the 1840s and 1850s. The hardships and successes of early pioneer life could not have failed to leave their mark on that first generation of children and on the grandchildren who went on to fight in World War One.

John Barker's maternal side

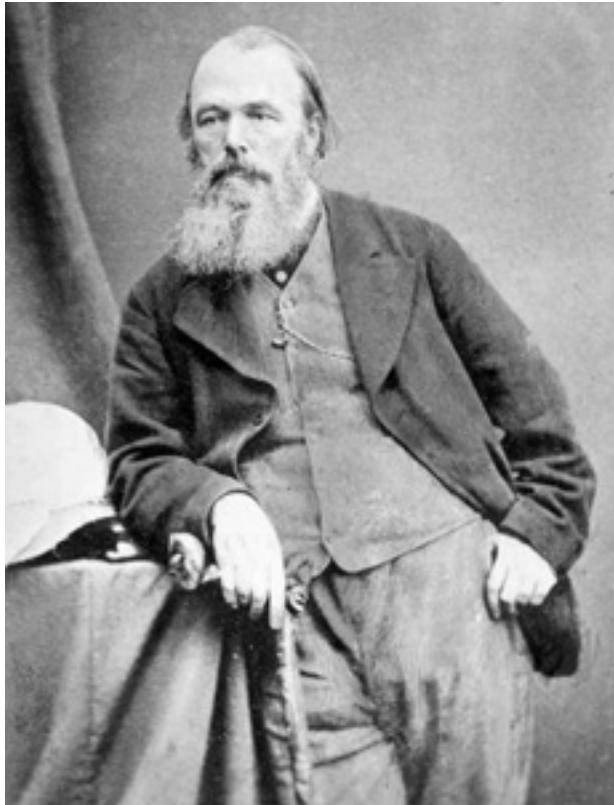
John's mother Emily Barker was born Emmeline Violet Studholme. She was the second of ten

children born to early settlers Effie and Michael Studholme at Te Waimate Station, in South Canterbury. Emily grew up in a big household which included her parents, ten children, a widowed aunt with her children, a governess and several domestic servants.

Emily's mother was Effigenia Maria Louisa Channon. Effie was born in 1838 in England, but lost her mother when she was two. In 1851, Effie, her two sisters and her father arrived in Wellington, New Zealand to settle. Shortly after arrival, her father died and the three girls were taken in by Mrs Riddiford at Orongorongo Station in the Wairarapa near Wellington. Shopping trips to Wellington necessitated launching a boat off the South Coast, coming in



John's maternal grandparents Michael Studholme and Effie Studholme (nee Channon).



John's paternal grandparents Dr Alfred Charles Barker and Emma Barker (nee Bacon).

through Wellington Heads and making their way up the harbour to Wellington.

Emily's father was Michael Studholme. Michael and two of his brothers arrived in New Zealand in 1851 from England. In 1855 Michael and John Studholme established almost 40,000 hectares of grazing leasehold land near Waimate in South Canterbury. Over the next 20 years they went on to obtain 146,074 hectares of purchase or leasehold in eight properties in the South Island and 221,363 hectares in five properties in the North Island. Michael farmed Te Waimate near Waimate in South Canterbury where Studholme descendants still farm today.

In 1860 Effie married Michael Studholme whom she had met while in the South Island visiting her sister. She moved with him to Te Waimate. Effie's diary recounts the gruelling four-day trip to get there – crossing all the rivers between Christchurch and her new home by horseback – and then settling in to a small "cuddy"¹ to dry her wet clothes by the fire.

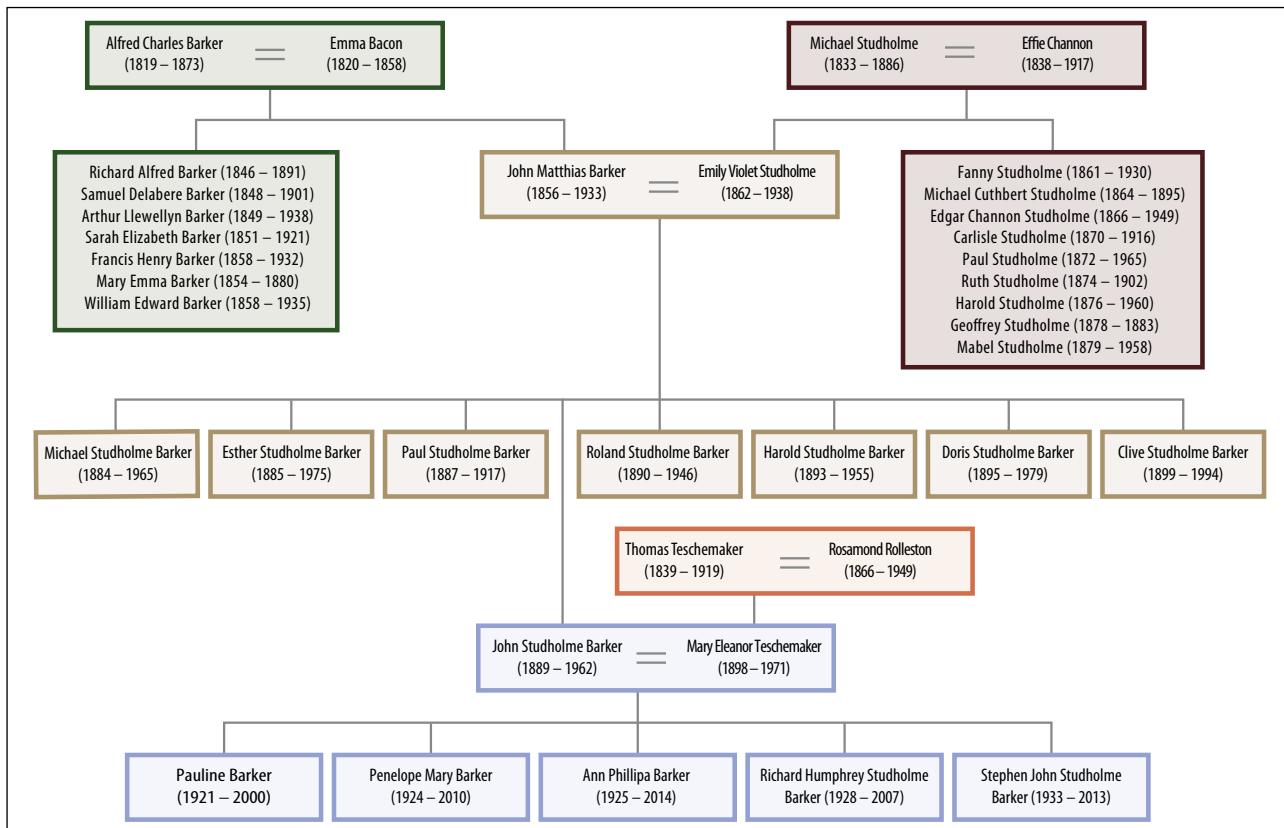
Their ten children were born between 1861 and 1878. In 1863 they sailed back to England and Ireland to visit family and friends and Effie corresponded with the English Studholmes for the rest of her life. Michael and Effie started married life in the basic "cuddy" and went on to build a large and comfortable home at Te Waimate. John's grandfather Michael died in 1886, but his grandmother Effie died in 1917 and this event is mentioned in his letters home during World War One.

John Barker's paternal side

John Barker's father was John (known as Jack) Matthias Barker who was born in 1856 in Christchurch. John Matthias Barker was the second youngest of a family of eight whose parents were Dr Alfred Charles Barker and Emma Barker (nee Bacon). Dr Barker was the surgeon on the *Charlotte Jane*, one of the first four ships to arrive in Lyttleton as part of the planned settlement of the Canterbury district. Life in the first years in Christchurch was quite rudimentary and initially the family lived in a

¹ The "cuddy" still stands at Te Waimate today.

Ancestry of John Studholme Barker



single room hut known as “Studding Sail Hall” as the roof was made of a studding sail from the *Charlotte Jane*.¹

On 2 October 1858, Emma Barker died 5 weeks after she had given birth to their eighth child, William Edward Barker. She was 38 years old. The young family was brought up with the assistance of Ann Bowen, a close friend of Emma’s. Dr Barker initially set up a medical practice in the colony and built a more permanent home on the corner of Worcester and Oxford Terrace not far from Cathedral Square. His practice required him to travel to outlying areas including Kaiapoi where he provided medical services to Māori living at the pa.

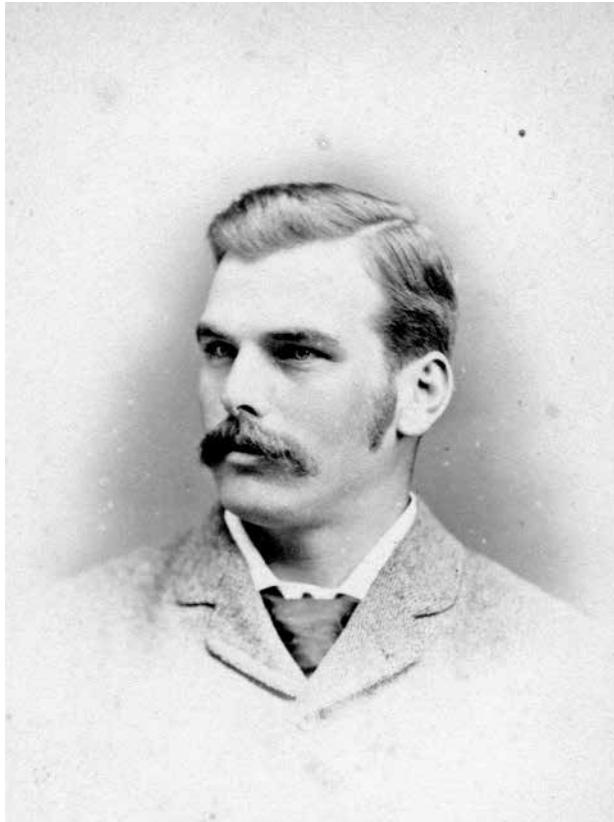
Dr Barker was, however, better known for his passion for photography and the design of early buildings such as the Christ’s College library. His sketches and photographs recorded many aspects of early Christchurch and Canterbury settlers

— many of these images donated by the Barker family are part of a digital collection held by the Canterbury Museum.² His interest in photography was passed on to many of his children and grandchildren, including John Studholme Barker. Dr Barker died in Christchurch in 1873 aged 54.

As well as their Christchurch property, Dr Barker purchased a farm at Ohapi near Geraldine as part of the planned settlement of the province. John Matthias Barker and his brothers lived a life typical of early settler boys involving farming, horse riding, hunting and exploring (as described in the letters of his brother Sam Barker). John Matthias Barker was educated at Christ’s College in Christchurch and then at Cambridge University in England. He was a tall man with an athletic build and was a great rower and rugby player. In 1877 he rowed in the Cambridge University eight.

¹ A replica of Studding Sail Hall is on display in the Canterbury Museum.

² <https://collection.canterburymuseum.com/highlights/18/objects>



John's parents John (Jack) Matthias Barker and Emily Barker (nee Studholme).



Emily Barker in the garden at Waihi.



Emily Barker and children: standing from left to right – Paul, Esther, Roland; sitting on Emily Barker's lap Doris; Sitting Harold and John.

Returning to New Zealand in the late 1870s he bought his farm Waihi, near Woodbury, about 8 kilometres from Geraldine in South Canterbury. This farm was subdivided off the much larger Raukapuka pastoral run sold by Clements Tancred. As part of the large land owning families in Canterbury John Matthias Barker was part of social circles that brought him into contact with the Studholme family. He married Emily Studholme on 5 October 1882 when he was 26 years old and she was 19.

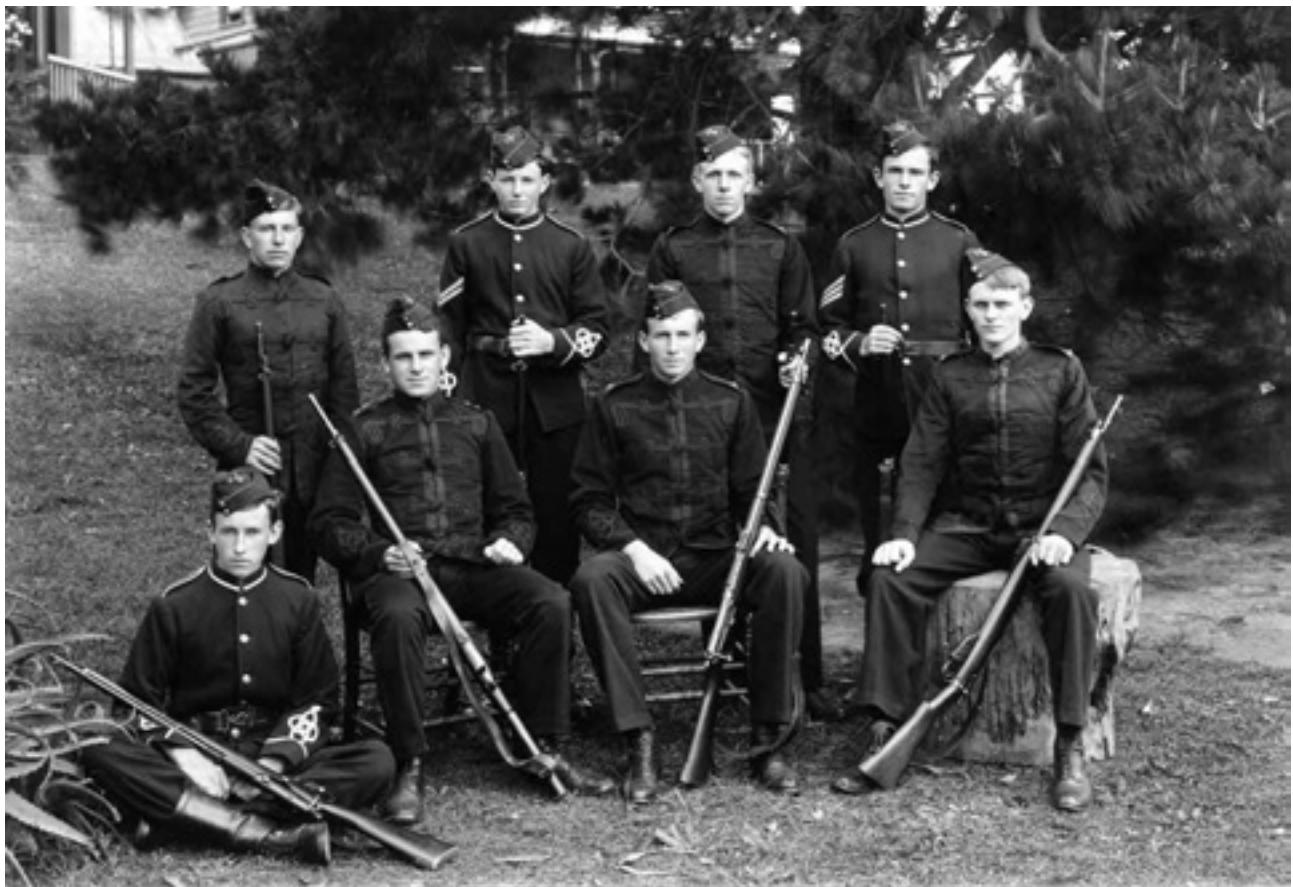
John Matthias Barker and Emily Barker lived most of their married lives at Waihi and raised eight children. The family lived in a large home-stead which employed servants and had at least two farming cadets (usually Englishmen) learning about colonial farming. The family kept an open house as did many established Canterbury farming families of that era with 10 or 20 people frequently seated around the table at dinner time. John Matthias died in 1933 and Emily passed away five years later in 1938. The farm passed into the

ownership of their children and was managed by eldest son Michael. Waihi was kept in the family until it was sold in 1960.

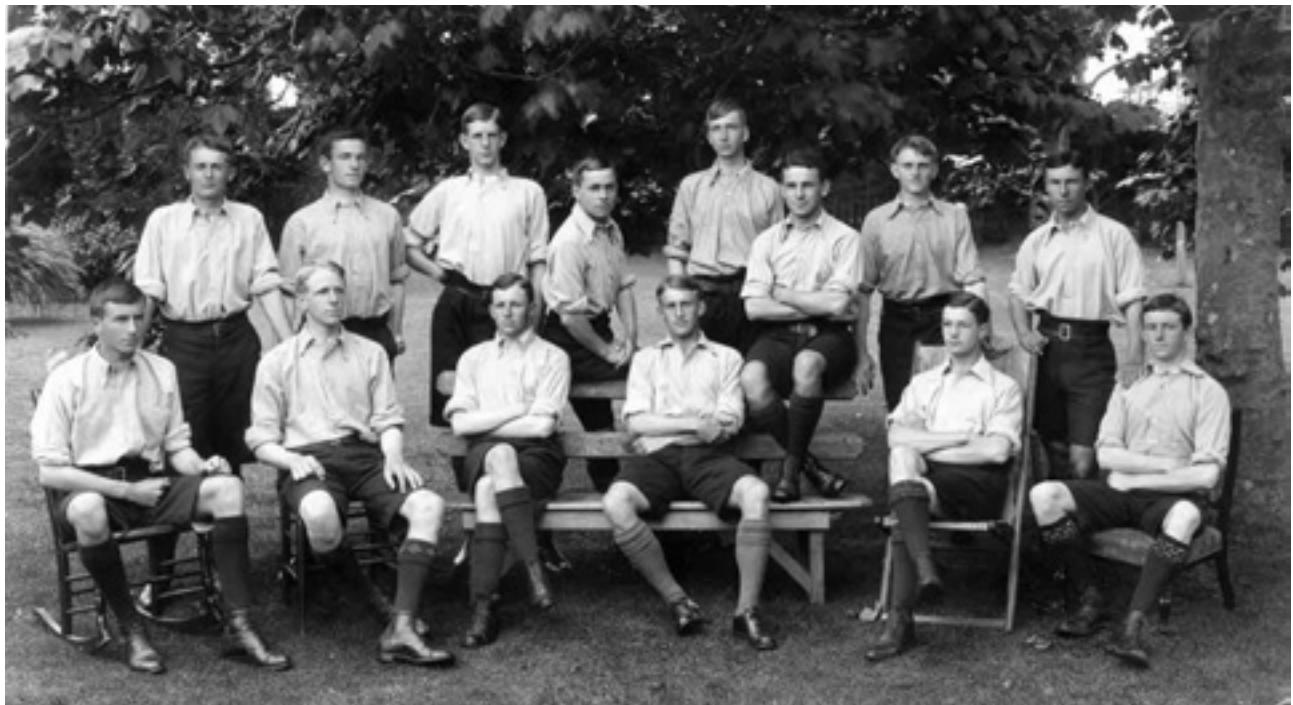
John and Emily were described as a very handsome couple and photos of their Golden Wedding Anniversary show this was still the case even in old age. In 1893 John Matthias Barker bought another farm Kaingaroa on the Chatham Islands. This was farmed by a manager and remained in Barker family ownership (through



Paul and John in the early 1890s.



1907 Wanganui Collegiate Shooting Eight. John Barker is seated in the middle and Roland Barker is standing second from the left.



Wanganui Collegiate prefects. John Barker is seated on the far left of the photo.



Wanganui Collegiate Rowing Four, 1907/8.
John Barker is seated on the far left of the photo.

a family company, Barker Bros) until it was sold to Te Iwi Moriori in 2004. In 1979 Barker Bros donated 33 hectares of kopi forest to the Crown to form the J M Barker (Hapupu) national historic reserve. This is one of only two national historic reserves in New Zealand and has enabled the protection of Moriori rakau momori (tree carvings).

John Studholme Barker's early years

John Barker was born on 12 April 1889. His early schooling was arranged through a governess. He then attended Wanganui Collegiate from 1901 at the age of 12. His brother Roland started Wanganui Collegiate in the same year at the age of 10. Travelling to Wanganui required a long journey and would have seemed a very long way from his home in Canterbury. As well as John's brother Roland, several of his first cousins, Richard Ernest Barker and Herbert Macpherson Barker also attended Wanganui Collegiate at this time. The other four brothers went to Christ's College in Christchurch. The decision to split the boys between two schools was made by his parents because there had been a prominent

Canterbury family whose sons had formed a gang at Christ's College which had dominated the school.

One of John's friends at Wanganui Collegiate was Josefa Sukuna (Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna) who was to become instrumental in Fiji's independence movement. With the outbreak of World War One, Fijians were not allowed to enlist with British forces so Sukuna fought for the French Foreign Legion receiving the Croix de Guerre for bravery. After the war he attended Oxford University and became the first Fijian to receive a university degree. Although Sukuna died before Fiji achieved independence in 1970, his nephew, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, who Sukuna had mentored became its first Prime Minister and later served as President.

John was in the Wanganui Collegiate rowing and rugby teams from 1907–08. When he left Wanganui Collegiate at the age of 19 he was a little over 6 feet tall weighing 14 stone (1.9 metres and 89 kg respectively). Whilst still at school John visited the Chatham Islands with his father in 1903. He met landowner E R Chudleigh who earlier had been bound and nearly hanged by Hau Hau, led by Te Kooti, in 1868 as they escaped the Chatham Islands. John vividly remembered the scars on Chudleigh's fingers caused by him biting his hands to keep his wind pipe clear during this incident.

After leaving school John Barker returned to Canterbury to begin his farming career. He purchased 204 acres at Four Peaks, Geraldine from E Howden in 1912. This property was only five miles away from his childhood home at Waihi. In 1910 John and his brother Paul bid for the 10,000 acre Fiery Camp Block as part of the Orari Gorge sale. This new station was called Blackrock until 1933 when John Barker purchased the wool brand and station name of Four Peaks Station. As a farm Four Peaks was difficult to manage as the hill country blocks were 14 miles from the smaller block with the homestead. The Four Peaks range was frequently snow covered which required stock to be wintered on lower land. The onset of the First World War was to change everything for John and put his farming career on hold for more than five years.

TWO

Prelude to the Great War

IN 1910 John Barker joined the 8th (South Canterbury) Mounted Rifles Regiment as an Acting Lieutenant. This was one of 12 regionally based mounted rifles regiments formed as part of a new Territorial Force. John's training as a cadet at Wanganui Collegiate meant he was well suited to the role. In 1913 the Territorial Forces along with special constables were involved in suppressing riots which had broken out following the Waterfront Strike in Wellington. John was deployed to Christchurch where the Territorial Forces were used to restore order and protect the port.

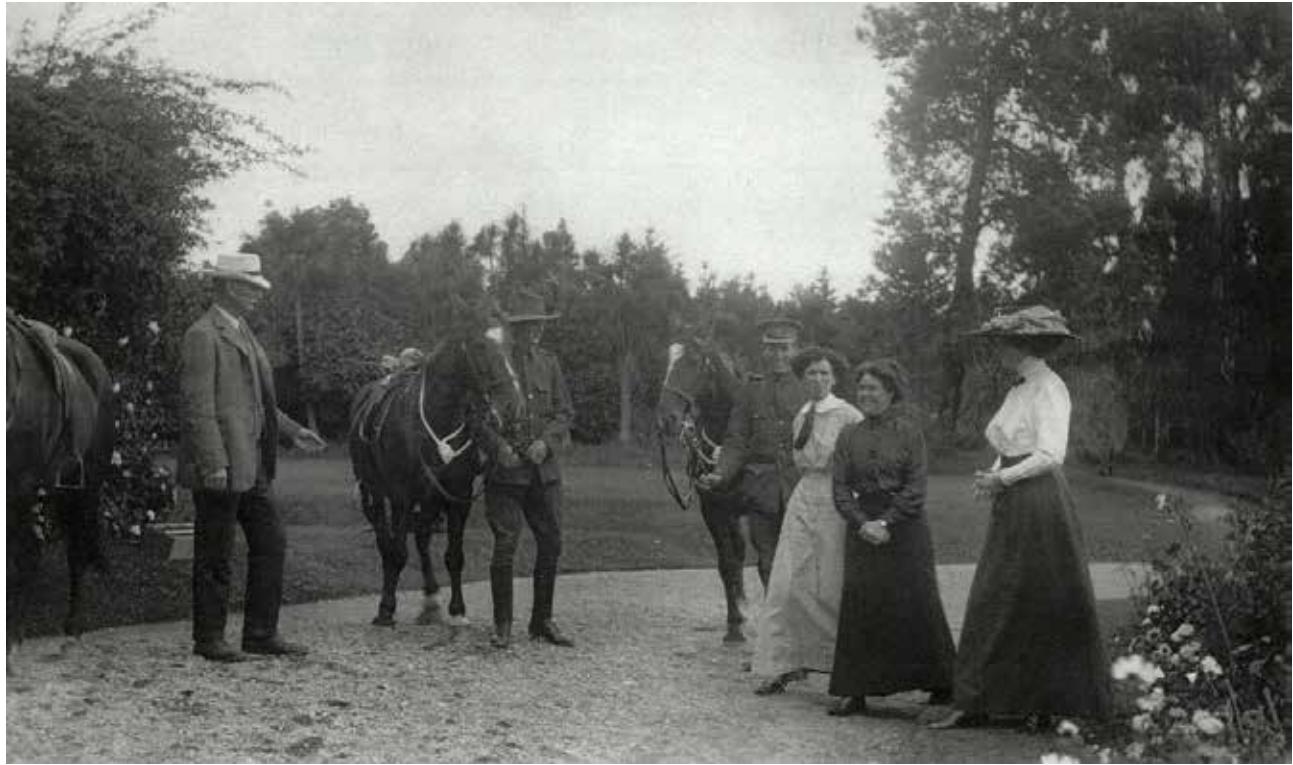
The deteriorating situation in Europe meant the Territorial Forces became increasingly organised and prepared to mobilise. On 5 August 1914 when news reached New Zealand that Britain had declared war on Germany, John Barker was planting an orchard at Four Peaks. John pre-

pared to leave with his brother Roland (also in the Territorial Forces) along with his two horses, Dodger and Molly. A photo of the two brothers and their horses assembled on the front drive of Waihi shows John's parents and his sister Doris farewelling them for what must have seemed like a huge adventure. The two brothers promptly enlisted in Timaru on 13 August and then reached Addington in Christchurch on 15 August. This was the site of the mobilisation camp where the CMR were formed up.

The CMR was one of four mounted rifle regiments (along with the Auckland, Wellington and Otago Mounted Rifles) that served as part of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force (NZEF) in the Great War. The regiment was formed on 12 August 1914 when the first men reported to the mobilisation camp at the Addington Show grounds in Christchurch.



John's cap badge for the 8th (South Canterbury) Mounted Rifles.



John Barker (right) and his brother Roland leave Waihi for the Great War in August 1914 while his father John Matthias Barker (left) and mother Emily and sister Doris farewell them.



John (right) and Roland ride out from Waihi.



The original Officers of the Canterbury Mounted Rifles at Addington Show Grounds, Christchurch August 1914.

Back row: Lts L Chaytor, Taylor, Barker, W Deans, F Gorton, Hayter, D S Murchison.

Second Row: Lt Marchant, Cpt Talbot, Lt Blackett, Cpt Hurst, Cpt Hammond, Lt Free, Lt Bruce.

Sitting: Major Wain, Cpt Cody, Major Overton (2nd in Command)

Lt Colonel Findlay (Commanding Officer), Cpt Blair, Major Acton-Adams, Major Hutton.

Front Row: Lt Gibbs, Lt Davison, Lt G Dailey.

The CMR regiment consisted of three squadrons from the existing territorial mounted regiments in the Canterbury district:

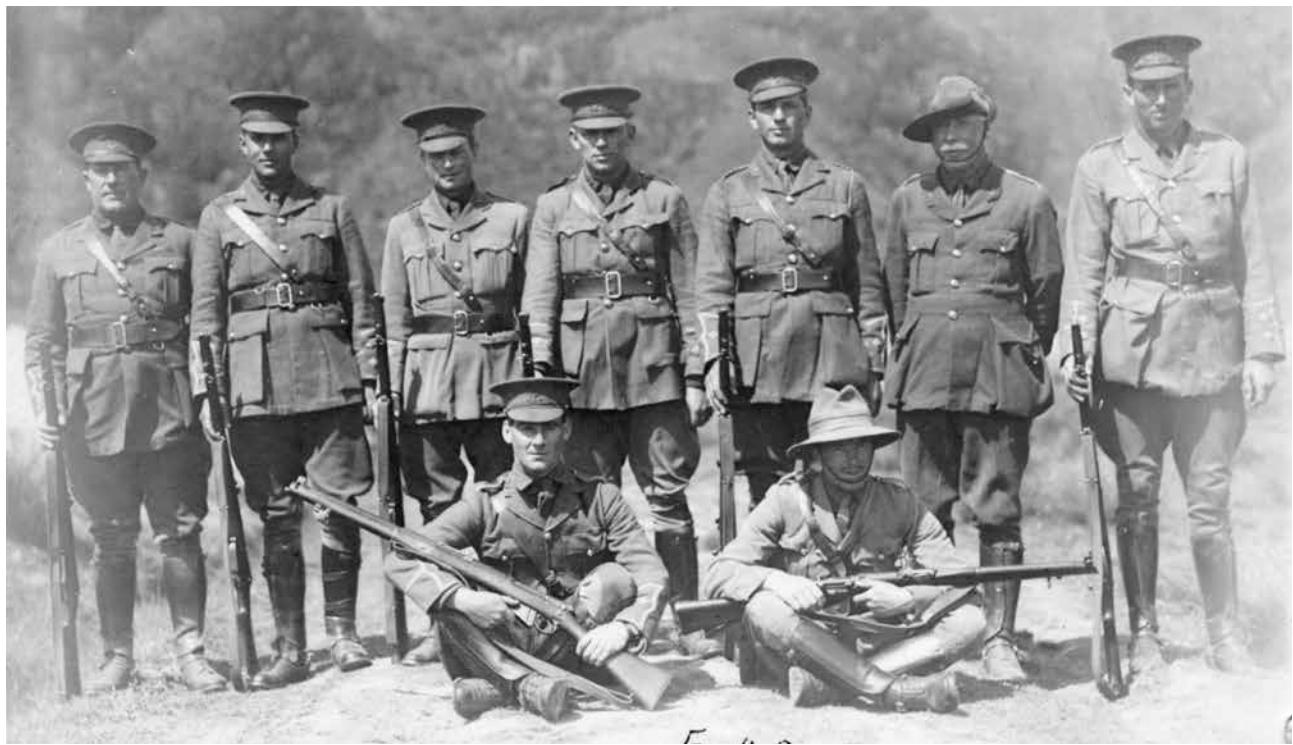
- The 1st (Canterbury Yeomanry Cavalry)
- The 8th (South Canterbury) which John Barker had belonged to
- The 10th (Nelson)

Each squadron had 158 men divided into four troops, with all the men having clearly defined roles in their four-man sections (eight per squadron). In combat one man in each section was responsible for holding the horses while the other three fought on foot. Camp duties were shared amongst the four men through well assigned roles and the section became the basic building block of the regiment. At full strength the CMR had 26 officers and 523 other ranks. The regiment had more than 600 horses and a machine gun section.

