A Letter Home

2nd Place by Gracie Fitchett

April 25, 1915 Whangarei, New Zealand
Gallipoli, Turkey

My Dearest Mary,
Today we landed. At 4:30 in the morning. The young lads were eager to set foot on the battlefield, not knowing of the gore ahead. It was unfortunate to see them so clueless. We were all given rifles, and ammunition. After we got off the ship, we hauled the crates and guns uphill. Suddenly, bullets were shooting down from above us. Bullets and bullets, knocking down hundreds of men, men I knew. The Turks had set up above the hill. We couldn't reach more than 20ft past the shore without getting shot down. Artillery shells exploded nearby. Although many of us were down, the Turks were shooting blindly. We pushed through with perseverance and managed to get to our camp. After losing brothers, fathers and children, tonight everyone was very gloomy and distraught. There isn't much to cheer us up, besides the scruffy terrier Paddy. Paddy cheers up the wounded, and plays with the young boys. He makes the troops laugh and see joy through this time of pain. I must go now, I'll write to you again soon. I love you Mary.
Love from Jack

July 7, 1915 Invercargill, New Zealand
Gallipoli, Turkey

Dear Mother,
It feels as though it's been centuries since I felt the heat of your lemon tea, and warmth of your hugs. I miss you very much. I've been grazed by bullets and dragged boys my age out of the firing zone. George, Michael and Benji aren't as cheerful as they were when they signed up. I pray Father is doing well, and recovering from pneumonia. Tell him to hang on for me. I apologise for leaving you worried, and I'm truly sorry for lying about my age. The boys seemed so resentful when I said I'm not going, and I didn't want to look like a coward. Earlier today I received a letter saying

cousin Campbell is being shipped over. I'm longing to see you and Father. I will do my best to hold my head high for you. It is now time for supper, I look forward to seeing you when I return.
Love Elliot

October 29 1915 Melbourne, Australia
Gallipoli, Turkey

Dear Lara,
I hope the censors don't cover up the majority of this letter. Being a nurse in this environment is non-stop. Gunshot wounds, gunshot wounds, and more gunshot wounds. It's heartbreaking to see the number of familiar faces I see as I cover them with their countries' flags. I've heard from the new boys, they're doing a lottery-type system, picking names out of barrels and forcing men to go. Ordered from Lieutenant Wade, the men set out injecting bayonets through the opposition's body. The men here are struggling to hold their heads high, as many of their mates, brothers, sons and fathers are gone. Although they have little concerts singing songs like "It's a Long Way to Tipperary". Send love to the town.
Love Cora