

Our Soldiers.

Trooper Carl Lake, son of Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Lake, of Darling-street, Dubbo, returned to the family roof-tree on Monday, from Palestine, looking well and feeling as fit as a fiddle. Young Lake is only 16 years of age now, but he saw one year and 45 days' service at the Palestine front. He enlisted when he was only about 15 years old. He is a big youth and filled out some during his absence. He went right through without a scratch or a week's illness. He returns somewhat unwillingly from the front, because he is under the military age, and all such are being sent home. Private Lake says that his money was stopped right away as soon as his age was discovered, and his pay-book impounded. On the way home, there were two other returnees under age on the boat, and the three were not served with the usual Red Cross kit, consisting of pyjamas, shirts, socks, cigarettes, tobacco, etc. No reason was given for depriving these young soldiers who had gallantly done their bit, whilst many youth of similar age were playing cricket or football in Australian colleges. The kit referred to is just the most needful thing on a transport, and the denial meant that these boys had to face a five weeks trip, without a pair of pyjamas or change of shirt. This sort of thing needs some explanation, and we hope it will be forthcoming, as there are bound to be many similar cases of soldiers under age returning to Australia. Their action in going to the front is a meritorious one, and should not be punished as is done by this practice. Speaking of the general character of Palestine, and he had got as far as the city of Jaffa, and saw some of it, Trooper Lake says it resembles the country about Dubbo. Jaffa is a great orange-growing centre. The city contains some modern buildings, and is about the size of Dubbo. The

and is about the size of Dubbo. The Brigade Lake was with was entrenched for eight days at Hill 263, near Jaffa, during the whole of which time the men were on half-rations. They were under shell-fire all the time from Turkish batteries behind the town, but the casualties were small. The troops are all in good spirits, and are determined to sweep the Turks right out of Palestine, under General Allenby, who is very popular with the men. The drive is successful so far, and the troops are now across the Jordan, and should soon take Damascus. Private Lake is glad in one sense to be back, but he says he would like to have gone as far as Jerusalem.

Private Guido Weber, of Delroy, who entered camp on the 1st July, 1916, and spent some 10 months at the front, a period of 18 months' active service being covered altogether from the moment he left Australia, returned to Dubbo on Wednesday morning. He saw service at Zonnebeke, Polygon Wood, Chateau Segar, Passchendaele, etc. At the latter place he was wounded by a high-explosive shell, at which time he lay out in No Man's Land for a period of 48 hours. Lying there suffering, every moment seeming an hour in length, he had time to catch occasional glimpses of the battalion stretcher-bearers, who are engaged in the work of bringing in the wounded. "Every man of them deserves a V.C.," said Private Weber. "They do noble work; their deeds are magnificent. One cannot find words to describe their splendid service." The wounds sustained by Private Weber were in the head and other parts of the body. He was buried for about a quarter of an hour after the explosion. Picked up by an old comrade and put in a place of safety, whence he was removed to Ypres, "the city of desolation." From there in the ambulance to the Canadian clearing station in Belgium, and thence to Rouen. Later he went to Birmingham, Eng., and after a stay of about

ham, Eng., and after a stay of about a fortnight there, entered various other hospitals. He left for Australia on February 3rd, arriving on the 21st March, and at present is in Dubbo, where he arrived on Wednesday morning. He returns after a few days' visit to his brother, and his old school, and his many friends at Delroy, to hospital in Sydney. Private Weber says he does not feel as well as when he left, but hopes with a little rest to recover his old-time vigor and energy. He has had some terrible experiences, such as fall to the lot of the soldiers in the firing line, and he does not like to speak of them; but he is cheerful, although he will carry the honorable scars of his wounds to the end of the chapter. Private Weber met with many a warm hand-clasp during the few hours he was in town on Wednesday morning.

Writing to the "Liberal" from Palestine, under date 17/1/18, Sergeant W. J. H. Vitnell, of the 12th Light Horse (late of Tooraweenah) says:—"We are just now resting near Gaza, and it is a well-earned rest. I can assure you. Our Regiment won fame by taking the town of Beersheba for a start off in the recent operations, and we have been going ever since up to a few days ago, when we were withdrawn and sent back for a rest. I had bad luck in having to go to hospital just this side of Jerusalem, but I was not long away. There were 12 decorations in the Regiment over the Beersheba battle, including our Colonel, who was decorated with the D.S.O., and highly complimented on the work of the Regiment, who took nine guns, 800 prisoners and tons and tons of war material at that fight. Conditions were very hard, water being the main trouble. Early in the operations poor old Vic. Ashworth, one of the best, was killed not far from us, at a place called Tel-el-Sharia, where we had a pretty stiff fight. He belonged to the Camel Corps. Paddy Fitzhardinge has just got his

Paddy Fitzhardinge has just got his commission. Our casualties right through have been light, although we have lost some good men in our Regiment, including 'Tibby' Cotter (killed at Beersheba), but the health and spirit of the boys are splendid."

Mrs. E. Bond, of McLeay-street, is in receipt of a couple of cheery letters from her son, Private Stanley Bond, from France, dated in January. He writes that he had a good time when on furlough in England. He did not go to bed for five nights, and when he went to sleep in a picture show he thought it was time to have a wink or two. In a later letter he says that his battalion is on the move and at first the weather was not all that could be desired, but at time of writing everything was lovely. Mrs. Bond also received a parcel of superb finery from her son. The parcel consists of two handsome scarves, beautifully worked, a pretty silk apron and a natty handkerchief, all of which she is very proud of. She is also in receipt of several photos of her son, taken alone and with two little girl friends, who appear to be remarkably happy in the company of the handsome Australian soldier.