On 23 September 1914 the CMR regiment rode from Addington in Christchurch over the

Port Hills to Lyttleton and departed by ship for Wellington. On 14 October the troops and horses left Wellington on transport ships the *Tahiti* and *Athenic*. While the men were voyaging to the Northern Hemisphere, France and the British Empire declared war on the Ottoman Empire on 5 November. After stopovers in Hobart, Albany, Colombo, and Aden the CMR finally disembarked at Alexandria in Egypt on 3 December 1914.

The CMR remained at Zeitoun, a camp just outside Cairo, until May 1915. They spent this time training and acclimatising to the new environment. In his correspondence back home John commented on many new experiences which included some sightseeing around Cairo. Although the war in Europe would have seemed a long way off, an attack on the Suez Canal by the Ottoman Turks on 3 February brought a chilling reminder of why they were overseas as the first New Zealand soldier was killed.



The Nelson and South Canterbury Mounted Rifles shooting teams at Trentham. During this friendly competition the 8th Mounted Rifles beat the 10th Nelson, 9th Hawkes Bay, 6th Wellington and 2nd Taranaki. Pictured standing from left to right are: Cpt Talbert, Lt Blackett, Lt Mayne, Lt Dailey, Lt Taylor, Major Wain and Lt Barker. Sitting are Lt Chaytor and Lt Hayter.



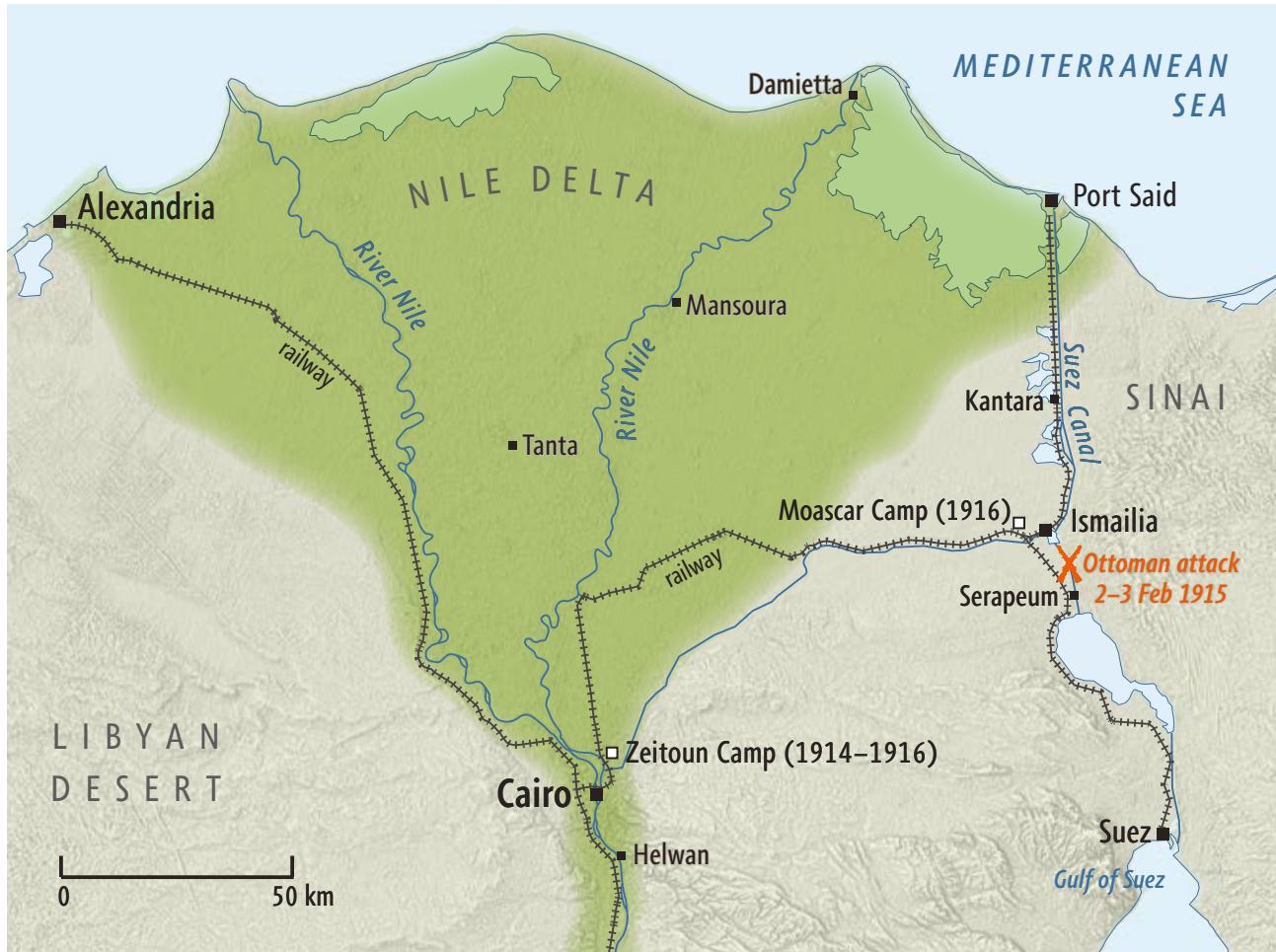
Training at Trentham, Wellington. John is standing at the far left.



Mounted Rifles “shearing time” at Trentham.
Roy Priest on right, Arthur Rhodes in centre
cutting Howard’s hair. David Devon (farrier from
Geraldine) on left.



John en route to Egypt talking to another Officer.



The Nile Delta and Suez regions of Egypt.



Troop ship departing New Zealand (this photo was enclosed with one of John's first letters home in 1915).

8 December 1914

Postcard of Cairo landscape on the banks of the Nile to Clive Barker (John's youngest brother, then aged 15)

We have been camped here four days and are getting quite settled down in the sand. We are just on the edge of the desert about 6 miles out of Cairo. The natives have wee little donkeys and generally put big loads on them and more on top.

JSB.

24 January 1915 Zeitoun Camp, Cairo

Dear Doris,

It is Sunday evening. I have just got to bed after coming in from Cairo. It is 9.30 and all the bugles all over the camp are blowing the last post. They sound like so many cocks answering one another. I meant to stay at home this afternoon and write letters but went off with Chaytor¹ just after lunch. I will give you our afternoon jaunt.

Picked up cab at camp with two rather old gray horses drove 3 miles to Abbassieh hospital². Enquired after Williams found he had been in contact with a small pox sore and was isolated. Saw Johnston (Geraldine sort). He has a bad ear but nearly right. Also about six others of the squadron. Went on by tram then took cab to the tombs of the Caliphs. Over onto a big meeting in honour of Mohamed's birth or death we could not make out which. Next ran into the Sultan visiting his father's tomb. Lost the cab. Wandered on for some time through the tombs. Went through the big quarries behind the Citadel then up a steep narrow causeway to the top of the hill to the old Roman fort.

Later. The two Wildes have been in for a yarn. Napoleon restored and added to the forts so we could not make out which was what. One fort was well presented. We went down into the water tanks the echo in it is wonderful. The View was very good. As we were coming down the sun was setting behind the pyramids next to the Citadel. Went into the big alabaster mosque which is beautiful. Had a look round the barracks. Saw the place where all the Muslims were washed and where Muhammad Ali I think it was, jumped over the parapet and escaped. Also where Napoleon had been shooting with cannons through the main gate. The whole citadel is just like what one would imagine what the old castles would be like from reading books. Next drove through the big Turkish and Arabian bazaars, had dinner and came home by the Heleopolis electric railway.

Love to all at home. From your loving brother, John.

¹ Captain Lawrence Clervaux Chaytor.

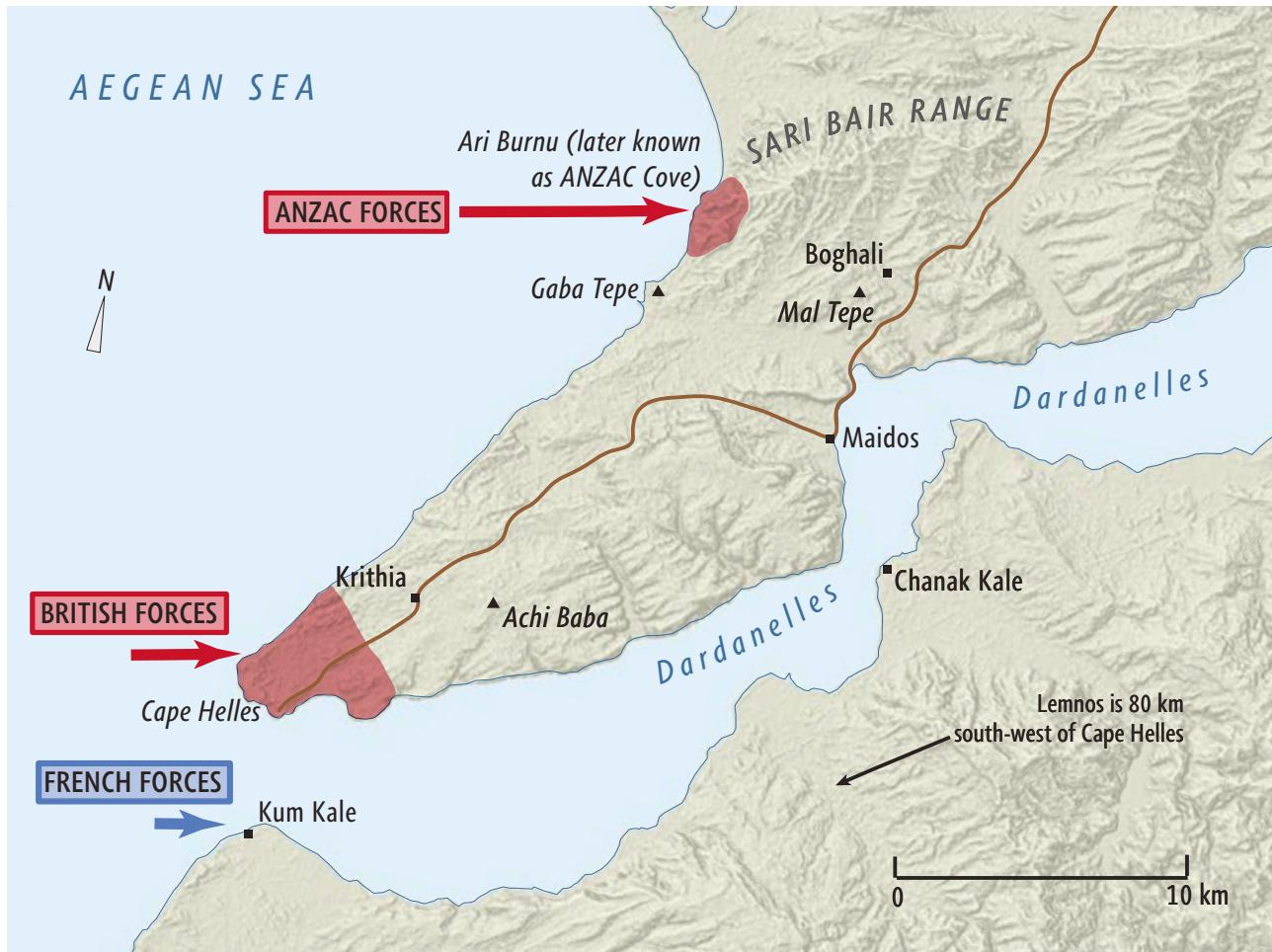
² Abbassieh was the Egyptian Army hospital allotted to the New Zealand troops.

THREE

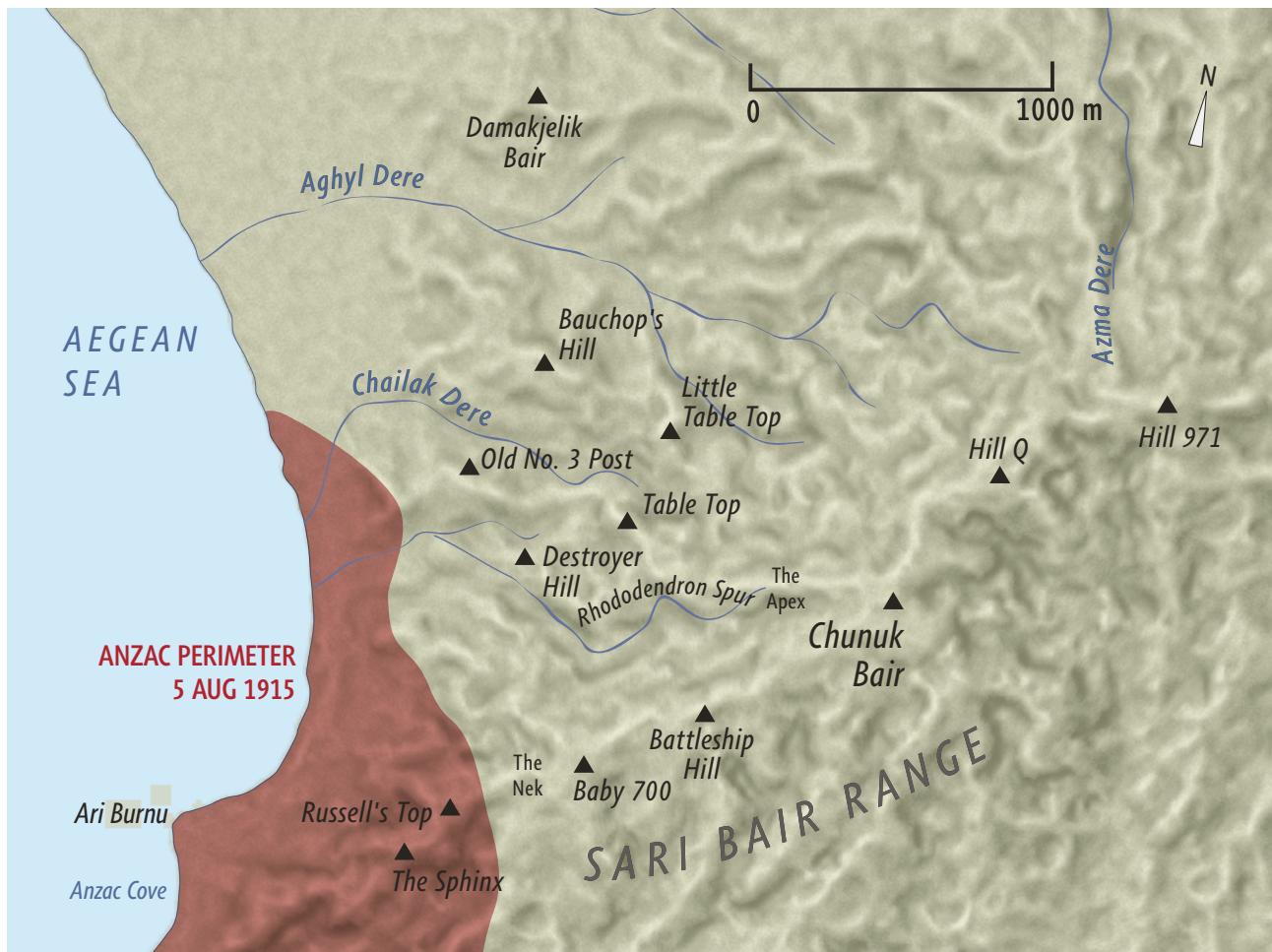
1915: Gallipoli

Your letter of 19th July got to me yesterday. In it you blame me for going up to Anzac when I was not fit. Well I knew that when I went but if I had stayed I would have been left indefinitely in charge of horses and besides a detestable chap would have taken over my troop. The men hated him so I had to go. And I don't regret it either.

Letter from John Barker to his mother, 11 September 1915



Gallipoli, 25 April.



Gallipoli, August.

THE NEW ZEALAND TROOPS in Egypt were to join a new front in an attempt to knock the Ottoman Empire out of the war. A plan conceived by First Lord of the Royal Navy, Winston Churchill, involved British and French warships trying to force the Dardanelle Straits on 19 February 1915. This action was intended to open the way for an attack on Constantinople (modern day Istanbul). After some initial success taking out the Ottoman forts at the entrance to the Dardanelles, a final naval attack on 18 March ended disastrously with three battleships sunk by mines.

In the wake of this unsuccessful attempt to reach Constantinople, the Allies decided to capture the Gallipoli Peninsula with land forces. New Zealanders and Australians made up nearly half of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force's 75,000 troops with the remainder coming from Great Britain, France, India and Newfoundland.

The invasion of the Dardanelles began on 25 April 1915 with the main landings at Cape Helles on the southern tip of the peninsula by British, and later French, forces.

The Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) – soon to become known as Anzacs – attacked 20 km to the north at Gaba Tepe (Kabatepe). Unfortunately the Anzacs landed at Anzac Cove about 2 km north of the intended landing site comprising a narrow stretch of beach surrounded by steep hills and rugged terrain. Their job was to secure the Sari Bair range with the capture of Mal Tepe (shown in the map). Up against them were units from the Ottoman Fifth Army who were to prove tenacious fighters. By late April the battle for the Peninsula had reached a stalemate.

The CMR were not part of the original invasion on 25 April 1915, but landed at Anzac Cove on 12 May. The CMR left their horses behind

in Egypt and fought alongside their counterparts in the New Zealand infantry battalions. John Barker's diarised notes for this period cover the CMR arriving at Gallipoli, their involvement in one of the two large Turkish attacks on the Anzac positions in May and the armistice that was arranged between the two sides to bury the dead. They also describe how he was taken ill, suffering from boils, dysentery and bronchitis and evacuated by hospital ship on 24 May. He was taken back to Cairo for recuperation.

On 21 June 1915 John Barker had recovered sufficiently to return to Gallipoli where the Allies were preparing for the last major offensive to break the stalemate on the Peninsula. On 6 August the offensive began and the CMR were involved in a night attack using only bayonets to secure Walden Point and Bauchop Hill. Although this part of the attack was successful the regiment suffered 40% casualties including the death of Major Overton (the second in Command of the CMR). The battle reached its climax with the Wellington Battalion taking and holding Chunuk Bair between 8–10 August. However, this high point was eventually overwhelmed by the Turkish forces. In the six days up until 12 August the CMR lost 24 men killed and 63 wounded.

After seven weeks back on Gallipoli, John Barker once again fell ill and was evacuated off the Peninsula on 12 August suffering from enteric fever (typhoid). His brother Roland took part in the last major battle of the campaign in the fight for Hill 60 from 21–27 August. During this battle only the Canterbury and Otago Mounted Rifles reached the Turkish trenches, suffering

approximately 60% casualties. Roland was shot in the right arm and he too was evacuated off the Peninsula.

John's letters tell of the poor condition he was in and the health issues that were to dog him for the remainder of the year and some of 1916. While at Alexandria John Barker was treated by Major Charles Hercus who pioneered the use of a saline drip to treat enteric fever (Major Hercus's son, John Hercus later lived next door to us in Wellington).

His first cousin Pat (N G) Barker, also part of the CMR, wrote:

Poor old John is very weak. He can only just talk and sometimes has to sit still for five minutes at a time to get breath. He has had a crook spin ever since he has been here. First it was boils, he just got over them in time to get away to the front; he had only been there a few days when he was sent back to Lemnos with boils again. He was back in the trenches for only a few days and then he got dysentery and was sent back to Cairo. They say he went back to the front before he was properly right. He went for about a week or two looking like a ghost then caught "enteric" and was sent to Alex where he has been ever since, and is likely to stop for a few months. I think they will send him back to NZ as soon as he is fit to travel.

Letter from Pat Barker to his Mother from Zeitoun, 1 September 1915

By late November 1915, the situation at Gallipoli led the Allies to reluctantly evacuate Suvla and Anzac. The troops were withdrawn between 15 and 20 December. Pat Barker was one of the last 30 men in the Anzac rear guard to evacuate Gallipoli on 20 December.



The crowded foreshore at ANZAC Cove.

9 May to 11 June 1915

Extracts in diary form from small book

Sunday 9 May 1915.

Joined the Regiment at the timber wharf. Our Brigade and one regiment of Australian Light Horse embarked on the *Grantully Castle*. Cast off at dusk.

Monday 10 May

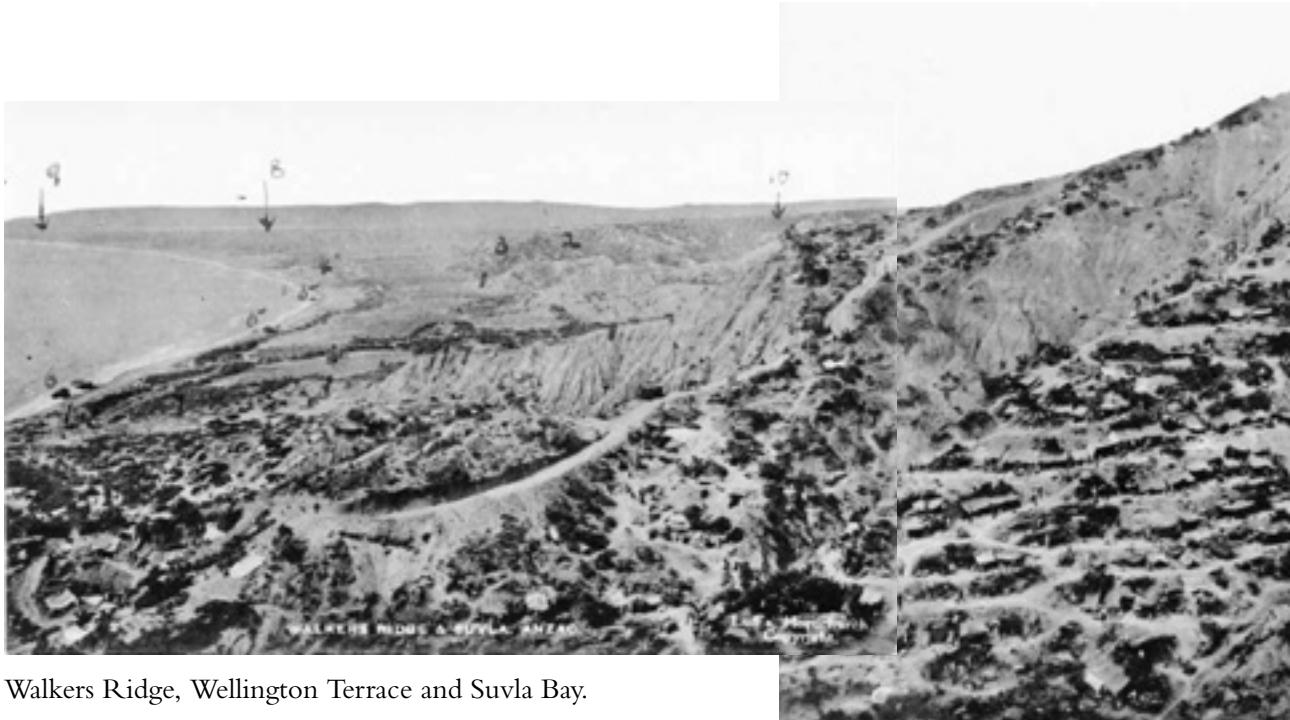
Sea very calm, ship very crowded. Had a four-hour watch 12 to 4 am, had a beast of a time walking over sleeping men. Passed Rhodes Island at dusk.

Tuesday 11 May

Very calm. Passed Islands all day.

Wednesday 12 May

Damp misty morning. Arrived at Cape Helles early morning. Saw shells bursting not far away. Lay there most of the day. Large fleet of warships and transports. Went up the coast to our landing, joined fleet there. Heavy bombardment of Cape Helles commenced and went on all night. Got onto torpedo boats and made towards shore. Foreshore all covered with bivouacs and holes, very steep mostly



Walkers Ridge, Wellington Terrace and Suvla Bay.

- 1 Point of reference for another postcard
- 2 No 2 Outpost
- 3 No 3 Outpost
- 4 Good well which supplied water for No 2 & 3
- 5 Boats left from first landing where they drifted ashore with nearly all occupants killed
- 6 Barges behind which we could bathe
- 7 Old line of trenches before Suvla
- 8 Salt Lake
- 9 Lala Baba behind which is Suvla Bay
- 10 Position of Anafarta Battery. For months there was a man with a whistle to warn people, stationed on the spot from which this photo is taken

clay cliffs towards top of near ridge 400ft high. A few shells landed near us. Felt uncomfortable. Got into lighters towed alongside pinnaces.¹

Seemed like a big battle going on up the hills but was informed things were very quiet. Landed on jetty No 5, beach crowded with men, all quite unconcerned. Huge piles of stores and ammunition. Jumped off and trudged along beach carrying all our worldly possessions. Found them very heavy. Met Major Shaw. Looking well.

Said all hands are well. Came round little point, met odd bullets. Went up dry creek bed and told to camp for the night. Just dark and bullets cracking overhead, never a second without one.

¹ Small boats.

Thursday 13 May

Remained in gully till 3 pm when we came out and passed 5 wounded horses, the survivors out of 24 of an Artillery Battery. Passed lots of Indian's mule transport. Climbed steep path to point half way up hill. Went straight into trenches relieving Naval Brigade. Very disappointed with look of them. Still more to hear tales about them. Had a quiet night with the exception of the continual crack of Turk bullets overhead.

Friday 14 May

Relieved at 8 am. Troop did fatigue all day. Bathed at foot of hill. Chased out of water by shrapnel. A party cleaned dead horses off beach. Looking down from my dugout, the sea just below. Lots of men bathing and just half round the point as busy a little port as ever was with a big lot of shipping lying just out of range. The formation of the coast is the saving because it is so steep that it is very hard for shells or bullets to hit the beach; although close on twenty men a day are hit down there. It being much safer in the trenches. Cpl Hay¹ from Timaru got killed while out on a burying party up the beach; there being some bodies still unburied.

Saturday 15th May

In trenches 8am to 8am; very quiet, gave several snipers frights at 800 yards.

Sunday 16 May.

Weather perfect. Fatigues all day. We only get a wash every other day, in the sea at that. Improving trenches and carting water. Water allowance very short and food good but very salty. A job to last the 24 hours.

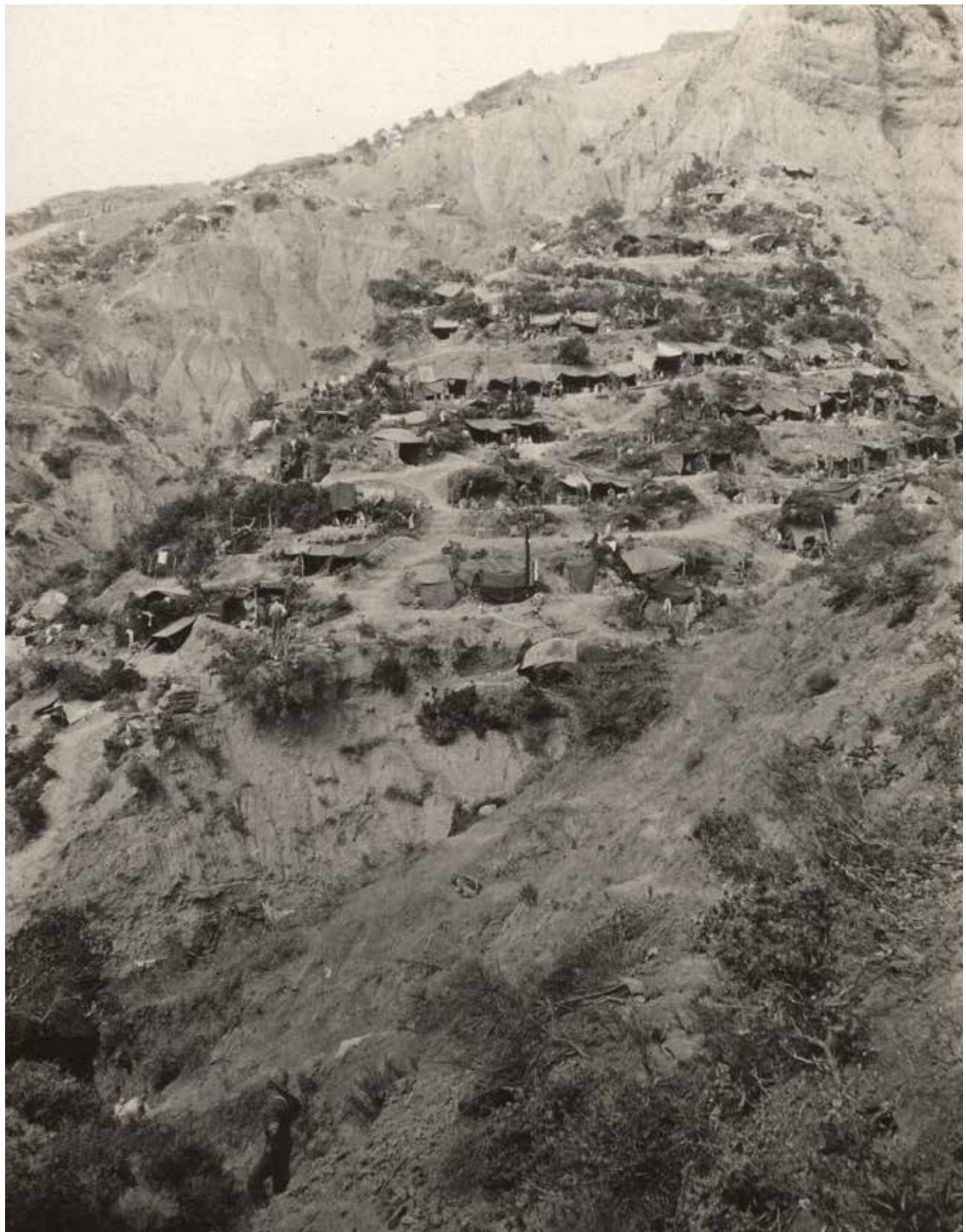
Monday 17 May

Another boil; under the armpit this time. Turkish fire considerably slackened. Rumour of them being reinforced by a Division.

Tuesday 18 May

Turks throwing notes into Australian trenches and making rude remarks about us. They know all about our Superior Officers. Say they are going to drive us into the sea.

¹ Trooper William Harold Hay.



Wellington Terrace.



View back towards ANZAC cove.

Wednesday 19 May

Stood to arms nearly all night. Very heavy firing at midnight all along the line. At 3 am Turks advanced all along the line with the exception of our ridge. In our section the 4th Waikato got it hottest, some Turks getting into trenches. 4.30 my troop reinforced Wellington. Were deafened by noise, got a little shooting. Shifted to rear of Auckland trenches to stop an imaginary 400 Turks who were supposed to have got around their flank. Waited for two hours expecting Turks through the scrub at any moment. Made a reconnaissance and found no Turks. Shifted to rear of Auckland trenches, lay in open with hail of bullets just passing overhead. Flying shrapnel missed us and got two or three CYC.¹ Thankful to get orders to shift back to our own trenches. Got no one hurt but several men hit by spent bullets. Heaps of dead Turks all along the line.

Thursday 20 May

On duty in trenches. Stood to arms from midnight; attack recommenced; more slaughter of Turks. 4th Waikato lost a few more men. Sat in trenches all day doing a little sniping. Can't swear to having got a Turk yet. Some three or four thousand Turks must have been shot during the last two days.

¹ Canterbury Yeomanry Cavalry.

Friday 21 May

Very pleased to see the 4th Artillery Brigade back from Cape Helles last night and the remnant of the NZ Brigade today. Off duty, slept, bathed and did fatigue.

At about 3.30 pm Turks all along the line waved white flags and thousands stood in full view on top of trenches. They did not want to surrender but wanted to bury their dead. They started but immediately began to collect rifles and ammunition. So we gave them two minutes to get back to their trenches and reopened fire. A few surrendered and one of our interpreters went right up to their trenches which were nearly blown in and full of dead.

Saturday 22 May

Very quiet, quite a change. A German General came in with a white flag to try to arrange an armistice. Still troubled by a battery near Anafarta. War ships destroyed Anafarta a few days ago all except the Mosque. There is a submarine scare and all ships have cleared out and destroyers are going in circles at full speed all over the place.

Sunday 23 May

My bivouac is about 250 feet up the hill and commands a grand view of the cliffs, sea shore and shipping with Imbros just across the way. We can also see the fleet at Cape Helles where the warships firing is very frequent. Our squadron is I think the most lucky so far with only 3 casualties. A shower of rain yesterday morning; our homes and the track were soon in an awful state. The first hours rain since we left NZ.

I was alright but most of the men would not believe that it would ever rain. In late afternoon had to report to the doctor. His report, really nothing wrong with chest. Mostly run-down and should not have left Alexandria. Made comfortable in own bivouac. Visited about 9.30 and bundled onto a stretcher and carted off. Passed from station to station. Labelled H ship (Hospital Ship); missed boat. Slept in shelter on beach. Am afraid I have lost all gear except blankets.

Monday 24 May

Showery. Had badges stolen off me. Am writing sitting up in bed, clothes off at night for first time since landing. Armistice for burying dead from 7.30 to 4pm. Five men (3 wounded and two killed) that I have seen, shot during first half-hour. Got letters from Harold, April 29th, Mother April 1st and Doris April 6th.

Tuesday 25 May

Had good night's sleep, chest much better. *Triumph* sunk quite close.¹ Did not see it. Sunk in 10 minutes, firing at submarine till capsized. Side above water. We fled for Imbros. She has done wonderful work protecting our right flank.

Wednesday 26 May

Lay at Imbros. German sub reported at mouth of harbour last night.

Thursday 27 May

Left early for Lemnos. On entering harbour two French ships behind us were attacked by a sub. They fired about 10 shots. They got safely in. Wounded transferred from the *Gascon*² to us. A wonderfully safe harbour, booms and nets across the mouth. Full of ships. Alongside the *Carmania*.³ Green hills running up to a fair height and cultivated and very bare.

Friday 28 May

Lay in Lemnos all day. Sailed for Alexandria at 7 pm. Tried to be left behind and nearly succeeded.

Saturday 29 May

Very calm, passed Islands all day.

Sunday 30 May

Very calm. Went to service. Lay outside Alex all night.

Monday 31 May

Went into port. Unloaded very slowly. All had to go to Cairo. Arrived there at 5.30 and taken to Geza Red Cross Hospital just at back of Zoo.

Tuesday 1 June

Very hot. In evening went into town and bought clothes.

Wednesday 2 June

In evening went to Zeitoun. Saw Gorton, Nancarrow⁴ and Stafford.

¹ HMS *Triumph*, a Royal Navy Battleship was sunk by a German submarine off Gaba Tepe.

² RMS *Gascon* – used as a troop carrier.

³ RMS *Carmarnia* – used as a troop carrier.

⁴ Lieutenant Vincent Fosberry Nancarrow, died 4 August 1915 of enteric fever.

Thursday 3 June

Took long walk in the gardens. Don't feel too fit. Very well looked after but must get out.

Friday 4 June

Went to Zeitoun and got £10 pay, saw Nancarrow and Gorton.

Saturday 5 June

Went to Cairo in morning with Marsden.

Sunday 6 June

Hot. Taken motor drive to pyramids. Walked round gardens with McNeill.

Monday 7 June

Into Cairo, walked out with McNeill.

Tuesday 8 June

All day out, lunch at Shepherds Hotel with Beamish and Scott. Abbasieh hospital and found Cpl Dobson, Troopers Elmslie and Hooper wounded. They state Moore¹ and Huxford² killed.

Wednesday 9 June

Went to Pyramids by self, tried to climb second pyramid but funked it.

Thursday 10 June

Left Geza in car for Zeitoun with Holgate from Timaru.

Friday 11 June

Went to Citadel and other hospitals to see our wounded.

¹ Trooper George Moore KIA 30 May 1915.

² Trooper William Thomas Huxford KIA 30 May 1915.

21 July 1915

My dear Mother

Have had a very quiet time lately. Came out of the trenches into rest camp three days ago. We were very lucky during our two weeks there, we only lost one man and he was drawing stores at the time. Roland is very fit; I went for a long walk with him this afternoon. We went to see Cazelet¹ over at our infantry HQ where he has been for a long time as permanent orderly officer. He was out so we left a note to say we had called. It is very interesting wandering about here.

The amount of work done is surprising. And most of the camps are spotlessly clean. We came home by the Cove and filled our water bottles by dodging the sentries. We saw a 9 inch high explosive land in an earth heap with dozens of men within a few yards. There is nothing but dust for a minute and then only one two badly shaken men. This evening we have the practice storming up clay cliffs. Nearly everyone was inoculated today for cholera for the second time so in time we ought to be safe from everything in the disease line. The only things left are dysentery, bullets and gas.

The Indian army transport are camped all up the bottom of the gully behind us (Mule Gulley). The mules are in splendid condition and surprisingly quiet. We have to walk within reach of their heels past hundreds and I have never seen one kick or bite. The Indians kill their own meat and have their own flock of goats and sheep which they keep on the cliffs in front of us. They will climb up to where dozens of shells hit and their shepherd gets in a terrible stew about them. They are great the way they scrape out the shell holes and sleep in them.

We have a daily paper one copy per squadron, but there seems very little news.

22 July 1915

I did not finish last night. Have struck a 24 hour job supervising carrying out dirt from the tunnels. Have got things started and have very little to do for hours. I met Stan Wilder in No 4 sap and went off with him to the 6th squadron HQ while he had breakfast. I will make it my home for the next day.

Came up here to the highest shoulder of Russell's Top to have a look around with glasses. I find Aunt Fanny's (Studholme) glasses splendid - as good as the best I have seen here. It is a beautiful fresh morning and the flies are not much in residence. I am in some old trenches which were once the firing line. They are much out of repair and partly blown in by the shells directed at the mountain gun. The whole country is getting a bit dried up looking.

¹ 2nd Lt Clement Marshall Cazelet died of wounds at sea on HMHS *Dunluce Castle* on 8 August 1915.



NZ troops.



Troops in reserve on Walker's Ridge.

Away to the North the salt lake is three parts dried up. The flat between there and here is all covered in weeds. The crops were not sown when the first landing took place. The two valleys running up to Anafarta are evidently very good land. There are plenty of trees mostly olives I think also a few tall poplars and silver poplars and long low red tiled farm buildings. The crops are partly cut and look fairly good and there are a few cattle and sheep in sight. Then of course as you look more to the East come very broken and scrub covered clay hills then cliffs and a steep rise to the top of 971 where the scrub is stunted.

The Turks have few guns including a 75 up there that shoot down onto us here. Then a shoulder blocks our view at about 500 yards it is well covered with trenches looks rather like a huge drainage scheme was on. The Turks are wonders with a spade. Then in the foreground across the gully more trenches. Acres of them all earth heaps. Where it has not been dug up the scrub is mown off with rifle fire. Over the near ridge is rather scrub clad. Then valley running down to the right. In the near part the crops were never sown; further away they are just ripe.

Over the valley are hills which just hide Mudros to the Narrows. The hills across the straight have crop and more trees than this side. Behind Mudros there is a hill running off toward Achi Baba it is very much the formation of the Geraldine Downs looking from the Lysarts, a steep face higher and not so steep as the Geraldine Downs



Issuing water.



A dugout at Walker's Ridge.

and covered with scrub. Crops at the bottom and a few patches at the top. I left out mentioning three roads or rather tracks leading over the Downs towards Mudros.

A few moments ago I saw a few horsemen coming down one and 12 loaded camels on another. In the foreground and to the right are bricks and thrown up earth for one or two miles. The line between ours and the other peoples is marked by a narrow strip mostly a sort of slate grey colour in bullet cut scrub. Every here and there are big masses of earth and craters where one or the other blew the other chap up. Then comes the valley, plenty of trees and enemy guns. Every now and then clouds of dust from our shells where they are trying to silence their guns. Then a deep ravine crops in the bottom then scrub then a gentle rise to Achi Baba to the shoulder to the north west of it with the road just discernible running over its saddle to Krithia. Further to the right cliffs and sea. There are one or two nice little bays one just the other side of Gaba Tepi. The remains of the Gaba Tepi signal station are easily seen and lines of trenches all around the hill.

As for the sea. Several ships including a hospital ship are lying off the point (Cape Helles) A number of trawlers are in sight between

the Point and Imbros, which does not seem far off. You can see ships in the harbour and crops on land. Then off to the West is what we always call Samothrace.¹ I am not sure if we are right though. It is a big mountain which the sun sets. There are beautiful sunsets as there are always clouds hanging around its top. Then sweeping round to the North away on the horizon is the mainland which can be followed on a clear day to where it runs behind the long scrubby ridge that rises behind the salt lake and runs up to a 1,110 foot hill behind Anafarta.

Have just returned from watching a go with bombs at Quinn's Post, on which I can look down and is about half a mile off or less. Our trenches are protected by wire netting screens. Our people must have slung about 50 bombs at them in about a minute. I hope this effort will be of some interest to you and that you can read it. It is rottenly hard to give much news without the censor objecting.

Had a ripping bathe last night after our hill climbing. I was down with Hurst² and Murchison.³ The sea was dead calm. The hospital ship looks so nice lying off shore. One comes and when it is full another comes and takes the first ones place and off she goes. They are always painted white with a green stripe along their side and two big red crosses one each side and they look so clean and nice. At night they have green lights around their rail and a big red cross of lights on their sides.

We argued all the way back to what we would have if we could have a good meal at home. We decided that the essential thing was a good big solid table and chairs with a big white table-cloth. The one item that we were all thoroughly agreed on was for meat we would only have a leg of mutton and roast potatoes and plenty of gravy.

I will shut up now as I must go and see how the earth carrying parties are getting on. There is a great demand for skilled miners here. We only get the earth to take away. Please enclose an occasional envelope when writing. I have asked Esther (Barker) to send me some but they have not arrived.

Love to you all from your loving son. John.

¹ The Greek Island of Samothrace.

² Major Herbert Clarence Hurst.

³ Major Donald Sinclair Murchison.



LEFT: Australian Field Ambulance.



RIGHT: Anzac troops at Gallipoli.



Field Artillery being hauled up the steep terrain of Gallipoli.



LEFT: The near vertical cliffs troops had to scale during the August offensive.

RIGHT: Captured Turkish rifles being brought down. This was the path NZ infantry went to fight in the assault on Chunuk Bair in August 1915 with Beauchop's Hill on the left and Table Top on the right.





Indian wheelwrights at work.



CMR trooper at Hill 60.



Transport No 9 outpost 12 August 1915.



The graves of four members of the Canterbury
Yeomanry Cavalry at Walden Point.

31 July 1915

My dear Mother

I am so sorry I missed last mail. Especially as it was pure laziness. Esther is splendid; we get letters from her every mail. We get two mails a week sometimes and it is much nicer to get something every mail. She sent a parcel of acid drops to Roland and I. They won't last long as everyone drops in for one.

We are still on Wellington Terrace. This morning I have climbed up onto the cliff to get some shelter from the sun and look down onto our camp and can see on down to the supply depot on the beach. Some very inconsiderate sniper has just begun to clear the beach of bathers. Everybody has just scrambled out of the water and are lying along under the bank. With the exception of twenty or more who are hiding behind an old barge. They have a small patch of water that is safe but as soon as one gets outside the danger line along comes a bullet.

The sea has not got a ripple on it and is dotted with destroyers, monitors, trawlers and picket boats and of course the hospital ship. It is a very hazy and sultry day and Samothrace and Imbros are nearly hidden from view. A destroyer is coming in close evidently to have a shot at something. It is swinging round so as to use both her guns. They have small buoys in the bay so as to know the exact range without having to waste ammunition each time. Some big shells have been wandering over lately and going into the sea close in. You should see the rush to look for fish laid out by the explosion. The destroyer has turned round and is going along the shore towards the point without firing a shot.

We have a lot of men sick they are going and coming every day. We are all hoping to see the NZ hospital ship roll up soon. Very soon I think this landing will no longer be so exclusively Australasian as it has been up till now. Leo Acland¹ says we are in the same position as if a man was on top of Mt Cook with his nightshirt on and had to wait there till someone came to take him down.

Later. Sunday morning. Am just going to post this and go to church up at Regimental HQ The latest rumour is that both Rumania and Bulgaria are in against us.

Love to all at home from John.

¹ Lieutenant Leopold George Dyke Acland.

2 September 1915,
No 19 General Hospital, Alexandria

My dear Mother

I have been feeling too beastly weak to try and write regularly but am better now. I was so pleased to get 5 letters yesterday. One from Paul, Doris and you and two from Esther. You will want to know how I am and all about the hospital. My temperature was high for several weeks. Anything from 105.8 to 103 [41 to 39.4°C]. I did not feel very bad only weak. I am down to normal now only occasionally up to 101. And am still beastly weak. I am sure to be sent to NZ or England in a few weeks so the Doctor says. There are four in this room all with fever and I am the least advanced and have to live on milk while the others get fed decently.

In your letter you ask if we like home news. Every word is of the greatest interest. I like to hear of all the little common place things you do over and over every day. Really Mother nothing is not of interest and I am sure I think of home as much as you do of us. Perhaps that is a big exaggeration. In your letter you mention Gifery going off and father turning the sheep off. How I wish I was there to give a hand.

It was a terrible big fight at Anzac just before I left. Our brigade did very well, everything they were supposed to do. The first night of the fight was great. We crept out from No 3 Outpost and laid down and waited for the signal to go. Which was 10 minutes bombardment by the destroyers then 10 minutes quiet and then 10 minutes shelling and then off with the search lights. We had orders to sew white bands on our arms and a big white square patch on our backs. It looked so odd and also not to load our rifles. I was in charge of the Regimental Reserve and never got near enough to use my bayonet. The patches and no shooting saved the situation.

The Turks thought there were thousands and did not know from which direction they were being attacked. We cleaned all the trenches allotted to us and chased away a whole camp of them but lost nearly 110 casualties. We then took up a position on Bauchop's hill and waited for dawn. We had no peace though as there were Turks everywhere trying to sneak away and we were taking them prisoner. Next day we rested and watched the fight go on for two more days. When it was finished I felt sick and it got so bad I had to report sick and got straight away.

Roland (Barker) is in ripping fettle, I think he is still all right as Hirdley the record clerk comes up every day and would be the first to hear bad news. Hutton is wounded and I can't find out how badly or where he has gone. We lost Mayne¹, Davidson² and Major

¹ Lieutenant George Cuthbert Mayne KIA 8 August 1915.

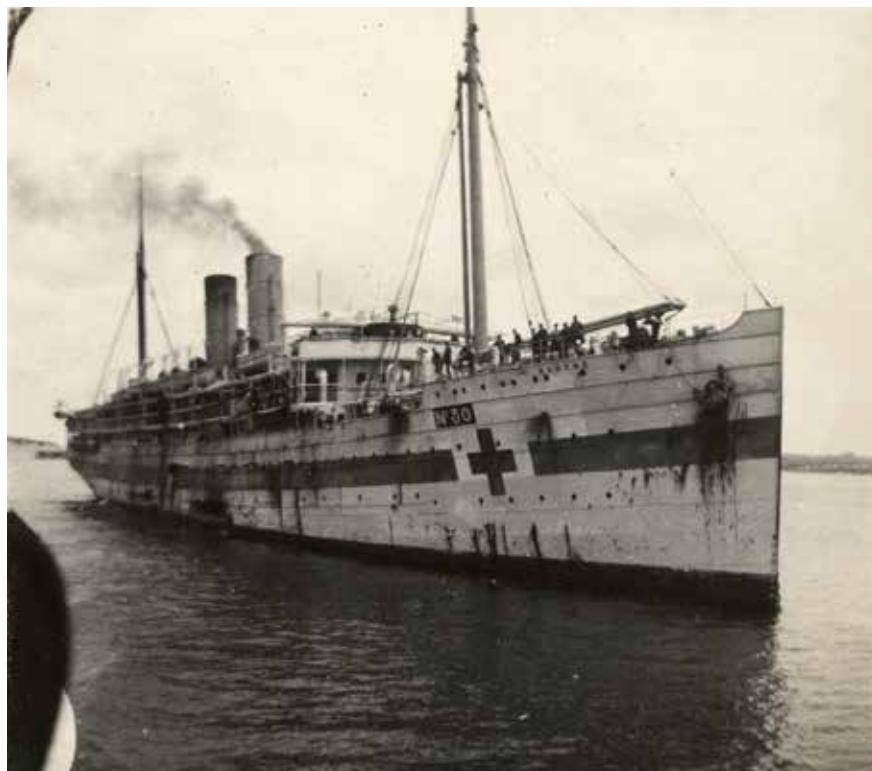
² Trooper Gilbert Davidson KIA 28 August 1915.

Overton¹ killed and Col Findlay, Free, Murchison, Jebson, Deans, Hurst, McCullum, Hutton wounded, also Cheseman, and Guiness, Blair, and Guthrie slightly. About parcels, I think we always get them in the end.

I am getting tired and must knock off. Much love to you all at home. I hope all I have said will be of interest. Pat (Barker) came to see me the other day looking so well.

Much love to all at home from John.

¹ Major Percy John Overton KIA 7 August 1915



The New Zealand hospital ship *Maheno* which evacuated wounded ANZAC soldiers from Gallipoli.



Burial at sea.

11 September 1915
No 19 General Hospital, Alexandria.

My dear Mother,

Your letter of 19th July got to me yesterday. In it you blame me for going up to Anzac when I was not fit. Well I knew that when I went but if I had stayed I would have been left indefinitely in charge of horses and besides a detestable chap would have taken over my troop. The men hated him so I had to go. And I don't regret it either.

I am sorry Paul¹ has chucked things but I suppose it was too much to expect that he would sit still and look on while things were doing. With luck I might meet him in England. You make me quite sick talking about old Bob. I am so glad you all like him. What has happened to Storm?

News came yesterday through Priest² that Roland had his arm smashed. I don't know how to find out where he is and he doesn't know where I am so it may be some time before we find each other but I am making every effort. You, I expect, will know much more than I do.

As for myself things could not be going better. My chart is splendid; a long steady drop going below normal and staying there for the last four days. I am beastly thin but feel perfectly well. And they are beginning to feed me but it is a hungry job.

My roommates are a queer mix. Next to me is Lt-Col Moore of the Otago infantry with a bullet through the leg and fever. He is a very decent fellow, quite young. Left NZ as an Adjutant and is an Imperial man. Belongs to Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Has just completed 9 years of active service. Boer War and West Africa most of the time. Is very interesting and is the brains of the room.

Next a young sub, East Lancashire, about the same stage as self. Is interesting as he thoroughly understands cotton milling and ironworks. Is a motor bicycle mechanic. Has fiery red hair. Next an elderly Australian who has been a wanderer over all parts of the world for the greater part of his life. One day Sister is a very energetic dark little Australian. One orderly was the gardener from the Duke of Cumberland's Estate, the other a lace maker from the lace part of England.

Much love from your loving son, John Barker.

Note on back of letter. Please remember not to repeat what is in our letters as things always get exaggerated and I have already seen a lot of harm done by it. My luck has been out lately. I have lost two revolvers stolen at different times and my helmet. Also had stolen

¹ His brother Paul Barker left his farm in West Australia and travelled by ship to England where he joined the Royal Field Artillery.

² Captain Roy Simpson Priest.

two lots of shaving gear, three sovereigns, a collection of Turkish buttons and badges, 4 pair of socks and a lot of other odds and ends including a watch.

Later. 12 September 1915

Dear Mother,

Surprised to get two letters from you and one from Doris (his sister Doris Studholme Barker). One of yours is 2nd August. I am so glad old TT (Tom Teschemaker) was in such good form and the crystallised fruit were just like him. I wish the box was here just now. On the Peninsula the paper shortage is about over as several people from Egypt send regular supplies. I hope old T.T. remembers about the waistcoat as we expect to spend a winter at Anzac. I have not heard a word of John Rolleston¹ and he was hit pretty badly. You all seem to be doing so much at home and here I am doing my 30th day in bed and not yet allowed to wash myself.

A trooper has just been to see me; I can't remember his name but know him well. He belongs to the 10th and was most anxious to hear news of Hutton. He is doing well after having a lot of his own ammunition knocked into him by a Turkish bullet. His equipment and ammunition saved his life. He was most cheery and hoped to rejoin in a week or two. Another trooper, Harwood from Akaroa (I think his family are well known amongst the early settlers) brought my box down from Zeitoun. Capt Hardy was also in to see me. Col Moore is pretty bad today, seems to have gone all to pieces. It is lunch time. I am beginning to get quite a lot, a cup of soup, three dried biscuits and a small saucer of custard.

¹ Trooper John Christopher Rolleston.

11 September 1915
No 19 General Hospital, Alexandria

Dearest Doris,

Just a line to say how pleased I was yesterday to get two letters from you. I was just dying for letters and got two from you and one from Mother and one from George Hammond which was full of news. It is a pity about old Joe Fifield. I hope he was found safe and sound. Remember me to the Rileys and old Glanvill. I am glad they are all well.

You should hear the opinion of our men on all the young poofshavers who go to England and get Commissions who would have to serve in the ranks if they joined the NZ forces. A number of our men offered Commissions have refused them preferring to be troopers with us. NZ has cause to be proud of her men. Lately they have been put onto the jobs that are too hard for the UK Army people. That is why we have had such appalling losses. The New Zealanders took Chunuk Bair on the main ridge of 971, held it for three days and were relieved. It was then lost. They retook it and are holding it.

Priest comes in every few days, he is out at Mistafa. His leg is nearly right again. He is very good and does all my odd jobs. He came in yesterday but unfortunately I was asleep, to tell me about Roland (his brother Roland who was wounded at Gallipoli). He found out through Hindley at the record office that he was wounded having an arm with a compound fracture. I can't find out where he is yet. There is a chance of being sent straight to England I find. As long as his arm is alright it is a relief to have him away. I am told that our squadron is down to 30 men but it might not be true.

Poor Pinkney Hayter¹ is gone. Chilli Hayter was in to see me about a week ago. Capt Hardy has been in several times. Also Patt, Hindley, Free, Gibbs and others.

I am sorry about Grannie's ewe. Please remember to give my love when next you see her.

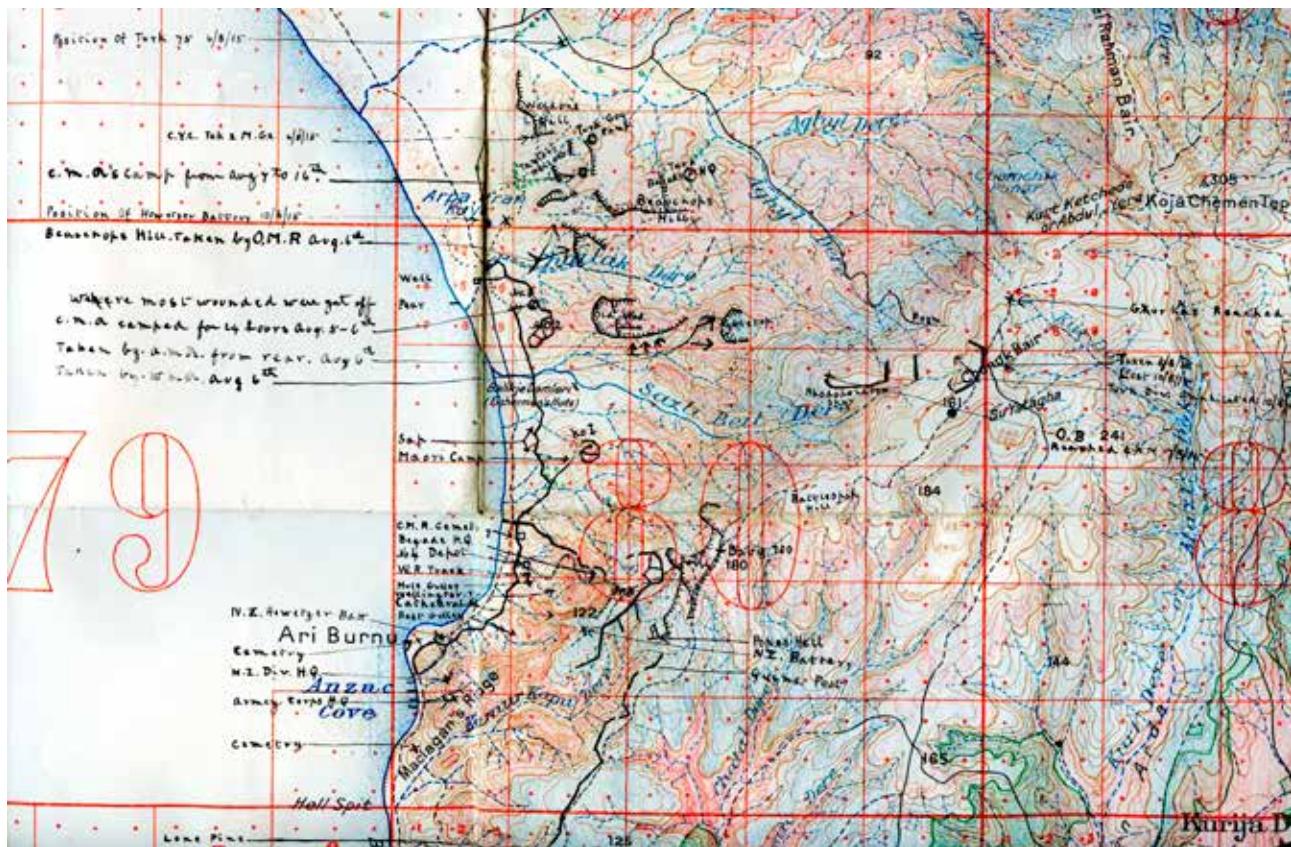
I can't get any word of Bartrop². I am afraid he is gone.

Much love from your loving brother,

John S Barker.

¹ Lieutenant Cyril Hayter KIA 28 August 1915.

² Trooper Ludlow Maynard La Costa Fox Bartop KIA 8 August 1915.



Map of Gallipoli annotated by John Barker.

FOUR

1916: Recovery in England

I must write to someone to have a good groull (growl). Can't think how to spell it - but no matter. This is the limit. It seems as if I were never to leave England. 90 NZMR and 2000 odd of all sorts have been on the *Euripides* (ship) for four days and look no more like starting than it did. We embarked last Saturday at the same wharf I landed at over a year ago and started off down the river and turned back just before getting out to sea and here we are still with about 300 yards of water each side of us.

Letter from John Barker to his sister Doris, 13 December 1916

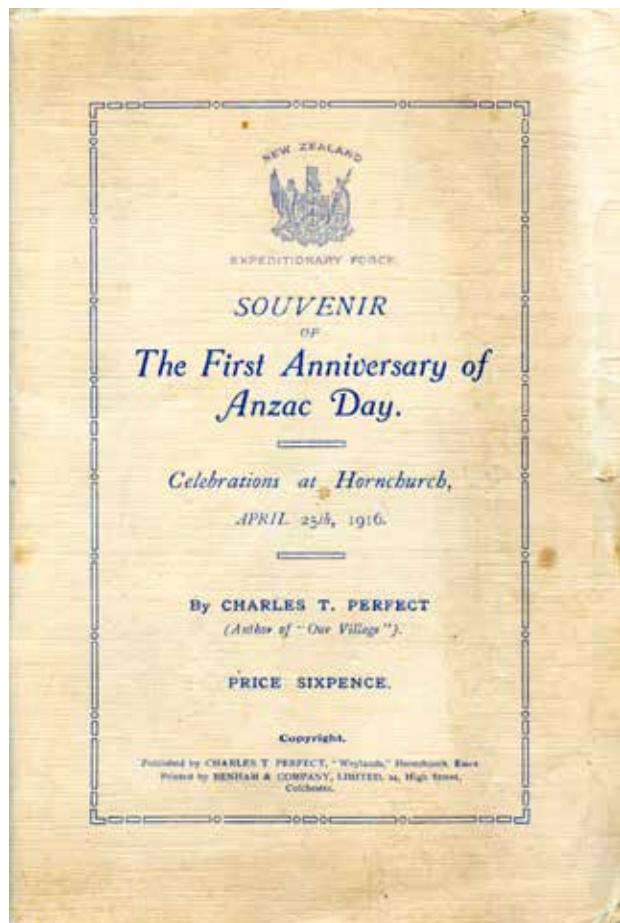
AFTER TREATMENT in military hospitals in Egypt, at the end of 1915 John Barker was transferred to England to recover. By the end of January 1916 he was sent to Hornchurch which was used as a large convalescent hospital to treat the "enterics" (those suffering the effects of enteric fever or typhoid). Other locations mentioned in John's letters, including Sling Camp on Salisbury Plain, are shown on the map below.

John Barker spent a year in England recovering from illness and completing further training. After spending two months from mid-August to mid-October 1915 hospitalised in Alexandria he spent October to November in a London hospital. He was then moved to Hornchurch convalescent hospital east of London (see map). He attended the first commemorative service for

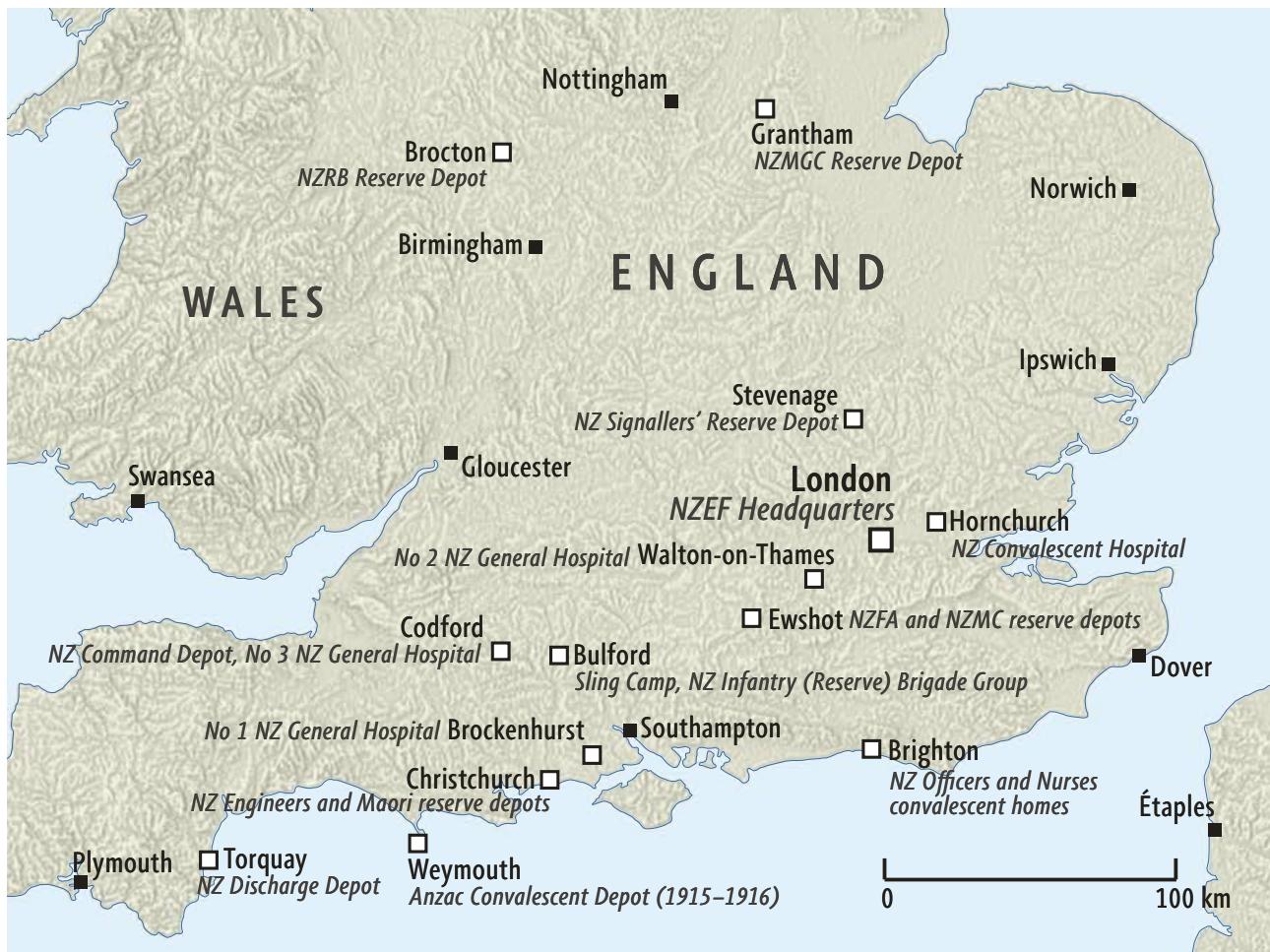


Frances day commemorations at Hornchurch 1916.

the Anzac landings at Hornchurch on 25 April 1916. After a period of light duties he went to the



The first ANZAC day commemoration at Hornchurch, 25 April 1916.



New Zealand army bases and hospitals in England.

NZ Depot at Codford and then a refresher rifleman's course at Hayling Island, near Portsmouth in August 1916.

During 1916, John found time to catch up with family and relatives in England. There are a number of occasions where he met up with Studholme and Barker relatives. He travelled and his photographs highlight his interest in history, agriculture and sheep farming in England. However, the most significant reunion was with his sister, Esther and brothers Paul, Roland and Harold. Photographs of this time show a happy occasion boating and picnicking on the Thames. This would be the last time John would see Paul who was killed the following year during the second battle of Passchendaele in October 1917.

By the end of 1916 John was ready to re-join the action in the Middle East. The CMR had remained there based in Egypt and were taking part in the Sinai Campaign.



"Nipper" Fullerton Smith at Sling Camp in winter 1916 (probably Christopher Fullerton-Smith of the Wellington Mounted Rifles who attended Wanganui Collegiate with John. His brother, Percival Hugh Fullerton-Smith also in the Wellington Mounted Rifles, died at Gallipoli on 7 August 1915).

2 January 1916
5 Wellswood Park, Torquay.

Dearest Salley,¹

You will be sick with me for writing so little lately. But I hope to do better in future. As you see from the address I have shifted camp for a few days. I am here with the Dennistouns who are all very well and just the same as ever (Mr, Mrs and Barbara). I got here yesterday from Camberley (in Surrey) and was taken to a tea fight at a house where three Misses Campbells live near here and afterwards walked round to see Mrs George Dennistoun (jnr) and son. She is looking quite well and as is Colin Pyne who is living with her. The six week old son Patrick looks more like a half fledged chicken than a baby.

The weather has been very windy and wet lately. Today there is a gale blowing and driving rain.

We went to church this morning. Not far to go luckily. A few days ago I went to St Thomas's hospital and saw Charlie Rowan (Four Peaks) who has smashed a leg but seems very cheerful. Also found Roma. Then off to Westminster to hear Christmas Carols. The cathedral was crowded. Being in uniform I was taken right through and got a seat near the choir. Then to Lambeth Palace and right up to the door. It appears Roma and co are treated like family.

Found Roma who showed me all over the palace and had tea but could not get seats for any decent show so had to go to picture palace after which to do things properly we went to the Savoy for dinner, then to Lambeth and Waterloo. Roma is looking as well and happy and is keen on her work. I have had several other trips to London from Camberley. Mostly with Rosalind (Studholme) who is always keen to knock about and see and do things. The latest thing

¹ John sometimes wrote to his sister Doris referring to her as Salley.



Captain John Barker having recovered from hospitalisation.

Lieutenants Russell and Barker at Sling Camp undertaking range finder training.



we went to was "The Merchant of Venice and "Charlies Aunt", rather opposite but jolly good. All went to Hindhead (a village in Surrey) and had lunch at the big hotel there and afternoon tea with Florence Studholme who looks and is a proper old maid. Also went to see them flying at North Camp but got turned out by many sentries.

Had a look round Aldershot and other camps. Had a look at Empress Eugenie's house and visited her chapel and tombs of various Napoleons etc.

Jim¹ is over in France and has got a job as Divisional Intelligence Officer; a jolly good job if he can stick to it I should say.

No news of Paul, Roland or Harold lately.

Just think of you in the middle of summer. Your last letter made me quite homesick. You sweeping out the hall and Kelpie scratching at the door and then his old trick of fighting ones feet. Also sitting up the garden with Jack Dog, give him my love.

Talking of love, Mr Dennistoun sends you his. He is sitting behind me by the fire reading and clearing his throat.

With ever so much love to you and all at home.

Your loving brother, John.

¹ James (Jim) Robert Dennistoun was shot down on the Western Front and later died of wounds as a prisoner in Germany on 9 August 1916. Jim Dennistoun came from Peel Forest and was well known to the Barker family having climbed extensively throughout the Southern Alps with Esther and Doris Barker.



Roland, Esther and John, 13 April 1916.



Barker Brothers at Grove House (owned by English Barker cousins), Southgate, England, 1916.
Standing from left to right: John, Harold; Sitting from left to right Roland, Paul.

30 January 1916
Grove House, Southgate

My dear Doris,

You are splendid writing so many and long letters and so many parcels. This last week I got 3 letters from you and two from mother also a pair of socks from you with green stripes. Also two parcels which I am sending on to Paul. The opossum waistcoat has not come yet. If I can make up my mind to part with it that will also go on to Paul as I am not likely to want it till next winter.

It has been very warm here since the beginning of November. The spring flowers are beginning to come. Even the weeping willows are getting green. During the last week I have been down to the base camp at Hornchurch. There are 1600 men there and 60 officers. A lot are going to be sent back to NZ. They will arrive about the same time as this I expect. All enterics are being kept there indefinitely which is rather a blow to me. On strength of which I am going to keep out of Hornchurch as much as possible. There are a lot I know down there including of my regiment Col Findlay, Marchant, Dailey, Murchison and Chaytor and Wain.

The other day I bought a new Colt automatic pistol which Dorothy and I have been trying the last few days. She is very keen. Tomorrow I am off to Leigh Barker's at Sway for five nights and then on to Bournemouth for two nights to see the Browns – people who have been good to me in hospital. They came to hear of me through David. It is a sickener Roland being still at Cardiff.¹ Old AEG (Rhodes)² won't be beat about getting him out. The old Colonel in charge down there won't even answer the High Commissioner's letters. Lord Plunket and Lord Islington are also both trying.

Last Wednesday I met Rosalind Studholme and knocked around town with her going to see "Romance" which was a bit beyond me. On Thursday night on my way home from Hornchurch I went with Dailey and Murchison to Simpson's in the Strand. The place where they always have saddle of mutton and then on to "Who is He" which is very good. Yesterday we all played tennis on the court here. Every night we are expecting an air raid but it never comes.

On Saturday we motored to St Albans, a rum old town, and had a good look round the old cathedral. It was market day and so we bought food for today. I have just sent a weekend cable so hope it arrives all right. I couldn't think how to explain that I am likely to be in England for some time.

I must stop now.

Much love to you and mother from your loving brother, John.

¹ Roland was recuperating in a specialist orthopaedic hospital in Cardiff to heal his arm which had been smashed by a Turkish bullet on Hill 60 at Gallipoli.

² Arthur Edgar Gravenor Rhodes, OBE NZ Member of Parliament (for Gladstone) and Mayor of Christchurch.

17 February 1916
Gray Towers, Hornchurch.

My dear Doris,

I have just got your letter thanking me for the brooch. I am so glad you like it.

Well here I am at the NZ Base Camp and likely to remain here, as all enterics are being kept here indefinitely as they find too many are infectious. All Canadians and Australians have been sent home and it looks as if we might be. This is a very good camp. Today I am Orderly Officer and have just finished a round of all the huts and cook shops etc. And now have to write a beastly report.

Today it is raining hard. Yesterday it was clear and bright but a very cold wind. The day before rain and wind. On that day about 100 went off to NZ and 400 to Egypt and another 200 including me to a memorial service at St Margaret's Westminster. The little church just outside the Abbey. We marched through from the embankment past the Houses of Parliament. We had a scratch band of our own and made quite a stir. There were a lot of Australians there too as well as a crowd of colonial people. In the afternoon I went to a reception at the Armourers and Brasiers club which was most interesting.

Tonight Jardine (a Wanganui Old Boy) and I are going to dinner with the Empsons¹. There is such a row going on and I cannot think of anything to say. I am quite well and sick of doing nothing. I do hope Mother's foot is alright and that you are all well.

Your loving brother, John Barker.

¹ Walter Empson was the Wanganui Collegiate Headmaster 1888 – 1909.



River trip at Datchet (on the North Bank of the Thames in Berkshire) when Esther, Paul and John were on leave.



Paul and Esther at Datchet. This was the last time John and Esther were to see Paul alive.

13 December 1916

My dear Doris,

I must write to someone to have a good groull (growl). Can't think how to spell it - but no matter. This is the limit. It seems as if I were never to leave England. 90 NZMR and 2000 odd of all sorts have been on the *Euripides* (ship) for four days and look no more like starting than it did. We embarked last Saturday at the same wharf I landed at over a year ago and started off down the river and turned back just before getting out to sea and here we are still with about 300 yards of water each side of us.¹

It is cold, dull, nothing to do, no papers only rotten cigarettes and other things too numerous to mention. On the other hand she is a fine ship and clean. Has good food and I share a good cabin with MacIntyre. The accommodation for the men is not bad either. She was leading ship of the second line in the first Australian convoy and is 15,000 tons. We are moored in a long line of TBDs (Torpedo Boat Destroyers) and submarines which keep coming and going continuously. Also several training ships are quite close (old wooden ships).

The greater part of the men are on 6 weeks leave from the East. And we have represented every conceivable unit, even tankers. Tomorrow we hope to get on shore for a march and so as to get a bit of exercise. I will cable as soon as I get to Egypt but it might be some time yet.

Your ever loving brother, John.

¹ Eventually John sailed from Devonport, England on 25 December 1916 en route to Egypt via Malta.



John visits Esther at Codford camp before embarking for the Middle East in late 1916.

FIVE

1917–18: The Anzac Mounted Division in the Middle East

Doris asks if I realise that I have been away for nearly four years. We all do. And four of us have just finished giving our opinions of wars after reading our home letters. Here we are after nearly four years wandering, sitting in a tent at 4 pm in one of the last places on earth and the temperature up to about 110 degrees and a cool day at that.

Letter to John Barker's mother, Emily Barker, 5 August 1918

FOLLOWING THE WITHDRAWAL from Gallipoli in December 1915 the CMR returned to Egypt. While most of New Zealand's military units were transferred to the Western Front in early 1916 a New Zealand Mounted Rifles (NZMR) Brigade was formed comprising 1760 men and 2100 horses. This brigade was part of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF) consisting of British Yeomanry¹, several infantry divisions, Australian Light Horse (ALH), NZMR and cameliers of the Imperial Camel Corps (ICC).

In March 1916 the New Zealand and Australian Mounted Brigades were transferred to a new Australian and New Zealand Mounted Division. This new Division was placed under the command of Major General Harry Chauvel, an Australian who had commanded the 1st Light Horse Brigade and later the 1st Australian Division at Gallipoli. The new Division was known as the Anzac Mounted Division (AMD).

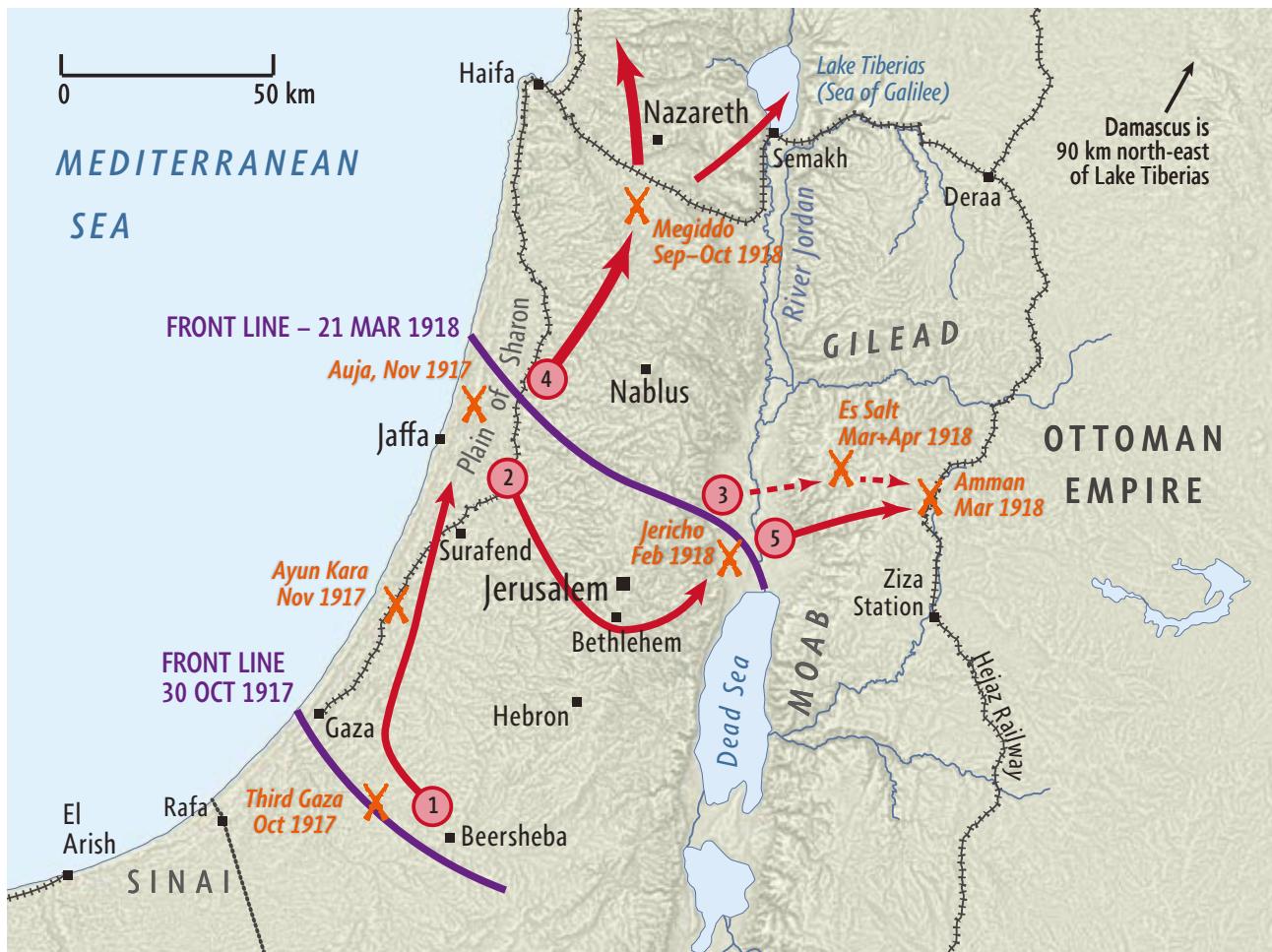
Reunited with their horses, the AMD made a major contribution to the Middle East campaign utilising the skills in horsemanship and mobile warfare that they had trained for. In Sinai and Palestine the mounted rifles were very effective in their ability to patrol and carry out reconnaissance over a much larger area than could be

covered on foot. The mounted rifles were therefore very mobile but were lightly armed and had fewer riflemen than a standard infantry battalion.

After a period of acclimatisation in Egypt, the New Zealand Mounted troops were sent to guard the Suez Canal. This was in response to the impending threat from the Ottoman armies following the release of their forces from the Gallipoli campaign. The campaign later moved from defence of the Suez Canal to seizing control of the Sinai Peninsula back from the Ottoman forces. By the end of 1916 the Ottomans had withdrawn from all remaining outposts on the Sinai Peninsula except Rafa on the Sinai-Palestine border. After a day of fierce fighting on 9 January 1917, Rafa was captured, and the entire Sinai Peninsula was in the hands of the EEF.

Due to the transfer of many experienced units to the Western Front to counter a massive German offensive in late March 1918, the EEF was unable to undertake any significant action in Palestine for the next six months. During this time the NZMR Brigade was stationed in the Jordan Valley helping to protect the EEF's right flank. This was not a place the troops enjoyed, not the least as it was mosquito infested resulting in many cases of malaria. In late March 1918 the Brigade took part in an unsuccessful raid on Es Salt and Amman. This raid, and a second failed

¹ British Territorial Army cavalry.



Palestine.

attempt on Es Salt in April, are indicated by the broken red arrows.

With reinforcements from the Indian Army, the EEF was able to launch a major assault against the Ottomans in the Battle of Megiddo in September–October 1918 (indicated by the red arrow labelled 4). With the Ottoman armies defeated and in retreat, the AMD crossed the River Jordan and captured Amman (indicated by the red arrow labelled 5).

This offensive was aided by an Arab rebel army, which sabotaged the Hejaz Railway and advanced into Syria in September–October 1918. There are a number of references in John Barker's letters to the AMD having to protect the considerable numbers of captured Ottomans from the vengeful Arabs forces.

Following the Battle of Megiddo, Palestine, Jordan and southern Syria were rapidly con-

quered by the EEF and its allies, effectively bringing an end to the war in the Middle East.

John Barker landed at El Arish, Northern Sinai on 1 February 1917 and was seconded for duty as Aide-de-Camp (ADC) to Major General Harry Chauvel, commander of the AMD. He served under Chauvel until 27 August 1917. John Barker's photographs of this period show some of the key moments of the campaign. He took photos of the commander of the Turkish 53rd Division who was captured by an ALH regiment during the failed First Battle of Gaza in late March 1917. His carefully annotated photograph albums show the key Anzac commanders watching the Second Battle of Gaza a month later in April 1917.

After his role as ADC to General Chauvel, John Barker returned to the CMR in August 1917 as second in command of the 1st squadron.



Sir Archibald Murray visits the ANZAC Division at Sheik Zowaid. From left to right: Brigadier General Edward Chaytor, Sir Archibald Murray and General Harry Chauvel (John served as Chauvel's Aide de Camp for the first half of 1917). It is likely that the Officer standing behind to the left of Chaytor is John.

Chauvel wrote to him on 6 September 1917 to thank him and wish him well.

As the momentum of the Palestine campaign gathered John was involved with one of the pivotal battles – the capture of Beersheba as part of the Third Battle of Gaza in late October and early November 1917. After an overnight march on their horses, the NZMR captured Tel el Saba, which was on the approach to the town and fiercely defended. This action made possible the capture of Beersheba. The battle of Beersheba later received fame in the film *The Light Horsemen* showing the ALH successfully charging the town's defenders on horseback. During this period John Barker also met the Australian poet Banjo Paterson and TE Lawrence (of Lawrence of Arabia fame).

In September 1918 the AMD was down to 4,000 men with many suffering from malaria and other diseases. However, this force joined up with General Chaytor's 11,000 troops from a number of countries including India, the British West Indies and Jewish volunteers of the Royal Fusiliers. The final push began on 19 September with a massive artillery bombardment on the coast. The AMD played a supporting role in the Jordan Valley preventing the Ottoman 4th Army from reinforcing other enemy forces.

Attention was then turned to capturing Es Salt and Amman (capital of Jordan), the latter



falling on 25 September. The CMR, assisted by the Wellington Mounted Rifles (WMR), captured the 'Stone Tower' or citadel, a key part of the Amman defences. John's diary had the following account of the climax of the battle for Amman:

27/9/18. To C.O. C.M.R. (*Earlier in Field Message Book and in handwriting of Capt. G. Mathias signed by J.S. Barker.*)

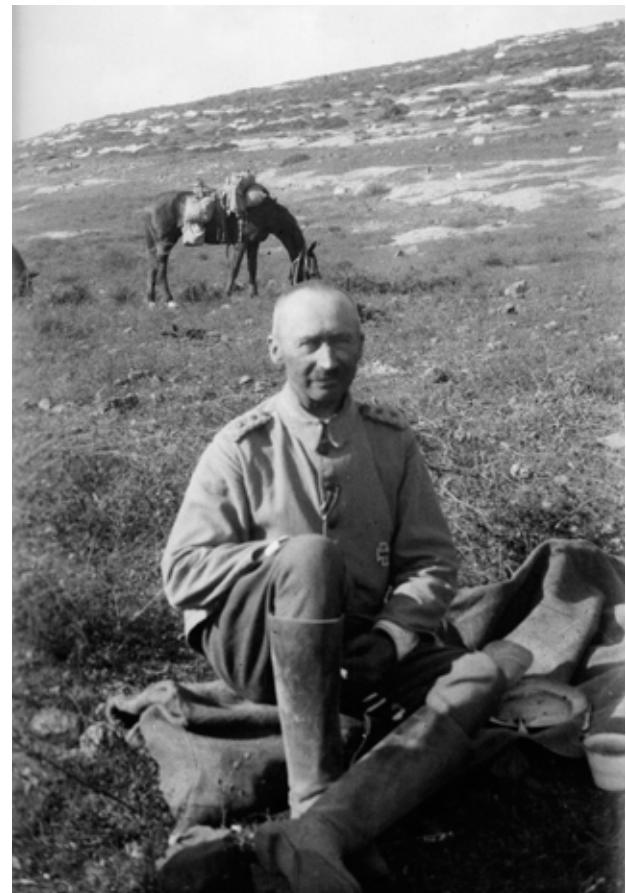
Report on the 10th Squadron, N.Z.M.R. during operations leading to the capture of Amman on 25/9/1918.

On receiving orders to proceed into action at N 142 W. 340. the 10th Squadron advanced in support of the remainder of the C.M.R. Regt. Very shortly an opportunity arose to support the firing line mounted down the ridge leading to the citadel. Lieut. Wandens troop advanced at the gallop supported by the remainder of the squadron. Lieut. Wandens on finding the ground which he proposed to dismount under fire crossed the ridge to find cover. Whilst crossing he came under heavy fire at close range. He was shot dead. His troop immediately dismounted under cover and advanced on foot to recover their Troop Leader's body, in doing so taking two M.Gs (machine guns). The Squadron then advanced on foot, taking the ridge north of the Citadel together with 35 prisoners, 19 horses and 9 mules. After giving covering fire for Australian and N.Z. Troops



Columns of prisoners including Ottoman forces and some Germans.

The German Commander of Amman (a Colonel) still wearing his Iron Cross. John notes that he was drinking tea on the road to Jericho on 26 September 1918. This was the day after Amman was captured and it appears that John escorted him as a prisoner.



who were then pushing through the town, the Squadron returned to their horses, afterwards watering in Amman and had their evening meal in the Amphitheatre subsequently taking over the prisoners of the Regt amounting to 77 officers and 1,246 O/R (Other Ranks)

Signed J.S.Barker. Capt. O.C. 10th C.M.R.

Following the capture of Amman the NZMR crossed the Jordan on 5 October and rode on to Jericho. Three days later they rode out of the Valley for the last time. After resting in Jerusalem they went onto Richon le Zion (8 km south of Tel Aviv).

After the failure of the Gallipoli campaign the NZMR had taken part in one of the most decisive Allied victories of the Great War. Three Ottoman Armies had been destroyed and more than 76,000 prisoners captured. With Palestine, Jordan and Syria conquered, the Ottomans signed an armistice on 30 October 1918. This was followed by Germany's surrender on 11 November.



Amman, Capital of Jordan.

On 25 September 1918 Mounted Rifles played a key role in taking the city, capturing large numbers of prisoners. That evening John and CMR troops had their dinner in the old Roman Amphitheatre which can be clearly seen in the photo.

4 March 1917

My dear Salley,

Have just come across two half written letters to you so will start again and hope for better luck. We have taken up another seaside residential section. We have a few young palms to hide amongst but not much shelter in all. Got here yesterday and are just about settled down. Shifting nearly drives me mad. The amount of office gear in the way of typewriters and chairs nearly sends me mad. It took 150 camels to shift us about two miles of soft sand from the desert hard country to this soft sandy beach. The old Turk aeroplanes have been having a good look at us up till today when they got the anti-aircraft guns up and nearly got him. They have not dropped any bombs of late.

Very many thanks for the photograph of yourself. But I do not like it too well as it is not a good likeness or you have changed more than you have a right to. Please take another when next you have one taken so as to compare them. I want one of Mother too.

Our patrols go beyond Khan Yunis every day and bring back the most beautiful oranges. Some have been well within sight of Gaza. But Shallal will have to be taken before we go any further. But I should not talk of these things and you will read them in the paper before you get this. All about here must have been a big town at one time. Plenty of broken glass and marble, bits of mosaic and a few copper coins. The money is mostly Greek. I came out in orders as a Captain not long ago.

First interruption: a man wants a pass to go to Romani to get some kit.

They are a rum lot. We have nearly every imaginable unit represented here. It is getting worse that we are no longer the AMD but the 1st Imperial Mounted Division with a lot of yeomanry in with us. The rum part is that the name still sticks and will do I think. My Clerk is a Scottish Horseman and stutters but is a really good man. It is beautiful night about 10 and I must to bed before someone else wants me. The latest reforming two Divisions is to try to make two respectable ones by dividing the colonials up and putting in 4 brigades of yeomanry from Egypt.

A few days ago three horses turned up for me. I have hardly used them as they had a rough time coming up. They look first rate. They were picked out by Banjo Paterson the poet man who I got to know at El Arish and is the chief remount man for the AIF (Australian Imperial Force). I have only ridden one a chestnut cob. He has evidently been a great pet. He is always looking for something to eat and hates sand and doesn't mind showing what he thinks. But once he gets hard he ought to take a lot of killing. I suppose Pat (his cousin Pat Barker) will be home now. Lucky beggar and yet I would not be anywhere else except here at present.

Your loving brother, John.

31 March 1917

My dearest Mother,

We got into camp late last night after 7 days of weary wandering. The first echelon of the DHQ (Desert Head Quarters) met the second on here on a ripping good camping ground. They had a big mail for us too. Four letters from you and two from Doris. A small parcel of chocolate and socks just the thing from you two weekly Presses and several other letters. I was so tired I didn't read your letters last night but woke up at 5 and have just finished them. How sad poor old Grannie (Effie Studholme) having died, you will feel the loss deeply I am afraid. I got news of her death two weeks ago. A few lines scribbled on the outside of a letter from Esther but it was so badly defaced I only guessed it. What a wonderfully active time you all seem to be having, you never seem to be still. How very nice of Grannie to have left you the cottage. I believe you will be able to make use of it more than the other members of the family. I am very glad Michael¹ got something as eldest grandson.

We are camped on the top of a 30 foot cliff above the sea. For all the world like Waimate cottage. Except that we are in range of the Turks guns at long range and the ground is sandy and falls away into a fresh water lake with palms all round but half a mile away. The larks are singing and here comes the HQ goat to see who I am. He was captured as a kid at Medaba and is great pet. Well I must be off for a bathe before breakfast. The camps stretch away from here for miles and already clouds of dust are rising. It is quite cool this morning but two days ago the heat was awful. Hundreds of camels just flopped down and died. It surprised me that they should go out before horses and men.

Later. It is just bed time. There was no time during the day and I missed the mail. This morning I had to go into Khan Yunis about six miles back. When last seen it was a beautiful valley all peach orchards but in one short week it has become a dusty town with a big railway station. Throngs of our men, camels, motor lorries and guns.

I went to see the two guns the Wellington Regiment got the other day. By the way it was Dick Black who got them and it was he who tried shooting with them with great success. I was loudly greeted by my old friends off the *Euphrates*, the tankers. They are there with their machines. And showed Capt Jordan and I all their workings. I can tell you little of the last weeks fighting except our Div did well as usual and were I am afraid the only bright spot in the week's work. We all had to contend with the powers that be who did their utmost for the Turks. I got through my small duties without a hitch which has given me great relief. We had a very

¹ John's eldest brother Michael Studholme Barker who served with the Imperial Camel Corps.

tiring march home again. It was hard four Wellington officers being hit and all friends. Wilder, Gordon Williams, Somerville and Herick. They are all doing well we are told. Only 50 casualties in the Division and 600 prisoners not counting what we layed out. Old Fitzherbert¹ of Rangitikei died well for a man of 60 odd. The captured guns were a sight all covered with wounded when they were brought in. There were no Red Cross nurses to hand for the moment. Don't you think it would be a good idea to get Esther to come home? I am sure she is dying to - only thinks she ought to remain in England.

What would it feel like if the war was finished and we could all go home again? Yet I would rather be here than anywhere at present. No word from Michael (Barker) for a long time. I think he must be up with the ICC (Imperial Camel Corps). They were in the distance the other day but there has been no chance to go and see for myself. This job rather ties me. I get about a good deal but always on some job or other. It is very interesting though as you get to know all the brass hats and know what is going on.

Much love from your son, John.

¹ Trooper Arthur Richard Fitzherbert of Marton was the oldest person to have served in the NZMR Brigade during the First World War. He died on 27 March 1917 of wounds suffered during the First Battle of Gaza aged 63.

25 April 1917

My dearest Mother,

It is no end of a time since I wrote I am afraid. The last week or more we have been constantly on the move. We had a big battle in which we rammed our head against a brick wall. Our Division did quite well and did not have many casualties. That reminds me today I heard definitely that Rory Priest¹ was killed. I am so sorry he turned out so well besides being such a nice fellow. Roland will be very disgusted. It is hard also after seeing so much too. The first news I had was from two camel men who I stopped out on the plain. I was anxious to find out definitely that Mike (Barker) was not up. The two said that they had not suffered heavily but had bad luck in losing their OC (Operating Commander) who got hit through the chest just above the heart while they were trying to dig in on an exposed ridge under a heavy fire and must have died they thought. We are all getting ready for a big attack which we expect as the Turks are getting very strong and are sure to have a good cut at us soon.

By the way the greatest news of all is that I now belong to the Desert Column and am laying amongst the Tommies with a vengeance. Three days ago a General got the boot and General Chetwode took over East Force. General Chauvel taking command of Desert Column and General Chaytor getting the Anzac Div. Col Meldrum getting the NZ Brigade. All just what we wanted but so far only temporary commands. I naturally wanted to stay with the Division so as to be under General Chaytor and work with Arthur as junior ADC but the general insisted on my coming on with him. I feel quite honoured over the argument which ensued but worst luck General Chauvel had his own way and here I am. Of course it is really much the best for me but it would have been just the thing if Arthur and I could have got together. There is not half as much to do here but of a better class.

Fate seems to not intend me to get near the firing line just at present but who knows what the next change will be. Well here I am sitting on my little chair in my little bivie under a big fig tree in an old orchard out on the plains east of Khan Yunis. The day has been a brute, the worst this summer. About 115 (46 celsius) in proper shade. We have electric light. It has a disadvantage though as it attracts all the bugs within miles and they are crawling into my bed.

A huge black scorpion visited me last night but he got slain with a boot. I am in the very best of health and don't feel the heat, dust or glare a bit so there is no need to worry about me still. In fact this

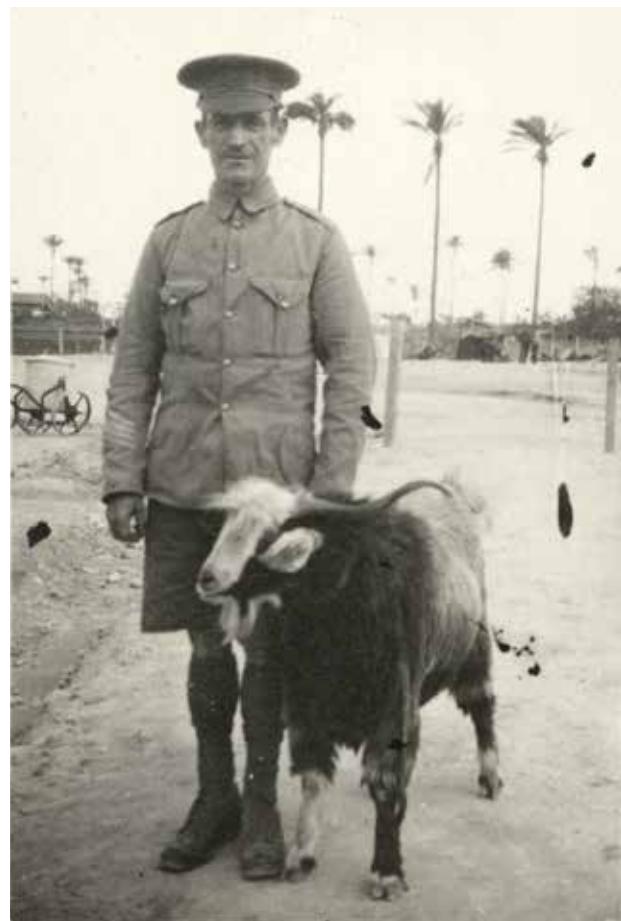
¹Captain Roy Simpson Priest of Woodbury was killed in action on 19 April 1917 while serving with the Imperial Camel Corps. Roy Priest came from Woodbury.



Horses drinking from the Sweet Water canal – a freshwater canal off the Nile River dug 1861 – 63 as part of the construction of the Suez Canal.



John and Captain Taylor at Moascar railway siding.



Mascot for the Scottish Horse, Ismailia.

is rather the chance of a lifetime. I must get to bed now as the day has been a long one and a tiring two motor trips of 14 miles. One with Arthur who I picked up at DHQ and took to our old camp at Bealah on the cliff edge. We made time for a bathe.

The old camp is on a grand site. Fairly cool even on a day like today. It is wonderful how the horses and men stand the heat and camels just fall down and die 24 hours later. The Khamsin¹ is over and tonight is delightful. But the day has been a brute. There is nothing that I would like more than a few letters and the worst of it is there are some wandering about close. They were at Belah two days ago. Spent a rotten morning in camp fixing things but quite a decent afternoon riding to Khan Younis to see the AIF paymaster and see about some trouble about water. More guns, more troops, how they are going to water them all I do not know. There is a wonderful well in the village which provides enough water for the village of 5,000 as well as one Division of Light Horse and no end of transport.

Have been interrupted by several visitors. It is late.

Your loving son, John.

¹ A hot southerly wind that blows regularly in Egypt and over the Red Sea for about 50 days, commencing about the middle of March.



Turkish commander of the 53rd Division and his entourage.



Staff officers at Esari about to undertake a reconnaissance of Beersheba in October 1917.

13 May 1917

My dear Mother,

Got two letters from you, one from Doris. March 13 to 25th. Also a weekly Press and a parcel today. You don't know how much I look forward to them. As for the parcel, it was in perfect order. I have now a very good supply of singlets and underclothing. And have the best of food so do not trouble about them till I get a harder job. Am much looking forward to the cake you mention in the letter though.

I wish we had as much confidence in the Russian Revolution as you have. What if Russia climbs down to Germany? The Mt Cook trip sounds ripping, what a pity if you and Doris don't go.

Roland seems to be having a pretty thin time of it. I am sending over tomorrow to try to get his glasses which I find are still in the 8th (South Canterbury Squadron of the CMR). So glad my dogs are all well. They will all have died of old age if this war goes on for many more years, before I see them again. You speak of Roy Priest and his Captaincy, how sad for his people the next news of him. Yes I have never been better in my life and do not mind the heat a bit.

I am afraid I have rather forgotten the little camera of late. The last fight there was too much to do. Your notion that the camel man has to endure more than the cavalry is all wrong. He can carry all his household besides stocks of water. As for Mike (Barker) seeing me I haven't seen the NZ Brigade for weeks so it doesn't make much odds what he is in as long as he is in the Desert Column. No word of Mike up here as yet, he must be still in hospital. I have written but no reply.

Yes, the submarines are bad they have sunk the last English mail as well as a month's supply of milk for us. Paul (his brother Paul Barker who at this time was fighting with the Royal Field Artillery in Northern France and Belgium) writes very optimistically the other day. Not much chance of turning into the successful crusaders for a bit. We are up against it just now. Please get Father to write and tell me some of the year's doings. I am living in hopes of that cable, in a billy, turning up soon, also the housewife.¹ Can't get decent thread in Egypt.

Must shut up for tonight as it is late.

Your loving son, John.



CMR troopers preparing to fire a Hotchkiss Machine Gun. Turkish and German bombing raids caused a number of casualties including horses.

Later. The General has just told me that he wishes me to take on Camp Commandant of Desert Column as the present man is getting command of a battalion. I have agreed to do as he wishes but he thinks GHQ (General Heard Quarters) may block me from getting it as I am too junior. It will be a bit of a handful I fear but is a good job if it comes off. I don't know to be glad or sorry as the present job is easy and interesting.

¹ Small sewing and mending kit.

I wonder what you think of all my shifts. They all lead me away from actual fighting and all my friends. A note from Mike at last. He is up here. I must have passed through his Company today. With luck I will see him tomorrow as it is my day off and he is not more than 7 miles off.



German aircraft captured at Fukhari, September 1917.



Hyderabad Lancer. The Egyptian Expeditionary Force comprised many different nationalities including the Indian Army which played a crucial role in the latter stages of the 1918 Palestine campaign.



CMR Officers undertaking compass training. John is closest to the camera.



Members of a Hong Kong/Singapore field battery in action dubbed "the Bing Boys".



British troops on road to Wadi Kalf.



Colonel Powles and Major Murchison at Marakeb.



CMR Officers. Seated from left to right Major Hurst, Lt Colonel Findlay and Major Murchison. John is standing on the right (unknown Officer on the left).



Major Charles Hercus, DSO and OBE. Charles Hercus was assistant director of medical services to the Australian and NZ Mounted Division, and had served earlier at Gallipoli.

Major Hercus treated John Barker for enteric fever and malaria and was credited with saving his life.



John's bivvy at Fukhari, Sept 18 – 23 October 1917.



John (standing to the far right) with a football team. John appears to be a coach in this photo but he himself was a member of the CMR Officer's football team. Sport and horse racing were a popular pastime for troops who spent a very long time from home during the Middle East campaign.



Shellal Mosaic – flooring of Church dedicated to St George 561AD.



A detachment of CMR troops with Major Murchison closest to the camera.



NZ Mounted troops enjoying a swim in the Dead Sea.



Horses watering at Esari.



Troop train on Jerusalem line.



Locals fetching water at Beni Sela. John took a number of photos of the diverse and colourful people of the region that the Mounted Rifles met during the Middle East campaign.



Women carrying water urns at El Arish.



Locals at El Arish.



Locals at El Arish.



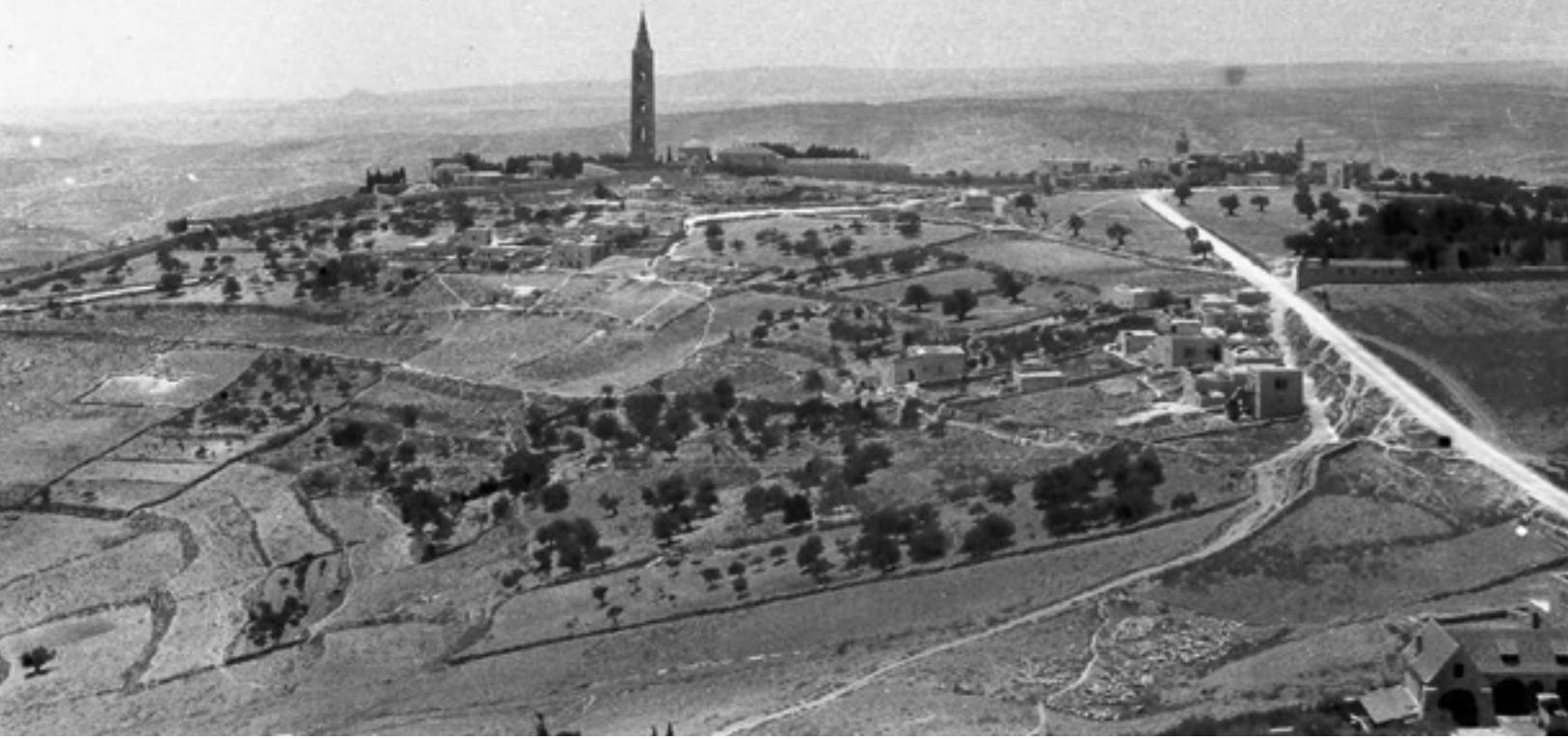
Man carrying rock for reservoir for the new Jerusalem water supply.



Wailing wall, Jerusalem.



Boat on the Ismailia Canal.



Russian church, Mount of Olives viewed from Mount Scopus.

11 August 1917

Dear Mother

Just a line before going to bed. At last the CMR have woken up and asked for my immediate return. It is quite time if I was ever going back and is the third time I have applied to. I am very glad in a way but am sure to dislike it after so long away. The point is that if I am ever to get promoted I must go back. It will be some weeks before I can hand over this job as they have no one ready to take over.

It is getting late but no one is making a shift to go to bed as the camels are raiding Sara Redoubt. Michael's Company is not out so there is no worry about him.

The show should be starting in a few minutes. I wonder what luck they will have. It is about 12 miles from here but I expect we will be able to hear the guns. There is much strafing going on as something has gone wrong with the telephone line.

14 August 1917

The raid was a failure, what they got not compensating for the loss of two men and several wounded.

I was over at the Regiment two nights ago. They are all well but very sick of night stunts. They come onto the beach to rest on the 18th and I join them on the 22nd if all goes well. It is doubtful which squadron I will go to.

16 August 1917

This will not do never getting this letter finished.

Four letters from you and Doris up to June 3rd. Also a pair of socks. You speak of the photos of the Gaza fight. The majority of the best films are lost. Some rotter who wanted to get copies took them to Cairo and lost them. I thought that I had mentioned that I still have got Aunt Fanny's glasses. And they are still in good order having been most useful. They have been lost once and stolen once. The time they were stolen I bought them back through an agent. There is still a chance of getting Roland's as I have a good idea where they are.

How nice being down at Waimate again. I am so sorry that Mrs Priest's run has changed hands without coming into Barker hands. Was the 10,000 just for goodwill or did it include stock and improvements? There is plenty to do now just handing over to Cox, an Australian who has been here for several days. The next job is to divide out my belongings. Send part to Cairo and pack the rest over to the beach along with myself.

Yesterday there was a big reconnaissance around Beersheba. The C in C was out. We went by car from here, 17 cars in all. I with two breakdown cars with mechanics and spare parts to bring up the rear. We had a sick car every few miles for over 50 miles there and back. You feel just like a jelly after a day across country.

We went just short of the railway five miles South of Beersheba.

Your loving son, John.

A letter written in Diary form covering 17 March to 10 April 1918

17 March 1918

A wild and stormy day but is showing signs of breaking. Everyone is much depressed. The last four days have worked havoc with men and horses but a few bright days and it will be all forgotten. We went to a most interesting service at St Georges Cathedral. The enthronement of the English Bishop in Jerusalem.

All the heads of the other churches in Jerusalem were present with the exception of the Roman Catholics. Even the Muslim Mufti was there. The bishop had been kept out up till now for political reasons. All movements are cancelled.

18 March 1918

Fine at last with a fair amount of sun. Had the morning off so had another look around the city. Was in the Mosque of Oman and the Mosque Alexa. It was originally built by the Knights Templar in 555 on the sight of Solomon's Porch. Has a pulpit presented by Saladin. The afternoon has been taken up with a conference held in this house.

18 March 1918

All went to a presentation of medals by the Duke of Connaught held just inside the Jaffa Gate inside the old barrack square. All the knobs of Palestine were there. Went for a long walk around the Garden of Gethsemane and Kedron valley. This evening went to see a model of the Temple and the stages up to the present day.

19 March 1918

Today has been a day of bustle getting ready to move and tonight we march into the Jordan Valley.

20 March 1918

Had an easy four hour night march to this place $\frac{3}{4}$ way down into the Jordan Valley. Got to bed about two this morning. We are about 5 miles above Jericho. It is a splendid view. All the Jordan Valley and Dead Sea just below and the hills beyond. The reputed Mount of the Temptation is just close to us. Also three monasteries. It is very hot here after the cold of Jerusalem. We are just on sea level.

21 March 1918

A day of watching. The infantry have spent the day fighting over the fords. They have one or two bridges over now and have a firm footing on the other side. We are waiting orders to go down and cross. We are too far away to see much of the fighting but can see the troops moving and the shells bursting.

22 March 1918

Still doing very little.

23 March 1918

Went down to the bridge built the day before at Hagla about three miles from the mouth of the river. Crossed on foot. Auckland had just crossed and done splendidly on the flats. Lt. Tate getting killed whilst charging a squadron took 41 prisoners and killed 48 in day. All the heads were there, C in C, 20th Corps, Sir Philip Chetwode; General Shea 60th (London) Div etc. In evening marched to Ain Hajla near Jordan. Spent a few hours and went on to bridges.

24 March 1918

Crossed after 1st and 2nd Light Horse and before the batteries and ICC. The 1st (Australian Light Horse) going north, NZ to Shunet Nimrin on Es Salt road. The 2nd with DHQ (Desert Head Quarters) and ICC east to push up the hills and get onto the plateau. At 3 pm when we were just on the foothills, we spotted about a 1,000 cavalry mostly Sacatians¹ who ducked before we could get a slap at them. There are splendid crops of barley on the plain East of the river and plenty of running water, trees and green grass. Thousands of Bedouins and sheep. The Bedouins are very friendly coming out with knives, swords and rifles of all ages. The Sacatians are at war with the Arabs so therefore are at war with us. They were imported into this district to keep the Arabs in order but are up against all kinds. We then started the 4,000 foot climb. Climbed all night by a track that is supposed to be fit for wheel traffic but is an utter impossibility and is hard for horses. We had to send back all our limbers, guns and baggage camels.

Then it came onto rain and never stopped for 30 hours. There was nothing but mud water and slipping horses. The camels had a terrible time. At dawn on the 25th one regiment was on top of the tail of the column getting up after dark that night. By this time we had 3 or 4 hundred Arab cavalry. They were a wild lot chasing imaginary Turks and Sacatians. Having left everything back on the camels and being wet through we were a sorry mob. That evening at 7 as the last of the ICC got up we started on. It was very slow along tracks in country where our maps are useless and an unknown enemy and a column up to 8 miles long. Raining hard and our guide deserted.

By dawn this morning 26th we struck the NZMR out mounts. We found Dick Black and Maurice Chambers covered with mud.

¹ John Barker refers throughout to Sacatians, better known as Circassians. This ethnic group were expelled from Russia during the 19th century and settled in parts of the Middle East including Palestine. During the First World War they were allied to the Ottoman Empire.

By this time it had stopped raining but there was a dense fog. We then joined the NZ Brigade for the march on Es Salt but, the 1st Brigade and infantry having forced the passes. About 8 we camped down and the sun came out but it is still cold. Spent the whole day drying and washing. It is wonderful how no one seems the worse for it. Three nights without sleep and wet and cold for most of it. This is a splendid grazing country with plenty of water and little timber. We are camped about four miles from Es Salt. During the day we have gathered up about 150 prisoners, those who could not run fast enough. The NZ Brigade got 30 Germans and 3 field guns, getting very few casualties.

27 March 1918

A beautiful morning but a cold night. All the dew had frozen on my oil sheet. Had a splendid sleep as I had taken all precautions and collected a lot of scrub for bedding. Am sitting beside the road while the ICC are passing. We are on our way to attack Amman a few miles off. It ought to be a great day. Now they are slinging shell after shell. All onto the same spot half a mile away from us and everyone else.

Later. We came to the top of a big hill looking down towards Amman about one and a half miles off down in a deep gorge. The NZ Brigade deployed to the right crossing the Wadi Amman and attacking from the South; the ICC dismounted and attacking straight down the ridges. The Second Light Horse to the left and attacked. All closed in slowly and opposed by heavy machine gun fire. The NZers got across the line and its demolition started. By dark all had closed in to within half a mile of the town but they had numerous machine guns and about 8 guns and advance was impossible so we camped down where we were. A fine but cold night.

28 March 1918

Attack resumed at 6 am. Very little progress made and several heavy counter attacks. We got our left badly crumpled and lost 20 missing. Two battalions of infantry came up but achieved nothing. Fighting ceased at dark except for two counter attacks which were squashed. Two more battalions and mountain guns came up at dark. A warm night.

29 March 1918

Holding on but Turks are very restless. It is now 3.30 pm and hardly a shot fired. Both sides waiting for reinforcements. Fighting is a ghastly business. It is clouding up and looks like rain. What will tonight bring us I wonder as orders are out. I am not too hopeful.

30 March 1918

It is now 5 pm, cold and cloudy but not raining. It rained hard all night but only showery during day. All our Brigades attacked at 2 am and made good headway taking 250 prisoners. The rest of the day has been taken up in repelling about 7 counter attacks in which they have lost heavily. The NZers have done splendidly but all to no purpose as the enemy is being heavily reinforced from the North and I think we are sure to withdraw a bit during the night. We are still short of the tunnel and viaduct which we came to blow up and would sever communications south for months. It has been an anxious day.

In the early morning we watched several hundred enemy mass for an attack on the left of the NZ Brigade. They came down in a dense mob onto a very thin line. But our people were splendid. Stood up to them and thinned them off and then into them and drove the remainder back in an ever dwindling mob. We have practically no guns and the Turks have about 12. Their force is about 5,000 men with 500 Germans. The Jordan is in flood and the bridges swept away. Our guns are bogged miles away and we cannot evacuate our wounded. In fact it is a rough house. But our people have put up a splendid fight and things can't get much worse so they must improve. In fact they are not as bad as they sound.

We can look down on the old Roman Citadel and Amphitheatre but is in part ruins. About here every rise has an old castle on it. They have been built ages ago before the days of cut stone. The country is all limestone topped hills with a very stoney boggy ground in between. Mostly under cultivation, barley and wheat. There are no houses except in the villages. There is a lot of trouble between the Bedouins, Sacatians and Turks. Two villages had a fight yesterday and blocked our line of supply. All hands carry swords, rifles and daggers.

31 March 1918

A bitterly cold and showery day. All night spent bringing in our wounded and withdrawing our line. Had a long and hard ride with the General from 5 to 9 trying to get the infantry to wake up and make the best of a bad job. Slowly retired to the edge of the plateau and took up a line at the head of the track at Ain es Sir down into the Wadi Sir. By dark only had the infantry and NZMR on top. All night camels and men were shoved down that narrow, steep slippery track.

1 April 1918

All went well until the last regiment (WMR) were withdrawing through the village. When the Sacatians who had been most profuse in their declarations of friendship turned dog on us. All the peaceable looking people on the hillsides, the village and miles along the creek started shooting. The next hour was rotten. Our rearguard

of WMR were splendid. They slowly retired leaving 14 men and 36 horses dead of theirs but they left more Sacatians. After that we marched on to the Jericho plain and camped at Shenut Nimean. The night was warm and fine.

2 April 1918

On the march at 7 am. As we drew near the bridges we had a most anxious time, 14 enemy machines were dropping bombs. They did little damage as they were very high and were engaged by our people. We crossed and camped near Jericho on the plain. I went straight onto Jerusalem by car to fix up DAAC work. Slept the night at the German Consulate.

3 April 1918

A beautiful morning and drive down here and now the paper war begins again. From the past sheets you will think we had a nasty knock. Well we did but there is no doubt that with fine weather it would have been a brilliant raid. We were out much longer than we expected to be and did not permanently destroy their railway but we took over 1,000 prisoners, 7 guns and at least 12 machine guns and one plane. Our casualties were heavy. Owen Mathias¹ was killed.

4 April 1918

Too hot to be comfortable. Paper war all morning and a drive down to the Dead Sea in the afternoon. Have just come back from the NZMR Brigade where I have been trying to hurry up some returns so that I can start to Cairo in the morning but will have to postpone leaving I'm afraid..... Just got no end of a fright. A centipede about 4 inches long just crawled out of my blankets. I cut him in half and had no end of a job to stop the two halves escaping and on top of that the two halves have started fighting and the head has killed the tail. And worse than all, the head half has escaped and can't be found. Well he can't bite as he has no head or tail. A most opportune pair of socks turned up from Esther. They were handed to me when we reached here after not having had my boots off for a week and having lost my change of socks. How's that for luck?

10 April 1918

Since last writing of this I have had a very pleasant drive to Richon le Zion with a few hours in Jerusalem and am now in Cairo for a few days getting out this month's orders. Sent a cable yesterday to put your mind at rest. Saw Mike (Barker) at Moascar. He is looking very well and is pleased to be transferred back into the Brigade.

Love John.

¹ Sergeant Owen Mathias KIA 30 March 1918.



Pages from one of John's photo albums showing Rafa and the Second Battle of Gaza in March 1917. John's photos show the surrender of the commander of the Turkish 53rd Division after being captured by an Australian Light Horse regiment.



CMR 1st squadron mess tent at Marakeb, August 1917. From left to right: Lt Gray, Major Hurst, Lt Livingston, Lt Reid, Lt C Deans, Capt Gorton and Capt Barker.



Observing the second "stint" across the Jordan River – Generals Allenby, Chaytor and Meldrum.

March 31st 1917

First Battle of Gaza



The A.L.M. Division in the Turkish camp. Commanders



Captain John Barker in 1917.



CMR Officers on the 4th Anniversary of the War in August 1918. Back row from left to right:

Lt Pigou, Lt Johnson, Lt Warden, Lt Lawrence, Lt Studholme, Lt Milne, Lt Murray, Lt Griffith, Lt Thrabley, Lt Whiting, Lt Manchester, Lt Bassett; Sitting (from left to right) Cpt Nesalame, Cpt Gibbs, Cpt Reid, Major Hurst, Col Findlay, Major Murchison, Cpt Barker, Cpt Matthias, Padre Jaison.

Sitting: Lt Young, Cpt Brewster.



John titled this photo: "My bivy and some mates": John Barker, Bill Gardner, Les Murray and Frank Knubley.



John writing home.



Egyptian Labour Corps being "dipped" (in John's words). Despite the harsh conditions portrayed in this photograph the Royal Army Medical Corps in Egypt went some way to prevent the spread of disease and poor sanitation. Disinfecting stations were set up in places like Kantara attached to an Egyptian Hospital.



Mounted troops follow British infantry through the Village of Ain Sir on 1 April 1918 on the way back from the first failed attempt to take Amman, capital of Jordan. John had commented how pretty the village looked but on 1 April 1918 local Circassians attacked the column killing five men of the Wellington Mounted Rifles and a number of horses. A fierce counter attack resulted in at least 36 of those who mounted the ambush being killed.



CMR crossing the Jordan on a pontoon bridge for the first time on 24 March 1918.



John getting a sewing lesson from Sister Stewart at Al Hayat in early 1918.

Exhausted troops after 4 days fighting which failed to take Amman in April 1918. Pictured are Lts Rischelhurst, James and Australian Light Horse troops plus Colonel Powles. Some troops have taken the opportunity to shave.



Troops in a more relaxed mood enjoying a break.



28 April 1918
Anzac Div

My dear Mother,

Two splendid long letters from you yesterday. Written January 24th and Feb 4th.

I am sure that you worry far more than you should about all of us. We have plenty of good times of a kind and soon forget the bad. I have not seen Mike for the last few days but I am told that he is very pleased over his transfer to the Brigade.

So Dick¹ has been bad with malaria, I hope that he had better luck than I did and did not get the malignant kind. That is not quite correct as I have been lucky in that I have not had a second dose and should be clear for good now.

That cable you mention about 50% desertions amongst Turk reinforcements is correct I think. They can't keep their army up to the strength they had even but have big lot of guns and MGs (machine guns) to make up for lack of men. What a pity about Clive's eyes (his youngest brother Clive).

Later. No end of people calling in amongst them the C in C and General Shea, 60th (London) Div. It is Sunday evening and we are just going to have a service. There may be some time before there is a chance to write as 'Tonight's the Night' again. Arthur is overdue to return. It is more than likely that I will have to take the next four month term of duty at the training Regiment as I have dodged it for so long. Am enclosing some photos and will send some films so as to reduce lumber.

No fresh news from France. The fighting there must be terrible. I wish that Mike (Barker) was back in the camels for a bit as I don't think they are going out. As for myself always remember that a Captain's job is the safest in the whole Brigade as they are mostly in charge of the led horses during action. Esther (Barker) must be at home by now.

Three letters from Doris yesterday, there may not be time to answer them for a bit. Your pyjama parcel arrived a few days ago. The warm under things will be handy for sleeping out if we wander in the Mountains of Moab. Today we can just see the snow top of Mt Hermon up the valley. It has not been too hot for the last few days. We have been bathing in the Jordan and the Dead Sea of late. So ought to be properly christened. Old John Turk has been very restless the last few days. Wanting to find out what we are doing. The hills show up wonderfully clearly in the evening light. It would be as well to stop sending the Weekly Press as I generally see other copies before mine arrives.

Your loving son, John.

¹ Probably his cousin Richard Ernest Barker.

5 July 1918

My dear Mother,

Great joy two letters from you and two from Doris. Written about the end of March. Doris asks if I realise that I have been away for nearly four years. We all do. And four of us have just finished giving our opinions of wars after reading our home letters. Here we are after nearly four years wandering, sitting in a tent at 4 pm in one of the last places on earth and the temperature up to about 110 degrees (43° celsius) and a cool day at that.

Your letters were grand long ones and full of news but Doris spoilt hers by saying I must be fed up of paltry everyday doings. They are just what counts. You mention my horses. They are sadly scattered. Dodger is officially killed by a bomb. But some of the men say he was evacuated to the vet hospital and they are sure he recovered from a wound in the shoulder. I will find him yet. The old Australian mare never recovered from the doing she got at Jaffa. Sarona, the new remount which I got at Jaffa, was hit through the head but is back again and is looking well. She is a very nice black mare, one of the best in the regiment. George Reid had her while I was away.

We are still in reserve in one of the best camps in the valley. Col Findlay is back with the Regiment. Have I told you that George Reid is back and taken over his job as Adjutant and I am now with the 10th Nelson Squadron. Sinclair Murchison is in command, I second in command and Murray, Harris and Frank Knubley¹ as subs. It is the first time I have belonged to the tenth and it makes my complete round of the Regiment. It is always the way with Captains to be shifted from squadron to squadron as they are wanted.

You ask what the treatment for malaria is. Quinine every day for three months and the same if it occurs again. At present I carry a big bottle where ever I go. It is always taken in the liquid nowadays.

Several small parcels have come from you of late. The socks are splendid, the chocolate is of not much use as it all melts but don't stop sending it as the winter will be very cold.

Must stop as several have called in for a drink.

Your loving son, John.

¹ Lance Corporal Francis Clissold Knubley.



Head men of Beni Shea tribe.



Arab Forces.



Arab forces get a lift on a British car.



Captured Ottoman and German guns from 1917 operations.



John looking relaxed wearing some local headgear at Al Hayat in January 1918.



Memorial at Ayun Kara, Palestine with graves of NZ Mounted Troops killed on 14 November 1917 in the foreground. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission later re-interred the dead at the Ramleh Cemetery in Israel. Victory at the battle of Ayun Kara opened the way for the Egyptian Expeditionary Force to occupy Jerusalem.

23 September 1918

My dear Mother

I must start a letter to you as we are on the move again and I may not get a chance to post a letter to you for some time. On the 21st I got orders to rejoin at once and got away from Ismailia by the night train. Capt Young, RAMC; Lt Jago, WMR; Lt Wright, Brigade transport, all from hospital. The Kantara express was very empty and we had a good run through to Ludd getting there at 0800. Hardly a soldier in sight but word of great doings. Haifa surrendered by wireless. A Division as far as Nazareth without a casualty. Had breakfast and went on to Jerusalem by the 0900 getting there at 1230. Had lunch at the Anzac reinforcement camp. Went over to the aerodrome and got the news. Some of the men had been 27 hours in the air during the last three days. They were mostly very tired but very pleased with themselves. NZMR, Brigade HQ at Damieh at that time. The whole of the Turks west of the Jordan captured or on the run.

23 September 1918

Made an early start 0500 to get lorries from Jerusalem to Jericho, wasted a lot of time getting away. Reached the Jericho dump at 1130 to find the 2nd Brigade having just hit out for Amman. The 1st Brigade somewhere East of Jordan going for Es Salt and NZMR somewhere up the Jordan. Divisional HQ having just gone somewhere. Had a feed and then found the senior supply officer and find there is a load of bread going to the Wadi Obidea at 1500 where we will find our own Divisional transport. So here I am waiting. Much dust while waiting, at last the 8 of us got away to Wadi Obidea getting there at 1700.

Found a number of our men on a dump there. 1st line transport came back at about 2000 from Dammieh. NZ Brigade on its way to Es Salt so we must not follow it but go by the Nimrin road with transport on the following day. Found the 10th squadron store man sick so took his horse. Made a 0300 start with remainder of CMR Quartermaster's staff (Bill Gardner). Halted at the Jordan at 0800 for an hour for breakfast. Caught up our Divisional train and our 13 pounder artillery Brigade at Nimrin (fort of hills).

The Turks had evacuated all the Nimrin defences and burned all they could not take away. In the gorge we kept on passing camps at first decently evacuated. Then frequent transport wagons abandoned or thrown over the cliffs. Big dumps burned and unburned. Then the big 20 mile range Jericho Jane gun thrown into the creek, a huge gun. Cartridge cases standing four foot long. Tons of shell ammunition, heaps of rifles and bombs. Dead horses and men. Mile after mile of steep hills, abandoned wagons and dead horses.

The nearer we get to Es Salt the more dead. Our aeroplanes had done it, great bomb marks all along the roads. Gardens and water at

Es Salt, more abandoned field guns, pomegranates and figs. Found Divisional HQ a mile N-East of Es Salt at 1600, handed over my horse to Charlie Wright (Camp Commandant) and got a lift in the General's car. The general and Arthur took the Amman road across high bare hill tops, a wonderful view North. Dead horses all the way. Got to Suweileh, a Sacatian village, at dark. The whole Anzac Division bivouacked about 8 miles from Amman. Just struck the CMR going out on outpost and as luck would have it my own horse Ball saddled and fully equipped. George Reid having just been put into an ambulance sick. Took over the 10th Squadron from Capt Mathias. There had been a lot of sickness. The Col, Major Acton-Adams and about 6 other officers all being evacuated. The Regiment had taken 4 or 5 hundred prisoners at Damieh and Es Salt with only one or two wounded.

25 September 1918

At daylight on the march to Amman. 2nd ALH on right of NZ on left of Es Salt - Amman road, 1st in support. Not long before their guns opened up, then much rifle and MG fire. We were in reserve to CMR who were detailed to gallop to Amman if opportunity arose. Up to 2 pm it looked as if we were not doing much good. Then the 2nd Light Horse by a clever move, rushed a redoubt on Camel ridge, where the ICC brigade had such a bad time 6 months ago. That cleared our right flank and Major Hurst in command of CMR soon had us off down our ridge straight to the Old Citadel and town. Then it became a race between the two brigades.

Soon an opportunity arose for us and in went Lt Wanden¹ mounted with his troop with the rest of the 10th after him. Some rotter of a German shot Wanden dead off his horse but his troop dismounted and into it with us after them on foot. There was a bit of a delay and then we went into the North of the Citadel and were then overlooking the town in the bottom of the gully.

In a few minutes Australian and NZers were galloping through Turks everywhere surrendering. We then returned to find the 8th and 10th had taken the German HQ; 14 German officers with the Commandant of Amman, a Col and 160 Germans and 8 or 10 machine guns. The squadron then went down to water in the river and we boiled up in the old Roman amphitheatre. At 7 pm we returned and took over the Regiment's prisoners which when collected and counted amount to: 14 German officers, 63 Turkish; 160 Germans, 2 Austrians, 1,220 Turks, 26 Italian prisoners of war (labour) and 157 horses and mules. What a mixture and all for one officer and three other ranks killed and about 10 wounded. Lt Bobby Young was badly hit and it is doubtful if he will live. What a mixture we had that night all herded into a mob.

¹ Lieutenant Eric Win Wanden.

26 September 1918

At daylight I began to water and draft my command. A number could speak English. Got them ready for the road by noon after taking over for the whole Brigade. 1600 men and 300 animals. We then began our 9 mile march back to Suweileh which we reached at 1800 and handed over the whole lot to some Indian infantry.

27 September 1918

Marched back to Amman and found the Brigade near the railway station in a good site.

28 September 1918

Moore going away sick. We are told that Chaytor's force has taken since leaving Jericho, 5,760 prisoners, 42 MGs and 26 guns. Our rations are scanty but what with stolen barley and sheep we and our horses are not doing badly. What is the next move to be? There are supposed to be 3,000 Turks south and we don't even know if we still hold Derra. What a smash poor old Jacko has got.

29 September 1918

Horses dying and men going sick. 5% a day. 1400, orders to move out at once and go south. 2nd ALH Brigade in trouble. 5,000 Turks surrendered to them about 16 miles south but the Arabs want to loot and murder.

30 September 1918

Reached Kastel at day-break to find a strange state of affairs. The Turks all armed and doing the outposts with the Australians in reserve. A regular war on. Several thousand Arabs galloping round letting their rifles off into the air. Three trains and 15 guns and no end of stores. I am now holding the Southern line of Outposts, it is the afternoon and the Arabs have mostly given up and disappeared. 23 Turks just came in under the white flag. They are all very done and stripped of nearly all clothing and boots. I have just sent them down to a huge reservoir for a drink. The reservoir is about 100 yards by 100 yards and 20 foot deep, all well cut stone and evidently of great age. We may go back tonight. Most of the prisoners have gone (about 5,000).

1 October 1918

Outposts last night, nothing doing. CMR left behind to guard 500 sick prisoners and 4 trains. Did little all day but shoot away Turkish ammunition at anything in sight. Had a good look around trains and station. A fearful mess, have collected 15 guns and 36 MGs. A Squadron of 3rd MR went to Madaba, found 500 tons of wheat in the church, with Turkish officer and 20 men on guard. Left them there still on guard.

2 October 1918

Still on outposts. 8th went to Madaba to find the Sheriff's people there with one of the Sheriff's sons. 8th returned at dark.

3 October 1918

Still the line not mended. Have orders to go back to Jerusalem, a 6 days march. A Regiment of 3rd Light Horse to relieve us at 1100. Haven't yet turned up and it is now 1500. A beautiful day, cool with bright burning sun. Big puffy clouds just like NZ. 3rd LH turned up at dark. Very apologetic about having lost their way. Marched back 15 miles to Kiasa the next station to Amman South.

4 October 1918

Off at daylight. Watered at Amman and took the Sir road out of Amman, down which the Camel Brigade had such a bad time six months ago. Came down to Ain Sir Village where the WMR lost a dozen men with the Sacatians. The village looked so pretty with all its trees, vines and poplars down the creek. We burned a few houses in which we found ammunition. And the WMR took off one of the leading men to try him for the row they had had. Reached Nimrin on the Eastern edge of the Jericho plain at sunset.

5 October 1918

A very hot and trying march, only about 12 miles to Jericho. Got reinforcements at last. Only just in time to save us from becoming immobile having lost half our strength in men and few horses.

6–7 October 1918

Remained at Jericho.

8 October 1918

A hot march to our old camp site at Tallet ed Dum. More sick and more reinforcements.

9 October 1918

A hot march to Jerusalem with a midday halt at Betheny, camped near the railway station on the Bethlehem road. Col Findlay and Major Acton Adams rejoined. Major Murchison back to 10th squadron. Shifted to 8th to take over in place of Major Gorton (to hospital). Gerald Mathias as second in command.

10 October 1918

Nothing doing. Had a Regimental dinner at the Fast Hotel.



NZMR battles and cemeteries, from *Devils on Horses* by Terry Kinloch.

11 October 1918

Went to Bethlehem with Frank Knubley. Had a good look round the church.

12 October 1918

Had lunch at the Fast. And spent the afternoon in the Old City.

13 October 1918

A good march to Latiune.

14 October 1918

On through Ranleh to the Brigade's old camp site at Richon where they spent the winter and started out for Jericho. Here we are – lines of communication nearly 200 miles from the nearest Turk except for the droves of fever stricken men who are passing south. A most successful stunt but we have lost over 1,000 sick out of less than 2,000 in our Brigade. More reinforcements have arrived and already we are up to strength and after about another week will be again ready for what comes along. We have no idea if we are to go north or not. Besides it looks as if the war is nearly over.

J.S. Barker

SIX

The Mounted Rifles' Horses

Poor old Molly. I was very sorry to lose her; she was such a good old sort. Always ready to go and never knock up and about the best tempered old beast you could get.

*Norman (Pat) Barker, John's first cousin who rode his horse Molly in the Sinai,
17 November 1916.*

The writer of this article has been on active service since the outbreak of the War, and has under his charge over 2,000 horses. The greatest number of these have withstood a desert campaign that will assuredly live in equestrian history as the most trying on horseflesh in the annals of warfare. The three and a half years of service has been with a force from the Antipodes, where the horse still holds his own in spite of motor cars and other mechanical contrivances which have endeavoured to relegate the most beautiful animal in the service of man to a day that is dead.

Major J. Stafford, DSO, NZ Veterinary Corps from C.G. Powles, The history of the Canterbury Mounted Rifles 1914–1919.

ON 13 NOVEMBER 1918 the CMR handed in their horses. By the end of the war there were almost 60,000 military horses in Egypt and Palestine including 2,500 from New Zealand¹. After hostilities ended there was a need for only a few thousand horses for the occupation forces. Coupled with a shortage of transport and quarantine regulations, the horses were sorted into four grades. Those aged over 12 years and fit for work could be sold locally (C class) while D class horses were deemed unfit and to be destroyed. Many of the horses initially retained were later killed or sold locally. Only one New Zealand horse that served in the Middle East made it back to New Zealand. This horse was Bess who belonged to Captain Charles Powles.

We don't know with certainty what happened to John Barker's two horses that he rode to war from Geraldine in August 1914. However, it is almost certain that both were destroyed. Dodger

was ridden by John throughout 1917 and features in a number of photographs in his albums. In August 1918 John recounted what had happened to Dodger in a letter home:

You mention my horses. They are sadly scattered. Dodger is officially killed by a bomb. But some of the men say he was evacuated to the vet hospital and they are sure he recovered from a wound



A NZ Mounted Rifle trooper showing full kit.

¹ Between 1914 and 1916 over 10,000 horses were used by the NZ Expeditionary Forces overseas.

HORSE				ROLL.		
No.	Sex	Colour	Descriptive Marks	Height	Age	Remarks
81	M	Bay.	White Blaze.	15.2	7	2322.
82	g.		no marks.	15	9	2323.
83	M	Brown	Star. Dark points.	15.2	5	2324.
84	M	Bay.	Star. Dark points.	15.2	6	2325.
85	g.	Bay.	Star. Black points.	15.2	6	2326.
86	g.	Dark Bay	Blaze off hind foot.	15.2	7	Transferred to 1 st troop 1/3/15. 2327.
87	M	Bay.	Wh. star.	15.2	5	2328.
88	g.	Chestnut.	Wh. star.	15.2	7	2329.
89	g.	Blk.	star.	15.2	6	C. 2330.
90	g.	Bay.	Star. Dark points.	15.2	5	2331.
91	M	Bay.	Wh. pts.	15.2	9	C. 2332.
92	M	Chestnut.	Blaze. Wh. stockings.	15	7	Destroyed 23/1/15. Broken tail at Ottoma.
93	g.	Chestnut.	Wh. Blaze.	16.2	7	2334.
94	g.	Black.	Star.	15.2	4	2335.
95	g.	Bay.	2 wh. hind feet. star.	15.2	5	2336.
96	g.	Bay.	Star.	15	5	2337.
97	g.	Brown	Blk. pts.	15.2	5	C. 2338.
98	g.	Bay.	Wh. Blaze.	16	8	2339.

Extract from John's notebook with details of some of the horses which left with the Canterbury Mounted Rifles in 1914. Although the Horse Roll refers to the horses by number, the reality was the horses had names and formed close relationships with their riders.

in the shoulder. I will find him yet. The old Australian mare never recovered from the doing she got at Jaffa.

It is likely that the bomb that wounded Dodger was dropped by a Turkish or German aircraft as the AMD lost a number of horses to aerial attack, in addition to shelling or rifle fire. The Australian mare referred to here is probably a remount as John's letters mention several horses including some chosen by Banjo Paterson.

The other horse that left with John in 1914 was called Molly. She was assigned to John's first cousin, Norman (Pat) Barker in January 1916. He had returned to the Middle East after the Gallipoli evacuation where he was one of the last 30 men to leave. Pat Barker showed great fond-

ness for Molly and made frequent references to her in his letters home:

I have got John's mare Molly. She is a snorter and will carry my weight well and will jump anything (17 January 1916).

I have just had to knock off for stables. Poor old Molly is not looking at all well. The desert life does not agree with her. She has fallen away a lot during the last week but is picking up again now (25 March 1916).

There is some talk of their culling the horses. I hope I do not lose Molly as I am very fond of her now, and she knows me, and quite resents anyone else riding her. I let her go every day for a roll and she always comes back to her place in the lines when I call her. She is looking a lot better now but is still a bit low in condition but looks more

healthy in the skin and feeds far better (31 March 1916).

One of our chaps who has a camera is going to take a photo of Molly for me. I hope it turns out well. She is very fit now and pulls like blazes, quite a new thing for her as she is generally so steady going (25 April 1916).

Old Molly got stung on the leg yesterday by a scorpion. It is as big as a post today and very inflamed, but does not seem to hurt her much (7 May 1916).

We were out about 16 miles from here sitting in the sun for six hours with the temperature at 125 degrees¹ in the shade and very little water. There was no shade where I was and a howling Sirocco² blowing, so you can imagine what it was like. I am fairly right now but still have a slight headache and feel out of sorts from drinking brackish well water. Old Molly was so thirsty that she drank all my tea. I made a Dixie of tea for Cecil Crow and myself and put it down at the foot of a tree to cool. The next thing I knew, Molly was licking the leaves out of the bottom (20 May 1916).

¹ 51.6 degrees Celsius. Temperatures in the 40s were commonplace, and on occasions exceeded 50° during the Middle East campaign.

² A hot Mediterranean wind that can reach speeds of up to 100 kilometres peaking in March and November.

I hear that since I have left the regiment that poor old Molly has gone to bits and broke down altogether the other day. I suppose there is no one to look after her properly and steal feed for her, and as she was the fittest horse when I left, she will have had all the hard jobs to do. I hope I get her back as she is a grand old mare (27 June 1916).

Poor old Molly went to hospital the day I came out here so I did not see her at all. She hung it out till the end, but got a bad back and had to be sent away (1 September 1916).

Poor old Molly. I was very sorry to lose her; she was such a good old sort. Always ready to go and never knock up and about the best tempered old beast you could get (17 November 1916).

The New Zealand horses were an integral part of the NZMR and suffered the hardships of war in much the same way as the men they carried. At the end of the war a number of horses were killed by their riders rather than be sold or given to locals who they had seen treat their animals harshly. According to Terry Kinloch, author of *Devils on Horses*, this was one of the hardest acts these men carried out during the war.

A memorial exists today on Black Birch Station in inland Canterbury to the horses that served as part of the CMR.



A fully equipped squadron of Mounted Rifles in the Middle East.



John's horse Dodger photographed in August 1917 at Marakeb. John rode Dodger throughout much of the Middle East campaign. He mentioned him several times in his letters including that he had been wounded by a bomb (likely dropped by a Turkish aircraft). Dodger never returned to New Zealand, a fate suffered by all but 4 of the New Zealand horses that served in the Great War.



Dodger and Tom Stapleton (also below).





A CMR squadron turned out for inspection with their riding gear.



Crossing the Nile River.



A photo taken by John titled “My usual view of the regiment”.



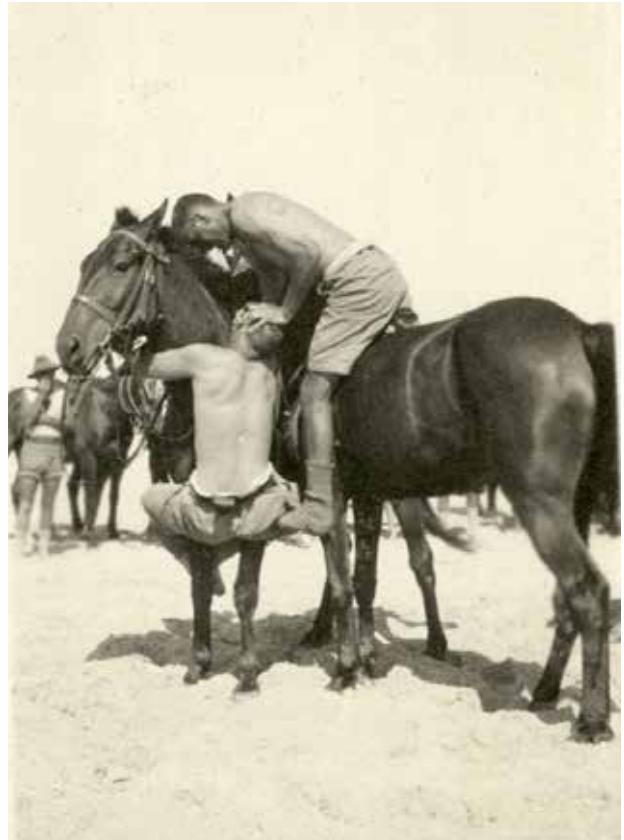
View of NZ Mounted Rifles defeating the 2nd Australian Light Horse at football at El Arish.



CMR troops and their horses take a swim at Marakeb, Palestine. The ANZAC Mounted Division spent a month there from 18 August to 18 September 1917.



Tug of war on horseback, Marakeb.



Wrestling on horseback, Marakeb.



Tethered horses with eye protection to prevent flies.

SEVEN

December 1918: Return to Gallipoli

Reached Chanak by noon. Guns all the way. No wonder the Navy never got through. At Chanak an argument started. The Navy did not know we were coming and the Army had never heard of us. We are not to go onto Constantinople and we are not wanted at Chanak. Later orders to go to Maidos which has been destroyed by the Turks. We are no one's child; so much the better.

Diary entry, 2 December 1918

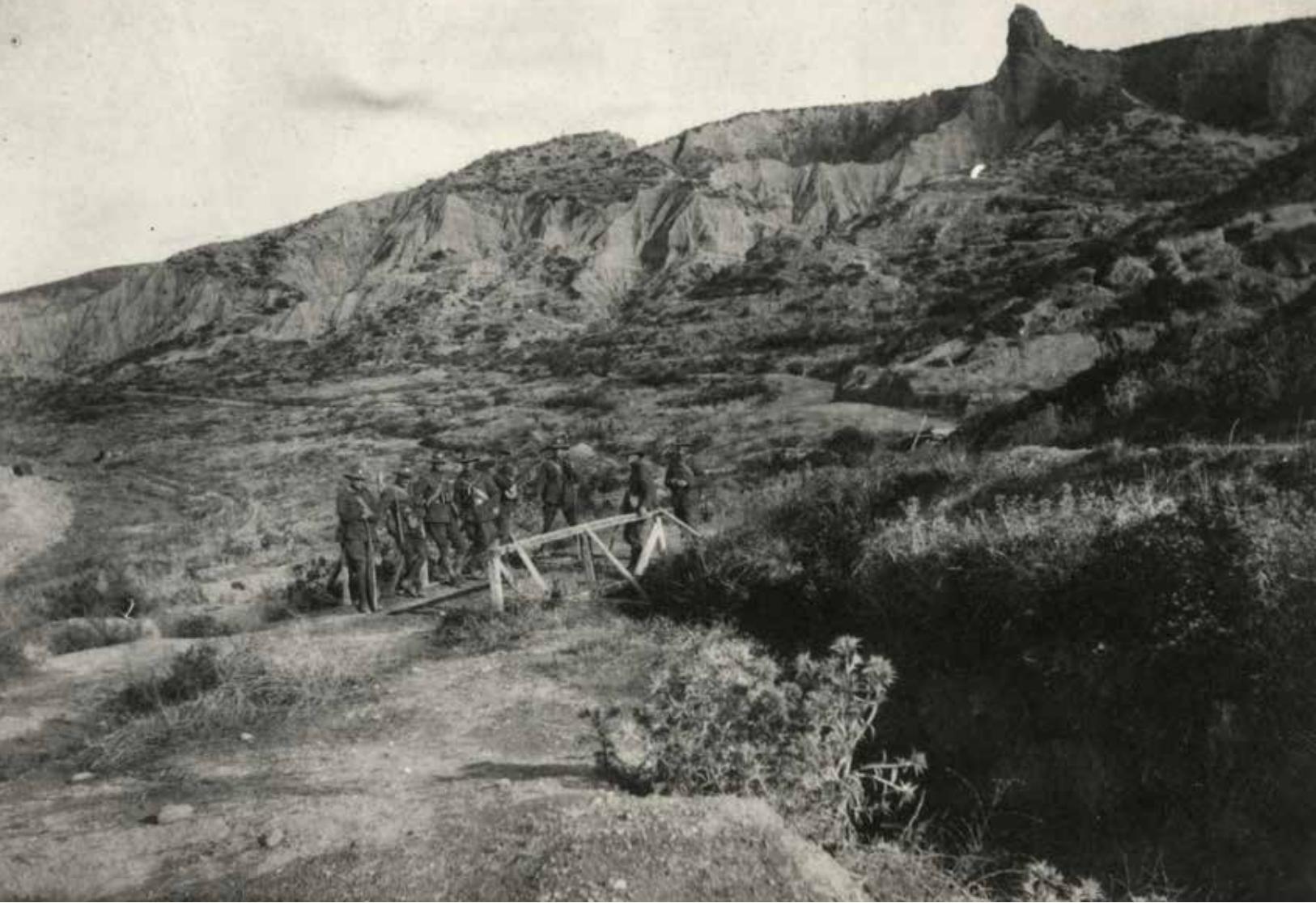
AFTER THE ARMISTICE with Turkey on 31 October 1918 the Allies occupied the Dardanelles and Constantinople. It was decided that the ANZACs would be amongst the forces to land on the Gallipoli Peninsula including the Canterbury Regiment of the NZMR Brigade along with the 7th Regiment of the 2nd ALH Brigade.

On 13 November the CMR regiment handed in their horses and sailed for Gallipoli after a fortnight in Kantara near the Nile Delta in Egypt. John Barker records what turned out to be a rather horrific journey. The *Huntcastle* transport ship they sailed in was a converted German boat that had been burnt out and reconditioned as a horse transport with accommodation for troops. It was forced to anchor off the coast at Chanak on the Gallipoli peninsula as the British garrison was not expecting them. Eventually they landed and spent the next six weeks on the peninsula. They went over the old battle fields and beyond to the Turkish coastal guns which had foiled the initial attempt by the French and British navies to force the Narrows through to Constantinople.

John's photographs show a number of human bones which they buried as most of the original graves from 1915 had lost their wooden crosses and markings. Incredibly, in a trench which had been captured by the Canterbury and Otago Mounted Rifles during the attack on Hill 60,



The gruesome sight that the CMR troops had to deal with returning to the Gallipoli battlefields. Human remains were reburied in graves and old grave sites were tended to.



A view of Walkers Ridge and the Sphinx in December 1918.

John found a page from a New Zealand paper. This page listed the men from the CMR who were wounded taking that trench on 21 August 1915. His brother Roland Barker can be clearly seen on this page which had survived three years in the trench after the Anzac forces evacuated the Peninsula.

The cold winter weather and the outbreak of the 1918 influenza epidemic made for a pretty miserable time during the six weeks the CMR troops were back on the Peninsula. A quarter of the troops were hospitalised and 11 died of influenza. Nonetheless John Barker visited Constantinople on 2 January 1919 and then the ancient city of Troy on 17 January. John's son, Stephen Barker, recounted that a shot was fired

at John Barker when he was in Constantinople but unfortunately there is no other account of these visits.

While John and the rest of the CMR were away at Gallipoli a very ugly incident occurred at Surafend, near Richon le Zion, which was to tarnish the reputation of the AMD. A young New Zealand trooper died on 10 December 1918 after been shot following a thief who had taken his kit bag when he was sleeping. The thief was never apprehended but the death of the trooper stirred up strong emotions amongst the Anzac soldiers. They had experienced a lot of pilfering at the divisional camp at Surafend by Bedouins. There had been a number of unsavoury incidents during the campaign including finding dead



A fragment of newspaper that John Barker found in December 1918 in one of the CMR trenches. It listed men of the regiment wounded in the ill-fated attack on Hill 60 including his brother Roland.

Amazingly the document survived 3 years in a trench after the Allies had evacuated the Peninsula before it was rediscovered by John.

Anzac troops had been dug up and stripped of their clothes. After an initial cordon around the nearby village of Surafend failed to flush out the culprit, the Anzac troops, apparently joined by other allied troops, took the law into their own hands. Details of how many troops were involved varied as did the number of Arab males they killed which had been estimated at around 40.

The troops closed ranks during subsequent enquiries but General Allenby paraded the AMD on 16 December and tore strips off them.

This was not the end of the matter, as after the British Army rebuilt Surafend the New Zealand and Australian Governments were both charged with the costs (£858 and £515 respectively). Furthermore the AMD was moved a few days later to a new camp site in the Nile Delta where they were to be involved in suppressing domestic unrest.

For a number of the Anzacs, such as John Barker, it was to be a further six months before they left the Middle East for home.



Turkish memorial to the fallen at the Gallipoli battlefields.

13 November 1918.
Richon le Zion

(*Diary notes in Army Field Message Book*)

After awaiting orders for a week and having swapped all our horses worth having away to the rest of the NZMR Brigade, we got orders this morning to hand in our horses to the remount depot Diran and leave by two trains leaving at night. Last night was a brute, the breaking of the fine weather. Deluges of rain and wind. Tent came down twice and everything got soaked. One consolation was everybody else was the same. It cleared up at 0900 just in time to parade all the horses. Men from other regiments came to take them away but I struck the job of going in charge of the crowd. Had no hitch over the handing over and got back to camp at about 2 pm wet through. All the oranges are looking splendid after the rain. We are taking with us five horses per squadron. I am taking Black Bell. The Brigade sports which were to have been today have gone west. Great farewells from the remainder of the Brigade. Got away at 6.30 pm.

14 November 1918

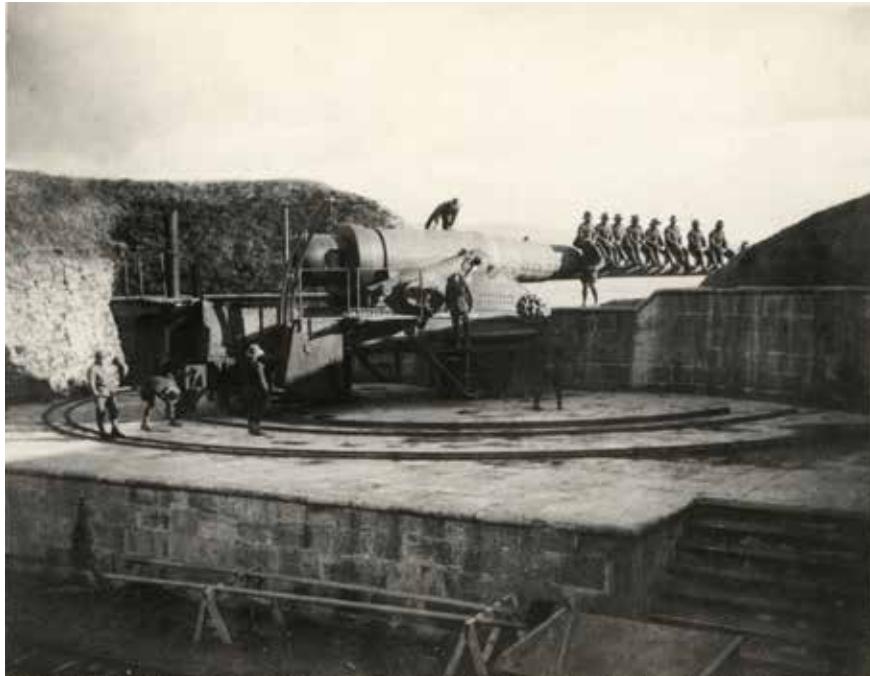
A wet and muddy ride to Ludd. We borrowed horses and horse holders from Wellington and Auckland to take us to the station. The men had to travel in open trucks many of which were full of water. Got to Kantara at 1100 today. Had to march 7 miles to a camp on the desert. The 60th (London) Div are all along the road on the way out. Major Murchison is returning from hospital tonight, and Major Bruce is expected back any day.

15–18 November 1918

Still at Kantara. Getting re-equipped and doing drill. Football is all the go. The 7th Light Horse are camped alongside us. The two Misses McDonalds from Aotea convalescent camp, Ismailia were out yesterday with Lt Murray from hospital and Cpt Gibson who is waiting at Ismailia for duty leave to NZ. We are supposed to be leaving tomorrow night but where we are embarking or where we are going is another matter. The 60th Div are demobilising at Alex. and all the white portion is going to England on the *Britannia*. Two Divisions are going to Abyssinia, the 10th and 53rd perhaps.

19 November 1918

Off to Cairo for 24 hours. Gerry Mathias back in bed with Spanish Flu on top of malaria. Looks bad. Saw Dines at Citadel, very thin but on the mend. Bobbie Young doing well.



A party from the CMR on top of a 14 inch Turkish gun protecting the Dardanelles at Kilid Bahr. The men commented that it was little wonder that the Navy had failed in early 1915 to force the straits.



British and Turkish soldiers undertake sentry duty near Chanak.



The graves of several CMR troops who died of the Spanish Flu in December 1918 on the Gallipoli Peninsula. This photo taken by John is of Lance Corporal Joseph Fifield who died on 20 December 1918. Like John, he had come from Woodbury in South Canterbury.

25 November 1918

Major Bruce turned up but has not yet taken over squadron. Orders to move on the 27th.

26 November 1918

Major Bruce to remain behind but may follow later.

27 November 1918

Marched to Kantara 7 miles, had a cup of tea and bun for men at YMCA and marched onto the wharf No 22 about 4 miles north along the canal. Found the *Huntscastle* to be a horse ship of about 5,000 tons. An ex German boat and full of rats and cockroaches. Loaded enough stores to last CMR and 7th ALH for a month or more.

28 November 1918

Reached Port Said at about 0800. A big lot of shipping including the *Ormondy*. Don't yet know where we are going for sure. Loaded all day. Were to leave at 1600 but when boat stations was on, a line of horse boxes collapsed nearly putting about half the 1st Squadron into the sea. Fortunately no men or horses hurt. It took all night to fix up the smash.

29 November 1918

Left Port Said at 0600. Orders to report at Mudros. A beautiful calm day but ran into rain in the evening

30 November 1918

Not much of a sea but windy and rainy. Ship very crowded. A beautiful sunset behind an island on our left as we passed Rhodes Island.

1 December 1918

Cold and overcast, passed plenty of islands. Sighted at mid-day Aethos, a big mountain about 7,000 feet high, I should say with snow. Also Lemnos later. Cold. Arrived at dusk at the entrance of Mudros Bay. Anchored just outside the submarine net. A cold wild sunset over the hills of Lemnos with Aethos in the background.

2 December 1918

Put out from Mudros at about 2230 with orders to report to Chanak in the Narrows. They all say we are going to Constantinople but I doubt it. Dark until nearly 7 in the morning. A gale blowing and a big sea. For a long time we were all beaten as to where we were.

Land showing up on both sides through driving rain. It turned out to be Samothrace a big island mountain and Imbros on our right and Anzac on the other side. A small trawler turned up to guide us. A slow job as she could hardly make way against the sea. We rounded Cape Helles but could see little for rain. The *River Clyde* is still there with several other wrecks. Reached Chanak by noon. Guns all the way. No wonder the Navy never got through. At Chanak an argument started. The Navy did not know we were coming and the Army had never heard of us. We are not to go onto Constantinople and we are not wanted at Chanak. Later orders to go to Maidos which has been destroyed by the Turks. We are no one's child; so much the better.

3 December 1918

Just lay at anchor off Chanak all day. Too rough to attempt to disembark. Wind and rain from the N East. May go on to Constantinople as there is trouble there.

4 December 1918

Still in the same place. Getting a good deal of sickness. Wind and rain. At 1430 went with Major Hurst and two Australians (Cpt. Holland and Williams) on a ML (mine laying) boat. Landed on the other side of the straits and walked to Maidos. Our job was to report on the prospect of billeting there. Found little more than walls standing. Our shelling three years ago had turned it into the same sort of place as many French towns. Had a good walk and gave a no good report. The mulberry trees are great. Also splendid cabbages. Must have been a very fertile valley. Plenty of sea mines lying along the shore. ML boats are the neatest thing you ever saw. Just a glorified motor launch that can go at 19 knots. The one we were on had gone for 36,000 miles without a breakdown. Carries guns, depth charges, wireless and a thing for listening under water.

5 December 1918

Still rough.

6 December 1918

Orders to disembark and go into an old hospital at Kilid Bahr. It is situated about a mile on the Maidos side and up a gully full of olive trees. It consists of a number of long low red tiled huts and a number of portable huts that have been shifted from Anzac and Cape Helles. The weather is now fine and very cold. Got about half the men on shore. Only had one trawler to do the work.



John (left) Stan Wright and "Dutchy" Holland, Rafa Beach March 1919.

7 December 1918

Unloading horses. Went off by myself. 150 of those on shore walked to Anzac. A very long day but all said it was well worth it. Very few traces of graves to be found.

Still cold and clear. Men very crowded and a lot down with influenza. Went for a long walk over the Kilid Bahr hills. A great view up and down the straits and over to Anzac. Lots of heather all flowering but the frost is cutting it.

9 December 1918

Cloudy. Plenty to do in camp. The ship unloaded by dark. Went with Col. Richardson of the 7th ALH to look at some buildings on top of Kilid Bahr with a view to sending a squadron there.

10 December 1918

Dull with showers. About camp all day. The bugs in the huts but all (sentence unfinished)

EIGHT

1919: Egypt and the Return Home

What would it feel like if the war was finished and we could all go home again? Yet I would rather be here than anywhere at present.

Letter from John Barker in Palestine to his mother, 31 March 1917

We are all very sick on account of demobilisation being stopped and are taking it out of the hides of the Gippies. How long we will be kept here we have no idea.

Letter from John Barker to his mother, 31 March 1919

AFTER THEIR WORK on the Gallipoli Peninsula the CMR returned to Egypt sailing on the *Norman* which arrived in Port Said on 22 January 1919. There they joined the rest of the NZMR who had moved there on 22 December 1918.

There is only one surviving letter from John Barker during this period and it is clear that the Anzacs were keen to get home. However, on 10 March 1919 a general strike began in Cairo and rioting and acts of sabotage spread throughout the country. After promising independence once the Ottoman forces had been forced out of Egypt, the British were to later imprison some of the Nationalist leaders which led to civil unrest. The Anzac troops were then used to enforce martial law and bring back order.

The CMR were involved in patrolling the Nile Delta for much of April, May and June 1919. The divisional bivouac was located very close to the remount depot and the CMR were once again allocated horses which included some New Zealand horses which had been kept.

Kafr el Sheikh, one of the most disaffected areas, is mentioned in John's letter of 31 March 1919. There the rioters were arrested and tried by a court convened by the Anzacs. Those found guilty were sentenced to fines, imprisonment and flogging. John's photos show a person being publicly flogged by a local authority with a cordon of armed Anzac troops. According to

John's son, Stephen, John Barker was required to oversee the execution of a man found guilty of rioting during this period. However, the condemned man escaped by using the clothing of a mullah who had come to visit him much to John Barker's relief.

During this period John Barker was on the Committee of the "Canterbury Foxhounds" which operated a number of horse races in the early part of 1919. This was part of a set of activities to keep the men busy and raise their morale through inter-squad and inter-regimental tournaments. The official history of the CMR described the role of horse racing during this time:

But the greatest pleasure was derived from the horse races, and in these the natives took an immense amount of interest, and helped in the arrangements and provision of the various racecourses required. A totaliser run on New Zealand lines was established. There was no charge for admission, and the inhabitants were invited to come and bring their horses. They came in great numbers, and, being great gamblers, a large amount of native money used to pass through the "tote". This participation in a sport they understood undoubtedly largely helped in the pacification of the inhabitants of the district patrolled by the New Zealand Brigade.

Colonel C.G. Powles, The history of the Canterbury Mounted Rifles 1914 – 1919 (p249).



CMR camped outside Kafr el Sheikh in the Nile Delta –scene of political unrest and riots in March 1919.
The NZMR, weary from a long campaign, were sent to bring order to the region.



A squadron of CMR troops leaves to quell a riot.



Rioters who were arrested were tried immediately and if found guilty were sentenced to fines, imprisonment or "the lash". CMR troops form a cordon while rioters are flogged at Sakah on the Nile Delta.



CMR troops parade at Kafir el Sheikh.



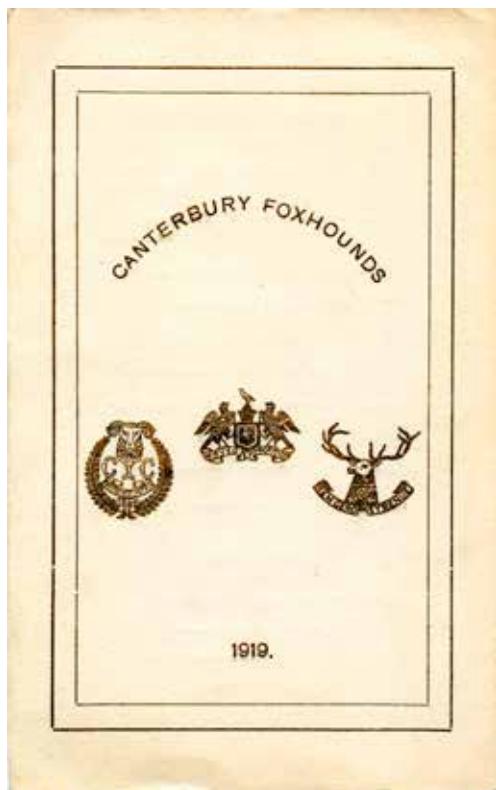
Horses watering while curious locals look on.

John Barker travelled to Damascus and Beirut during May and June and Jerusalem in July 1919. By June 1919 the situation in Egypt was largely under control and on 17 June orders were received for the Anzacs to once again hand in their horses to prepare for demobilisation. The AMD and the NZMR Brigade officially ceased to exist on 30 June 1919.

Finally, on 30 June 1,089 men left on the *Ulimaroa* including John's brother Michael. John himself left on the final ship, the *Ellenga* on 23 July. This ship returned to New Zealand via Colombo in Ceylon and Fremantle in Western Australia. Nearing the final leg of the journey, the *Ellenga* stopped at Newcastle in New South Wales to take on coal. On the first day out of Newcastle the ship developed engine problems and had to return to port. Many of the troops were broke after the long voyage home and sev-

eral stop-overs so John went to the Bank of New South Wales and met the manager who turned out to be someone he knew from Governors Bay in Canterbury. John arranged a £300 loan from which he handed 10 shillings to each soldier on shore leave asking them to repay him "later". According to John's son Stephen, he continued to receive repayments until 1932 with the £300 fully repaid.

The *Ellenga* arrived in Auckland on 10 September, then Wellington on 13 September and finally Christchurch on 14 September. John arrived home in South Canterbury on 15 September, five years and one month after he left for war in 1914. That month he was removed from the New Zealand Expeditionary Force and absorbed back into the 8th (South Canterbury) Mounted Rifles with the rank of Major.



M E E T S.			
	DATE	PLACE	TIME
CANTERBURY FOXHOUNDS			
Patron. Major Gen. Sir E. W. C. CHATTON K.C.M.G., G.B.	Feb 24	Kelab	0800
President. Brigadier Gen. W. MELDRUM C.M.G., D.S.O.	March 2	Railway & Road of Raja	0800
Vice Pres. Lt. Col. J. FINDLAY C.B., D.S.O.	6	el Lubba	0700
" " J. McCARROLL D.S.O.	8	Belah	0700
" " A. BATCHELOR	12	el Musleh	0700
Secretary. Lt. A. H. MANCHESTER C.M.R.	15	Bersheba	0700
Master & Huntsman. Major J. STAFFORD D.S.O.	19	Belah	0700
Whip. Lt. HATTON			
Deputy Master. Major P. ACTON ADAMS D.S.O.			
Kennelman. Tpr. HUSLING			
COMMITTEE.			
Chairman Lt. Col. FINDLAY C.B., D.S.O.			
Major H. G. HURST D.S.O.			
" D. S. MURCHISON D.S.O.			
" J. S. BARKER			

The Canterbury Foxhounds – John was on the committee of this horse-racing venture which went some way to win the hearts and minds of the locals.

John had by this stage been promoted to Major.

31/3/19.

my dear mother, just a line
in case this gets to you before
8 d. I wonder what news the outside
World has been given of Egypt. There
has been a general rising of the people
throughout the whole of Egypt. They
have not gone in for much murdering
but have devoted themselves to smashing
railways & telegraphs. We were given
four hours notice to leave Derna for
Marta and spent four days there.
during which time we drew horses
and reequipped. We then entrained
for Orenbar where we spent 24 hours
as the line had been destroyed in
front of us. We finally reached Tanta,
which is a big town on the Cairo
Ales line, where we spent a day.

Our next move was to travel north
for two days to Hafz el Sheikh.
We had some trouble as a number
of the canal bridges were burned.
The district refused to put up a
fight much to our disgust as they
had defied us. So we then set
to work to flog which kept us
going hard for four or five days.
yesterday a squadron & a half of
us came on to this place Sida Salem
to go on with the good work. We
are now on the edge of the big swamps
near the sea. Tomorrow we go east
for two or three days. Col Thindley
is in command of N^o 1 mobile column
which consists of C.M.R., & light
car patrols & an armoured train.

We are all very sick on account
of desensitisation being suffered and
are subject to fits of the likes of the
gaffes. How long we will be
dugt here we have no idea.

Sida Salem is the headquarters of
a big land company which owns
about 150,000 acres of land which they
are draining & washing before letting
out to farmers. This business gives one
an idea of the size of the Delta
and what a sheik we have got to
set out to punish all the offenders
in the population of twelve million.
We still expect to get home by
June. Much love

John.

John's last letter home from Egypt written on
31 March 1919. John finishes with the expectation
that they would be home by June. In fact he didn't
reach home until 15 September 1919.

31 March 1919

My dear Mother,

Just a line in case this gets to you before I do. I wonder what news the outside world has been given of Egypt. There has been a general rising of the people throughout the whole of Egypt. They have not gone in for much murdering but have devoted themselves to smashing railways and telegraphs. We were given four hours' notice to leave Rafa for Kantara and spent four days there, during which time we drew horses and reequipped. We then entrained for Benha where we spent 24 hours as the line had been destroyed in front of us. We finally reached Tanta, which is a big town on the Cairo to Alex line, where we spent a day. Our next move was to trek north for two days to Kafr el Sheikh.

We had some trouble as a number of canal bridges were burned. The district refused to put up a fight much to our disgust as they had defied us. So we then went to work to flog which kept us going hard for four or five days. Yesterday a squadron and a half of us came to this place Sida Salem to go on with the good work. We are now on the edge of the big swamps near the sea. Tomorrow we go east for two or three days. Col Findlay is in command of No 1 Mobile Column which consists of CMR, light car patrol and an armoured train. We are all very sick on account of demobilisation being stopped and are taking it out of the hides of the Gippies. How long we will be kept here we have no idea.

Sida Salem is the headquarters of a big land company which owns about 150,000 acres of land which they are draining and working before retailing out to farmers. This business gives one an idea of the size of the Delta and what a cheek we have got to set out to punish all the offenders in a population of twelve million. We still expect to get home by June.

Much love, John

NINE

Post-War Years

We argued all the way back to what we would have if we could have a good meal at home. We decided that the essential thing was a good big solid table and chairs with a big white table-cloth. The one item that we were all thoroughly agreed on was for meat we would only have a leg of mutton and roast potatoes and plenty of gravy.

Letter from John Barker, Gallipoli, 22 August 1915.

THERE IS NO WRITTEN RECORD of John's homecoming five years and one month after he left his home in South Canterbury. We can only guess as to the reaction of his close family and how pleased they must have been to see him. The Great War had left many families without husbands, fathers, sons and dear friends. The CMR lost 334 men in the Great War and there are war memorials in many Canterbury towns from where the troops had come.

John Barker returned to farm at Four Peaks. On 3 February 1921 he married Mary Eleanor Teschemaker (known as Eleanor) in Christchurch. He was 31 years old and she was 25 years old.

Eleanor was a daughter of early settler Thomas John Cornelius Teschemaker who arrived in New Zealand in 1855. The Teschemaker family were originally from Holland and had also owned plantations in Dutch Guiana. After living in England, Thomas and his brother Fred emigrated to New Zealand. They owned Haldon Station in the Mckenzie country from 1857–1867. They then bought Otaio Station near Waimate in 1868. The Teschemakers were one of the few run holders to survive the depression in the 1890s.

In 1897, at the age of 58, Tom Teschemaker married Rosamund Rolleston, daughter of William Rolleston, the fourth (and last) Superintendent of Canterbury Province. Their



Medallion of appreciation given to Major John Barker from the people of Woodbury in 1919.



John and Eleanor's wedding, 3 February 1921 in Christchurch (also below left).



eldest daughter, Mary Eleanor Teschemaker, was born in 1898. They had two other daughters: Gonda Elizabeth Teschemaker (1899–1983) and Margaret Rosamond Teschemaker (1901–1997). The two daughters married brothers John Hutton Grigg and Gilbert Hutton Grigg.

After their marriage John and Eleanor Barker went on a trip to Europe for their honeymoon. When in Europe they visited Paul Barker's grave in Belgium. Photographs from this trip showed considerable battle field debris still visible on the Western Front including destroyed tanks that had been left where they were immobilised.

In 1925 a new homestead was built at Four Peaks designed by Heathcote Helmore. It was a two storey building with French shutters and a slate roof and was the first country homestead in South Canterbury to be wired for electricity. John and Eleanor had five children:

- Pauline Barker (1921–2000). Pauline married Peter Vaughan Jenkins, a General Practitioner,



John's wife Eleanor Teschemaker.

and lived in Blenheim. They had one daughter and two sons.

- Penelope (Jimmy) Barker (1924–2010). Jimmy married John (Pat) Lockhart Clark-Hall and they farmed at Mt MacDonald near Hawarden in North Canterbury. They had two daughters and one son.
- Ann Philippa (Phil) Barker (1925–2015). Philippa married Peter Cracraft Grigg and they farmed at Surrey Hills near Mt Somers in Canterbury. They had two sons and one daughter.
- Richard Humphrey Studholme Barker (1928–2007). Richard graduated with a Bachelor's degree in chemical engineering and worked in Australia before farming Four Peaks for a short time. He suffered a mental illness and never married.
- Stephen John Studholme Barker (1933–2013). Stephen married Juliet Constance Armistead and farmed at Mt Mason near Hawarden in North Canterbury. They had two sons and two daughters.

John Barker farmed Four Peaks successfully in the post-war years keeping meticulous records of all aspects of the farming operation. Four Peaks won pasture competitions for many years.



John's passport photo circa 1920.

He developed the practice of wintering sheep on low country farms driving mobs of 3,000 sheep for up to three days to lower country. This included pastoral grazing at Rangitata and Longbeach which was farmed by his brother-in-law, Jack Grigg who had married Eleanor's sister, Gonda Teschemaker.

Despite the effects of malaria and enteric fever that John had suffered during the war he appeared to lead a very active life which included stalking deer and wapiti in remote Fiordland valleys with his brother Roland. He was a keen fly fisher and fished many of the rivers in the South Island, up until close to the time of his death.

John was also a keen ornithologist and studied kakapo in the Fiordland bush. It was during one of these trips to Fiordland that he met Sir Douglas Mawson at Deep Cove who was investigating the potential for hydroelectric power in the 1930s.

Another outdoor pursuit enjoyed by John Barker was climbing, an activity which was followed by all his children some of whom became life time members of the New Zealand Alpine Club. He climbed in the Tasman Glacier area in the early 1920s when the area was still largely unexplored. His sisters, Esther and Doris Barker, were both accomplished climbers. Doris mar-



The Heathcote Helmore designed homestead at Four Peaks built in 1921.
It was the first country homestead in South Canterbury to be wired for electricity.



The Four Peaks homestead when its gardens had been established.
John was a keen gardener and many trees that he planted create a beautiful landscape today.



Christmas at Waihi circa 1920s. Standing from the left: Michael Barker, Harold Barker, Norman Hope, John Matthias Barker. Seated (middle row) Doris Barker, Esther Hope (nee Barker), Emily Barker, Eleanor Barker. Sitting: Clive Barker and John Barker.

ried well known climber H E L (Ned) Porter who pioneered many of the classic climbs in the Southern Alps.

John continued the family involvement with the farm on the Chatham Islands and oversaw the building of the homestead at Kaingaroa in 1935. Later, his sons Richard and then Stephen, managed the family company running Kaingaroa. Stephen ran the operation for over 40 years up until its sale to Te Iwi Moriori in 2004.

During World War Two John Barker was put in charge of the local home guard and the homestead at Four Peaks was requisitioned for a period by the NZ Army. Several American GIs

were billeted with the family including one who maintained contact for some years after serving in the Pacific. John's son Stephen recalls his father listening intently to the wireless of the reports of the Desert Campaign and battle of El Alamein; an area with which he was familiar.

In 1942 John suffered a heart attack and this meant a lessening of some of his outdoor pursuits. He was a keen gardener and a Fellow of the Royal Institute of New Zealand Horticulture. A particular passion was propagating daffodils. John was also a stamp collector and had an extensive collection including Health Stamps in which he took a keen interest. He did not become heav-



John and a climbing party circa 1920s. John was a keen outdoorsman and enjoyed climbing, hunting and fishing as well a number of other pursuits such as botany, gardening and stamp collecting.



John's family in 1934: Pauline (standing back row), John, Philippa (holding the dog), Jimmy (Penelope) standing on the right, Richard (left in the front row) and Eleanor holding baby Stephen.



John's family in the 1940s: Standing from left to right Stephen, Pauline, Philippa and sitting from left to right: Richard, Jimmy and John.



John and Eleanor (standing at the right) at the wedding of their daughter Jimmy to John Lockhart Clark-Hall (known as Pat) 7 October 1948. On the left are Pat's parents, Air Marshal Sir Robert Clark-Hall and Lady Lillias Clark-Hall.



John at the wedding of Rosemary Studholme Barker to William Francis Irwin Hunt on 5 November 1958. Rosemary was Roland Barker's eldest daughter – but as Roland had died in 1946 at the age of 55 John performed his brother's duties at Rosemary's wedding.



John relaxing reading the paper later in his life.

ily involved in local life except as a Pest Board founder and Justice of the Peace.

Both his sons were interested in farming and in 1953 Four Peaks was formed into a partnership with JS Barker and his sons. Richard Barker took over farming Four Peaks until mental illness meant that he was no longer capable. By 1954 John Barker had retired to Christchurch and his youngest son, Stephen, farmed in North Canterbury. Four Peaks was sold in 1960, the same year as Waihi which had been in family hands since the 1880s.

While retired in Christchurch John Barker took an active interest in his family and their grandchildren. Some of his grandchildren clearly remember their grandfather staying and helping out in his quiet way with tasks such as gardening. He maintained strong and close relationships with all his children who were very fond of him. People remember him as a very kind and generous man.

On 27 June 1962 John Barker died after a short period of illness at the age of 73. His wife Eleanor lived until 1971. Both were cremated and their ashes were interred at Woodbury Cemetery. They are next to John Barker's parents, his brothers Michael and Harold and sons Richard and Stephen.

A Family Affair

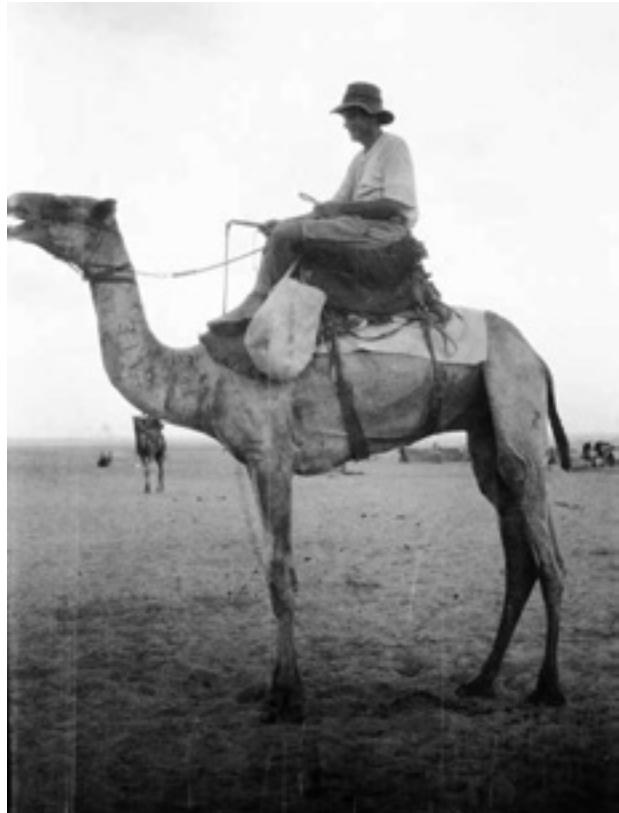
WORLD WAR ONE had a huge impact on John Barker's family with six of them serving in both New Zealand and British forces including Esther Barker who nursed in the Voluntary Aid Detachment. Paul Barker's death clearly had a dramatic effect on the family although there are no surviving written accounts by the family. In addition, on the Barker side of the family there were at least eight other first cousins who served. A summary of the war time contributions of John's siblings and first cousins (on the Barker family side) is given below.

Michael Studholme Barker (1884–1966)

Michael Barker was the eldest in the family and went farming about 1907 with his future brother-in-law, Norman Hope at Mt Albert Station, Makarora, west of Lake Wanaka. Sometime before World War One, Michael moved north to farm with his brother Roland at Mangapehi in the King Country. Roland Barker enlisted in the CMR when war broke out and was wounded at Gallipoli. He then left England in April 1916 and returned to take over the farm at Mangapehi.

When Roland finished his military service, Michael enlisted with the NZMR Brigade in March 1916. Like his brothers, Michael was a tall man at over six feet. After his initial training he left New Zealand in December 1916 and was transferred to the ICC in January 1917.

In 1916 the No 15 (New Zealand) Company, ICC, had been formed from men originally intended as reinforcements for the NZMR Brigade. In 1917 the New Zealand, Australian and British cameliers fought against the Ottoman Turks, first in Palestine and then from early 1918



Michael Studholme Barker, Imperial Camel Corps.

in the Jordan Valley. John Barker caught up with his brother Michael several times during the Palestine campaign. Between 400 and 450 New Zealanders fought in the Camel Corps and 41 died before the two New Zealand companies were disbanded in mid-1918.

Michael had several periods of hospitalisation from malaria and by late October 1918 was transferred back to the NZMR Brigade stationed at Ismailia in Egypt. In December 1918 Michael Barker went with his brother as part of the NZMR Brigade detachment sent back to



Imperial Camel Corps on inspection.

Gallipoli to monitor the armistice with Turkey. Also, like John Barker, Michael was to remain in Egypt for much of 1919 undertaking military police duties.

Michael finally sailed back to New Zealand on the *Ulimaroa* in August 1919. In October 1919 he was discharged from military service due to being no longer physically fit on account of the effects of malaria which he had contracted during service in the Middle East. Michael returned to his parents' farm at Waihi near Woodbury.

In 1926 he married Constance Mary McArthur in Geraldine when he was 42 years old. They had one son, Anthony Michael Barker who farmed at Hilton, Pleasant Point and Pleasant Valley, Geraldine. In 1927 John Matthias Barker formed Barker Bros Ltd, including both Waihi Station, Woodbury and Kaingaroa Station on the Chatham Islands, with his seven surviving sons and daughters as equal shareholders. Michael managed Barker Bros on behalf of his brothers and sisters until he retired. After his retirement, a manager ran Waihi until 1960 when it was sold. Michael died in 1966 and is buried alongside his father and mother and other family members in the Woodbury cemetery only a short distance from Waihi where he grew up.

Michael and Constance's only son Anthony was the inventor of the Kent Log Fire and in 1969 he established Barker's Wines which evolved to become Barker Fruit Processors Ltd. The factory is located on his Pleasant Valley farm.

Esther Studholme Hope (nee Barker, 1885–1975)

Esther Studholme Barker was the second child and oldest daughter of John and Emily Barker. Her mother was a keen artist and supported Esther in pursuing a career in the arts. She began art as a child in Geraldine and later in 1907 started having lessons from Christchurch artist Margaret Stoddart (1865–1934) who introduced her to the work of the English Impressionists and encouraged her to look to her local environment for painting inspiration.

In 1912, when the family travelled to England Esther stayed on in London and studied at the Slade School of Art. She travelled and painted in many European countries exhibiting at the Royal Academy and the Paris Salon. Esther was with a group of artists in Brittany, France in 1914 when war broke out. She went back to England and joined the Red Cross to serve as a nurse-aide from September 1915 until August 1916. Accompanying her were two other New Zealand



Esther Studholme Barker in Malta, 1915.

friends who were also artists: Airini Vane (nee Mair) and Beatrix Dobie. She also painted during the time she was based in Malta and some of her works are still displayed there.

Esther then went to Codford Camp around August 1916, also with Airini Vane and Beatrix Dobie. Her photographic collection showed that they worked in the canteen and took wounded New Zealand soldiers on trips as part of their rehabilitation. By early January 1917 she commenced painting again. During this period in England in 1916, she met up with her brothers Paul, John and Harold when they had leave.

Esther Barker returned to New Zealand in 1919 and married Norman Hope in 1920 when she was 34 years old. They lived on a large Mackenzie Country station called The Grampians and had one son, Andrew Norman Hope born in 1922.

Esther Hope was well known as a landscape artist and many of her works are displayed



Esther Barker (right) and fellow painter Beatrix Dobie at Codford Camp, 1916.

in Canterbury galleries. Their home in the Mackenzie Country received many artists over the years. Esther was friends with a number of prominent artists including Dame Ngaio Marsh, Sydney Thompson and Olivia Spencer-Bower. In addition to her painting she was involved in a number of other artisitic projects including assisting Christchurch architect RSD Harman with the designs for the Church of the Good Shepherd at Tekapo in 1935.

The Hopes retired to Timaru in 1956 and Esther died in 1975 aged 89. The Grampians is still owned by the Hope family.

Paul Studholme Barker (1887–1917)

Paul Barker was two years older than John, and although they did not go to school together they were close. Paul went to Christ's College and then left with his cousin Herbert Barker to farm in Australia. Together they bought a station called Barramine near Marble Bar in Western



Captain Paul Studholme Barker,
Royal Field Artillery, 1916.

Australia comprising 200,000 acres. The Eastern boundary of the station with the Great Sandy Desert was marked by the No 1 Rabbit Fence which stretched more than 1,000 miles from Port Hedland to the south coast and was completed in 1906. They dug a number of wells and erected windmills as well as fencing a "home paddock" measuring seven miles by four miles to graze the 1,800 ewes purchased.

This station proved to be very hard country for sheep farming with predators such as dingoes. The cousins found that it was necessary to earn off-farm income and Herbert began operating camel trains in the outback to transport wool and minerals. Paul continued to run the farm and interacted with many aborigines as the station soon gained a reputation for fairness to the local people, many of whom had their first contact with Europeans here.

Paul remained in touch with his family in New Zealand through the fortnightly mail collection at Warrawagine which was the nearest settlement to the farm (which today is still operating as a 1,000,000 acre cattle station). He

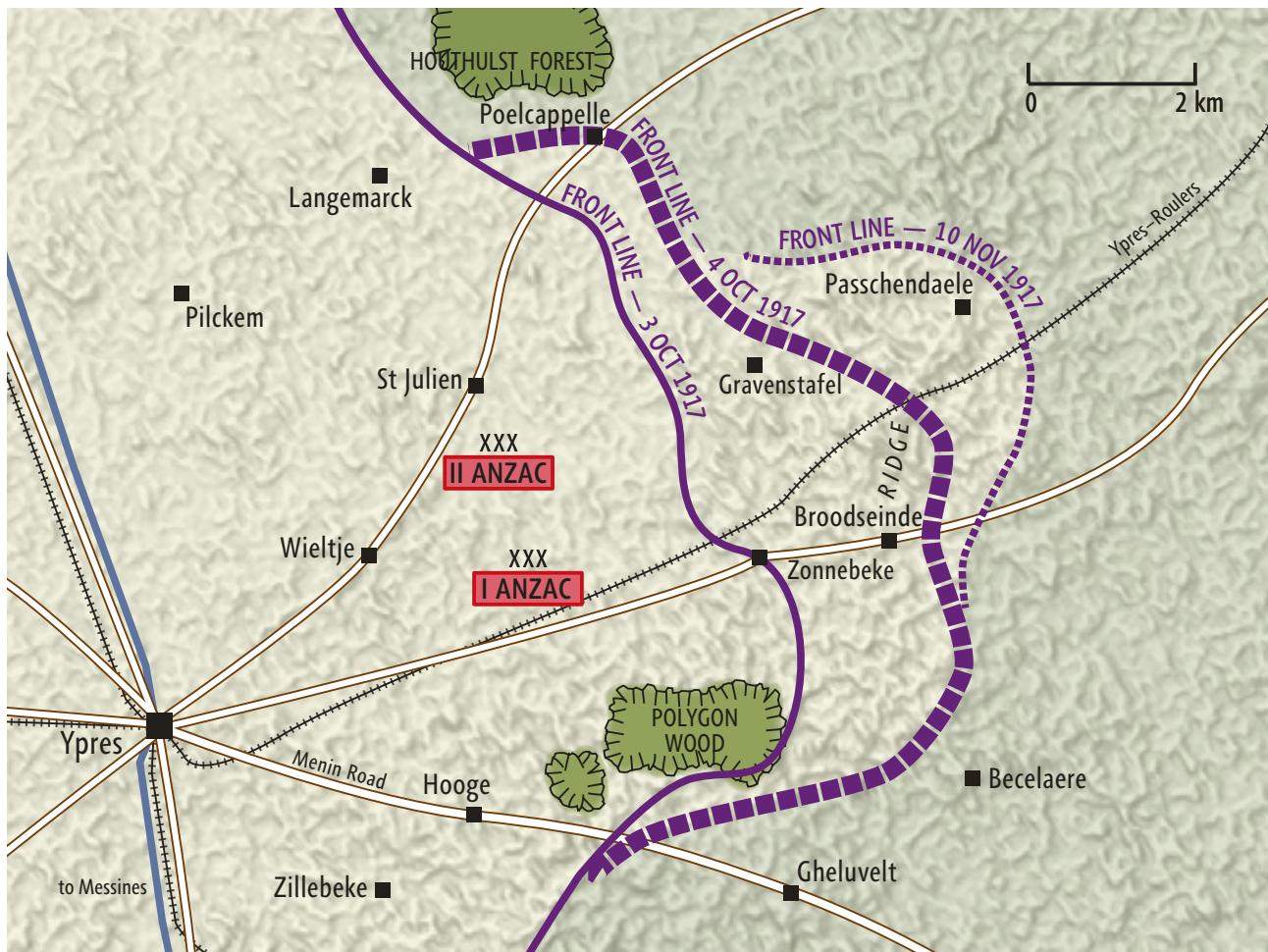


78 Brigade Royal Field Artillery probably taken in 1917. Back left: Smith (South Africa), Chantrill (England). Front row from left to right: Stratton (Australia), Field (England) and P S Barker (New Zealand).

Captain Paul Barker, Lieutenant Reginald Chantrill and Major Linwood Field were killed by a direct hit on a shelter trench on 17 October 1917. The three are buried next to each other at the Solferino Farm cemetery, near Ypres in Belgium.

would have been acutely aware of the mobilisation for the Great War and the role the rest of his family were playing. On 31 August 1915 he signed his will at Marble Bar before leaving for Port Hedland where he sailed to Singapore and then to England paying his own passage. Herbert Barker stayed and continued to run camel trains for some years and wrote several books about his adventures (*Camels and the Outback*, 1964). He also took an aboriginal wife and there is a branch of the Barker family in Western Australia that descend from this union.

Paul Barker joined the Royal Field Artillery. Having grown up on a New Zealand farm, he was proficient with horses which made him well suited for the pulling of artillery on the Western Front. The 10-man gun crew of an 18 pounder



Passchendaele.

had to be able to ride as well as shoot. Paul joined the 78th Brigade of the Royal Field Artillery. This Brigade was part of the 17th (Northern Division) which had moved to France in July 1915. They initially moved to the Southern Ypres Salient and then saw action in the Somme in 1916, Arras in 1917 and later that year moved to Flanders and fought in the First and Second Battles of Passchendaele.

Paul enlisted as a Non-Commissioned Officer and was rapidly promoted to Captain. On 4 October 1917 the 78th Brigade moved from Arras to Langemark (marked on the north eastern corner of the map). That day the nearby New Zealand Division fought in the Battle of Broodseinde where they successfully took the forward German positions and captured 1,100 prisoners extending the front eastwards (refer to the thick purple line in the map). However, the relative ease of this engagement preceded

New Zealand Division's greatest military disaster when, on 12 October, an attack on the Passchendaele Ridge led to 845 New Zealand soldiers losing their lives with another 2,700 wounded.

Heavy rain in October 1917 and incessant artillery action had turned the ground into a muddy bog. Four Divisions of the Canadian Corps relieved the Anzac Corps on 18 October. On 26 October 1917 the diary of the 78th Brigade which Paul Barker was serving with recorded the events that unfolded that day:

Zero hour at 5.40 a.m. for an attack. 18 pounders fired a creeping barrage and 4.5 howitzers fired on fortified huts and concrete emplacements. The weather was again very bad and the mud prevented the contemplated advance. The batteries were heavily shelled. Major L Field, Captain P S Barker and Lieutenant RP Chantrill all of B/78 were killed by direct hit on trench shelter. One

Waihi,
WOODBURY,
April, 1918.

The Director of Base Records,
W.R.L.L. INGTON.

Dear Sir,

I am informed by my daughter in England that the Military Authorities are forwarding to New Zealand the Military Cross earned by my late son, Captain Paul Barker, who held a Commission in the Royal Field Artillery. Should the Decoration be forwarded to the Minister of Defence for presentation, I shall be much obliged if you will kindly approach the Minister and ask him to forward the Cross to me by post and not as I see is sometimes done at a public presentation, because both my wife and I feel that we could not go through the ordeal.

Yours truly,

(Sgd) J.M. BARKER.

Letter from John Matthias Barker asking that Paul Barker's Military Cross should not be presented at a public ceremony. The Medal was presented by the Governor General to the family in private at Orari Railway station in South Canterbury on 26 September 1918.

O/R (Other Ranks) killed and 13 O/R wounded.
Several guns damaged and two destroyed.

Eventually the Canadians took Passchendaele Ridge at a cost of 16,000 casualties on 10 November. During October there had been extremely bad weather which would have made life in the trenches untenable. The 78th Brigade diary recorded frequent artillery and enemy aircraft attacks both day and night. The diary also showed that the Brigade suffered 125 casualties that month including 21 killed and a number suffering from shell shock. The Brigade records show their guns alone had fired over 41,000 artillery rounds that month and they in turn would have been the subject of German artillery and aerial bombing.

On 14 Dec 1917 the 3rd Supplement to the London Gazette recorded a Military Cross being conferred on Captain P.S. Barker:

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty in running a wire to his battery observation post, maintaining communication all day and calibrating his battery under hostile fire.

We have no correspondence from the family on Paul's death which would have shaken all of them. Paul Barker lies buried in a Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery at Solferino Farm near Ypres in Belgium close to the French border. Solferino is a small cemetery with 296 Commonwealth burials of the First World War and a small plot of three German prisoners. He lies next to the two men he died with on 26 October 1917: Major Linwood Field (Distinguished Service Order and Military Cross) and Lieutenant Reginald Percy Chantrill. Paul died when he was aged 30 and both men lying near him were of a similar age.

On 26 September 1918, John Matthias Barker and Emily Barker, received the Military Cross



Memorial plaque for Paul Barker made by his cousin Herbert Barker located at Barramine in Western Australia.



Paul Barker's Military Cross.

that had been awarded to their son Paul Barker at a private ceremony at Orari Railway Station in South Canterbury. This presentation followed a formal request by John Matthias Barker to have the medal not presented at a public ceremony.

In New Zealand Paul's sacrifice is recorded in memorials in the Christ's College chapel and at Woodbury near where he grew up. After leaving Western Australia in 1931 Herbert Barker arranged for a copper plaque to be made for his cousin which is cemented in a rock outcrop near the concrete foundations which are all that is left of the Barramine homestead in Western Australia. This must be one of the most isolated memorials for a New Zealander who served in the Great War.

Roland Studholme Barker (1890–1946)

Roland Barker was two years younger than John and very close to his brother. Roland left for the Great War with John and shared much of the same experiences up to and including Gallipoli with the CMR. Roland is mentioned often in John's letters and he saw extensive action as a Sergeant. On 21 August 1915 Roland was badly wounded during the assault on Hill 60 when he was hit in the arm by a rifle bullet. He was evacuated from the Gallipoli Peninsula and spent time recuperating in Whitchurch, a Welsh Hospital which specialised in the early part of the war in the treatment of orthopaedic cases. By early 1916 Roland was well enough to enjoy the reunion with his siblings in England.

Roland was discharged from military service in April 1916 and left England for New Zealand on the *Athenic* on 15 April 1916. He then went back to run a 4,000 acre farm called Moketenui



Sergeant Roland Studholme Barker.



Roland Barker's binoculars given to him by his uncle, Carlisle Studholme. These binoculars went missing when Roland was wounded in the attack on Hill 60 in August 1915 at Gallipoli. John Barker was able to locate these binoculars with NZ Mounted Rifles troops in Palestine in 1917 and brought them back to New Zealand for Roland.

at Mangapehi after his eldest brother Michael had left to enlist. In 1932 Roland married Rosalind Mostyn Innes-Jones and they had two daughters, Rosemary Studholme Barker (born 1933) and Juliet Studholme Barker (born in 1942).

Roland kept in touch with John and went on several hunting expeditions with him to Fiordland. In March 1928 the two brothers spent more than five weeks in Caswell Sound stalking wapiti deer where Roland shot a 15 pointer bull (NZ Fishing and Shooting Gazette, September 1949).

Roland passed away in 1946 at the age of 55.

Harold Studholme Barker (1893–1955)

Born in 1893, Harold Barker was the youngest member of the family to serve in the Great War. He left New Zealand after attending Christ's College to become a Naval Cadet in the Royal Navy in 1906. Like his brothers, Harold was a tall and powerfully built man and played rugby (pictured in the royal Naval College First Fifteen standing third from the left). He also won the Royal Naval College Dartmouth Cup for heavy weight boxing in 1910.

When the Great War broke out Harold served on a number of Royal Navy Ships including HMS *Warspite* which took part in the Battle of Jutland, the largest naval encounter in the war



Lieutenant Harold Studholme Barker, Royal Navy.

from late May to June 1916. During this battle the *Warspite* was hit 13 times by heavy shells with 14 men killed and 16 wounded.

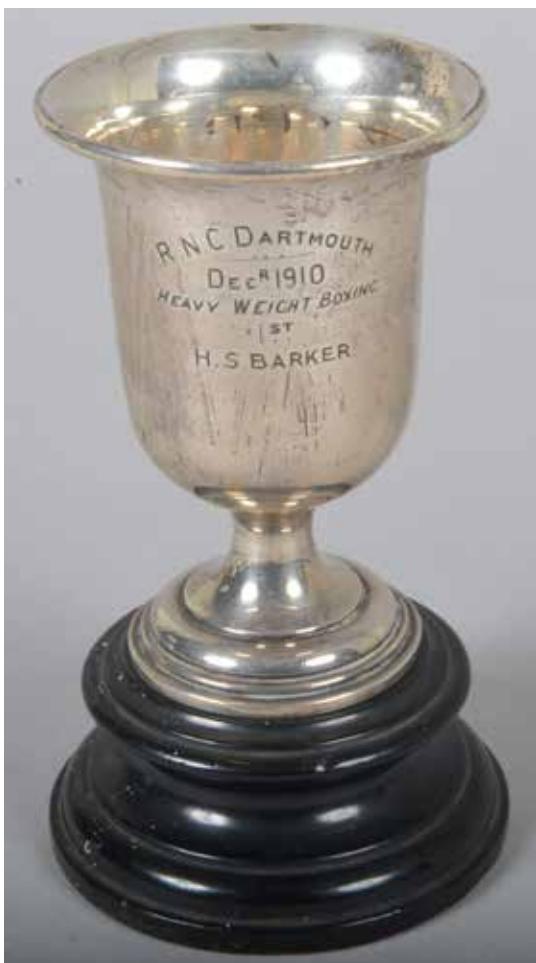
After the war Harold married Shirley L'Estrange Nolan in 1921 when he was 28 years old. He retired from the Royal Navy in 1923. Their only daughter, Prudence L'Estrange Barker was born in Christchurch in 1931. Harold died in Christchurch in 1955 at the age of 62.

Doris Studholme Barker (1895–1979)

Doris Barker was born five years after John and she lived through the Great War Years at Waihi when she was in her early 20's. John frequently wrote to her – sometimes referring to her as "Salley". The relationship between the two was close – as witnessed by the fact that John wrote to Doris separately from his mother even though the two were living in the same house. On 8 November 1917, the *Timaru Herald* recorded that Doris had been involved in fund raising for the war as "County Queen" in a carnival that raised almost £7000 for "patriotic purposes".



Harold Barker (standing third from the left) in the Royal Naval College First Fifteen.



The Royal Naval College Dartmouth Cup for heavy weight boxing which Harold won in 1910.

Doris was an active outdoors person and involved in early climbing in the Southern Alps. It was through this pursuit that she met her future husband, Englishman Harold Edward Lionel Porter (Ned) who she married in 1927 at the age of 31. Porter climbed extensively throughout the Southern Alps often with Swiss Climber Marcel Kurz. Doris and Ned continued climbing throughout their lives including the European Alps when they moved to live in England in the 1930s.

Doris and Ned did not have any children and Doris died in Sutton Courtenay, Berkshire when she was 84 years old. The New Zealand Alpine



Doris Studholme Barker (foreground) with her sister Esther on a climbing trip. Doris is wearing a brooch made from the collar badge of the 8th (South Canterbury) Mounted Rifles.



John Barker's collar badge of the 8th (South Canterbury) Mounted Rifles.

Club lodge at Fox Glacier was built with money donated by Doris and Ned and is called the H E L Porter Lodge.

Clive Studholme Barker (1899–1994)

Clive Barker was ten years younger than John so was too young to go to the First World War. His early education was at Waihi Preparatory School and Christs College. He then trained at Canterbury University in Wood Anatomy. He went to England where he lived for a period studying wood structure at the Imperial College of Science. During this period he worked at Kew Gardens. Clive married Johanna Mary Newton in Exmouth, Devon in 1929. They had two children: Jane and Robin.

Like a number of his siblings Clive had a strong passion for mountaineering. In 1909 when he was nine, Clive joined his sisters Doris and Esther and Jim Dennistoun to climb Mt Peel to see the sunrise. In 1919 he and his sister Doris went to the Mt Cook region where they were based at the Hermitage and undertook many ascents. During his mountaineering life he climbed with many notable mountaineers including Guides Peter Graham and Marcel Kurtz and later his brother in law Ned Porter.



Doris and her husband, mountaineer Harold (Ned) Porter.

Clive married Maureen Gertrude Frengley in Wellington in 1944. He worked with the New Zealand Railways Forestry Division and then the New Zealand Forest Service until his retirement in the early 1970s. Clive continued to live in Wellington up until his death in 1994.

THE FIRST COUSINS

Apart from his brothers, John Barker had 16 male cousins on the Barker side and of those, 8 fought in the First World War. Some fought in East Africa or France, but others were in the Middle East like John. While John's sister Esther served in Malta as a volunteer, his cousin Violet was a trained nurse who served on the NZ hospital ship *Marama*. This level of involvement is a reminder that the war touched large parts of every extended family.



Clive Barker (second from right) with his sisters Esther (on the right) and Doris (second from left).

Other members of the party were Couling (Guide) and Foxy (possibly Margaret Teschemaker – John's future sister-in-law). Esther titled this photo: "Day after our horrid adventure on way down from Haast Bivouac." The photo is taken in front of the original Ball Hut in the Mount Cook region.

Theodore Delabere Barker (1879–1953)

Son of Samuel Delabare Barker and Frances Lean. He enlisted in October 1915 and was in Europe until December 1919 in an engineering regiment. In June 1917 he was severely gassed on the Western Front and later admitted to a NZ Government Hospital. Following recovery, he trained men at Sling Camp in England on how to cope with anti-gas manoeuvres.

Alfred C Barker (1885–1950)

Son of Samuel Delabare Barker and Frances Lean. Alfred joined up in April 1918. He did not see active service, as the war was over by the time he finished his training in England.

Ronald Delabare Barker (1888–1965)

Son of Samuel Delabare Barker and Frances Lean. Ronald was already overseas when war broke out. From London he joined the 27th battalion Royal Fusiliers (known as The Frontiersmen). They sailed from England in April 1915 to British East

Africa and fought there until the end of WWI. Ronald lived for many years in Tanganyika (now Tanzania) and returned to live in NZ in 1956.

Richard Ernest Barker (1888–1962)

Son of Arthur Llewellyn Barker and Dorothy Milton. Richard was keen to join the army from an early age and in 1907, while still at school, he applied to join the Imperial Army. In 1911 he was commissioned in the 2nd battalion South Lancashire Regiment and saw extensive action in the Great War. He rose to the rank of Major and served in the Second World War including El Alamein. He retired to NZ with the rank of Major General.

Norman George (Pat) Barker (1894–1969)

Son of Arthur Llewellyn Barker and Dorothy Milton. Pat served in the Canterbury Mounted Rifles during the Gallipoli campaign. He is mentioned several times in John's letters, while John and his horse are mentioned in Pat's. Pat was one

of the last men off the Gallipoli Peninsula when the allies evacuated in December 1915. He also served in the Sinai in 1916 and rode his cousin John Studholme Barker's horse Molly. Norman was hospitalised with nephritis (kidney disease) and then sent back to NZ.

Francis Llewellyn Barker (1880–1946)

Son of Francis Henry Barker and Marion Cox. Francis served in the Boer war from 1900–1901 and then volunteered again during WWI. During 1916 he served in France and the Middle East. In May 1917 he was sent back to NZ for serious misconduct involving alcohol. In July 1917 he enlisted again under the name Frank Barker and had returned to serve in the Middle East until December 1918 before anyone realised his true identity.

Violet Gertrude Barker (1881 – 1946)

Oldest child of William Edward Barker and his first wife Louisa Gertrude Ellen Pritchett. Violet trained in Wellington and qualified in 1914, becoming a nurse in the NZ Army Nursing

Service (NZANS). She attained the rank of Sister and served on the first commission of the NZ Hospital Ship *Marama* from April 1915 to October 1916. The first commission of the *Marama* took the ship to Alexandria, Southampton, Marseilles, Salonika to Stavros where she was used as a base hospital in the Balkan war. The ship also travelled on to Malta and Southampton. At this time both the *Maheno* and the NZHS *Marama* were part of the White Fleet which carried the wounded from the battle of the Somme to England.

Ernest Christopher Barker (1892–1946)

Son of William Edward Barker and his second wife Lucy Pritchett. Ernest was a surveyor and served as a Captain with the NZ Field Engineers. He served in Gallipoli until July 1915, was evacuated with enteric fever and then rejoined his unit on Gallipoli in December 1915. After a brief interlude in Egypt, he was posted to France and served there from 1916 to 1918 including two very long spells in hospitals recovering from wounds.

Anzac Day 2015

On 25 April 2015, 10 of John Studholme Barker's 13 grandchildren and their families gathered in Canterbury to commemorate his contribution as part of the World War 100 celebrations. The family members travelled to South Canterbury where they attended a short service at St Thomas's church in Woodbury where John Matthias and Emily Barker had been founding parishioners.

The family were then kindly allowed access to the Four Peaks homestead which has been beautifully restored. It is located in a splendid setting with the trees and some of the original garden established by John Barker in the 1920s.

The family then visited Waihi homestead. This visit was made possible by the Reid Family who have farmed it since the 1970s – only the second owners since the Barker Family sold the farm in 1960. Although the original homestead that the Barker family grew up in has been replaced there are remnants of the extensive gardens that existed. This includes a walk through a nut grove and one of the original kahikatea trees that had a rope swing that was well known throughout the district. We were joined by Michael Barker, grandson of Michael Barker senior who was the

Executive Director of Barkers Fruit Processors still living in the district.

For all of us this was a very moving and personal experience – standing on the same driveway from which John Matthias and Emily Barker had farewelled their sons John and Roland to war 100 years ago. These men and the other four members of that family had all played their part in the Great War including Paul Barker who paid the ultimate sacrifice. This period of their lives had a profound impact on the family and their contributions have shaped so many of the aspects of the current generation. For me, this weekend commemorating the impact of the Great War on our family completed a circle and brought to life a generation that had largely been forgotten. Their presence was felt by us all and the realisation that we are who we are as a result of the efforts of this generation who lived through the Great War.

The final visit was to Woodbury Cemetery. There many of the Barker family are buried including John Studholme Barker. The cemetery is in a beautiful location ringed by large well established trees that shelter the area from the prevailing nor' westerly wind. It is the most peaceful and quiet setting.



Woodbury War memorial, near Geraldine, South Canterbury.



John Barker's grandchildren, 25 August 2015.



Descendants of John Barker, 25 April 2015.



Four Peaks homestead, April 2015.



Chronology

1914

August

- 4 Britain declares war on Germany
- 13 Timaru
- 15 Addington

September

- 23 Lyttleton
- 29 Landed Wellington

October

- 16 Left Wellington in a convoy
- 21 Hobart
- 28 Albany, Western Australia

November

- 5 Britain and France declare war on Turkey
- 15 Colombo, Ceylon

December

- 3 Port Said, Egypt
- 5 Zeitoun Camp (outskirts of Cairo)

1915

January

- 25 NZ Infantry Brigade ordered to Suez Canal (first NZ casualty on 3 February)

April

- 12 Hospitalised, Heliopolis
- 25 Australia & New Zealand Army Corps land at ANZAC Cove, Gallipoli Peninsula

May

- 12 John Barker lands at ANZAC Cove
- 24 Taken sick with Bronchitis
- 31 Geza Red Cross hospital

June

- 9 Reported back to Zeitoun Camp
- 17 Embarked for Alexandria
- 21 Landed back at ANZAC Cove

August

- 6 Major Allied offensive at Gallipoli begins
- 9 New Zealanders hold Chunuk Bair (the furthest point taken in the campaign)
- 12 Hospitalised on the *Neuralia* Ship
- 16 Deaconesses hospital, Alexandria

October

- 4 Sailed on the *Andonia* (stop off at Gibraltar on October 10th)
- 15 Landed in Devonport

November

- 9 Discharged from St Marks hospital, London

December

- 20 Evacuation of ANZAC forces from Gallipoli Peninsula complete

1916

January

- 22 3 weeks leave at Bedford, UK

February

- 12 Reported to Hornchurch Hospital, Essex

July – August

- Went to Codford, Sling & Tidworth camps in the UK for further training. Completed a machine gun course

August

- 28 Awarded Certificate, 1st class for Rifle Course, Hayling Island

December

- 12 Lieutenant JS Barker promoted to Captain
- 25 Sailed from Devonport
- 30 Gibraltar

1917

January

- 2–6 Malta
- 9 Alexandria

February

- 1 El Arish (Northern Sinai, Egypt)
- 7 Captain JS Barker is seconded for duty as ADC to Major General Harry Chauvel, commander of the ANZAC Mounted Division
- 22 Sheikh Zawaiid

March

- 26 First battle of Gaza

April

- 1 Deir el Belah (20 kms SW of Gaza)
- 17–19 Second battle of Gaza
- 21 Desert Column

August

- 27 Return to Canterbury Mounted Rifles, Second in Command of 1st squadron

September

- 18 Fukhari, Southern Palestine

October

- 24 Esari
- 29 Night march, Asluj
- 30 Advance on Beersheba with all-night march
- 31 Fought at Tel el Saba, leading to the capture of Beersheba (includes the famous cavalry charge by the Australian Light Horse)

November

- 2 Tel el Saba to Hill 1140
- 3 Watered at Imshosh wells
- 5 Held Ras el Nagb
- 14 Fought at Ramleh, near Tel Aviv in Israel
- 16 Camped at Surafend
- 17 Entered Jaffa

December

- 4 Fell sick with recurrence of enteric fever (typhoid)
- 9 Citadel Hospital
- 27 71st Hospital at Al Hayat

1918

February

- 27 Discharged from 71st Hospital
- 28 Luxor, Egypt

March

- 7 Cairo to Kantara (Northern Sinai)
- 14 Jerusalem
- 24 Crossed Jordan River
- 27–30 Battle of Amman, Jordan

April

- 1 Saw action at Ain Sin where the Wellington Mounted Rifles were attacked by Circassians (originally exiled from Russia, the Circassians were allied to the Ottoman Empire in WW1)
- 3 Jericho
- 4 Jerusalem–Jericho
- 6 Jericho–Richon le Zion
- 7 Cairo
- 12 Richon le Zion
- 13 Jericho
- 19 Crossed Jordan River

May

- 6 Re-crossed Jordan River
- 20 Cairo
- 26 Port Said, Egypt
- 28 Bethlehem
- 30 Re-joined regiment at Beit Fuji

June

- 10 First recurrence of malaria

July

- 27–28 King Solomon's pools
- 29 Temporary command of 3rd squadron

August

- 10 Back to 2nd in command of 10th (Nelson) squadron
- 26 Cairo on leave
- 31 Training regiment

September

- 24 Command of 10th (Nelson) squadron
- 25 Capture of Amman

October

- 5 Jericho
- 9 Jerusalem
- 14 Richon le Zion
- 30 Armistice signed with Turkey

November

- 11 Germany surrenders
- 13 Handed in the horses
- 27 Sailed from Kantara on the Nile Delta

December

- 2 Arrived at Chanak, Gallipoli Peninsula. Stayed at Kalid Bahr monitoring armistice and reburying NZ dead on the Gallipoli battlefields

1919

January

- 2 Constantinople (modern day Istanbul)
- 17 Troy
- 19 Embarked – Zeitoun

March–April

- Nile Delta enforcing martial law

May

- 27 Cairo
- 29 Damascus, Syria

June

- 2 Beirut
- 5 Tiberius
- 19 Alexandria
- 26 Training Regiment

July

- 7 Jerusalem
- 23 Sailed on the *Ellenga* (with 1094 men)

August

- 2–4 Colombo, Ceylon
- 17–19 Fremantle, Newcastle

September

- 10–11 Auckland
- 12 Struck off the New Zealand Expeditionary Force and absorbed into the 8th (South Canterbury) Mounted Rifles with the rank of Major
- 13 Wellington
- 14 Christchurch
- 15 Home

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I have been well supported and encouraged by my first cousins, particularly those who met during ANZAC weekend 2015 to commemorate the life of our grandfather. I am deeply appreciative of support from members of the wider Barker family including Michael and Celia Barker, Jane Peacock and the Hope family who so kindly gave me access to their photographic collections.

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The maps used in this publication are from the NZ History website (<http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/war/first-world-war-maps>) and have been reproduced with the permission of the Ministry for Culture and Heritage. Thanks to Roger Smith of Geographx in Wellington who edited the maps for me to suit this publication.

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Geoff Norman designed the book and very capably laid out the photographs and text. Katy Rhodes proof-read the manuscript.

Finally, thanks to the Canterbury Museum for making the book available on their website as part of the Barker collection.

*Dedicated to the memory of
Stephen John Studholme Barker
(1933 – 2013)*



The idea for this book came from my father, Stephen Barker who had a passion for family history. From an early age he told the stories that he had picked up from his father of the Great War and the role that his uncles and aunts had played. I was named after my Great Uncle Paul who died at Passchendaele in October 1917 so the Great War always held particular significance to me.

Stephen was very fond of his father and shared a number of the same interests including climbing, NZ history and botany. Stephen managed Barker Brothers from the early 1960s until its sale in 2004. This family company was comprised of descendants of John Matthias Barker, and farmed Kaingaroa on the Chatham Islands.

Stephen Barker was an expert on the Barker history in Canterbury and in the 1970s developed a family tree of the descendants of Dr A. C. Barker in New Zealand. He went to great lengths to make contact with the different branches of the family, as far away as Africa and Western Australia. He safeguarded his father's war-time letters and artefacts and started the painstaking task of transcribing his letters. In 2000 he attended the 85th Commemorations at Gallipoli with his sister Philippa, first cousin Rosemary Hunt (one of Roland Barker's daughters), his wife Juliet and his niece and great niece.

This book builds on the foundation that Stephen Barker created. During the 100th commemoration of the Great War it is a fitting tribute to a generation whose lives were shaped by this formative period of our history.

Paul Stephen Barker
December 2016



In August 1914 John Barker left his farm near Geraldine in South Canterbury to go to the Great War. He returned home more than five years later after having served in the Canterbury Mounted Rifles at Gallipoli and throughout the Middle East. Drawing on his diary, letters and photographs, this book tells the story of John and his family whose lives were shaped by this formative period in New Zealand's history.

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