

Happy Birthday.'

Fay's father handed her a package wrapped in brown paper.

'What is it?'

'Open it and see.'

Fay Catherine Howe untied the string and flipped through a book of empty pages.

'It's a journal,' her father said. 'I'm worried about you living out here on Breaksea Island with just two old lighthouse keepers for company. Keeping a diary might be like having a friend to talk to.'

'But I have Jacko,' Fay replied.

'A donkey isn't what I had in mind,' Father laughed.

'He's a good listener!'

'He is that.'





August 5<sup>th</sup> 1914

*I love my new diary, especially its soft red cover. I'm going to write down all my plans for the future. But those plans might have to change. Father received a telegraph. Britain has declared war on Germany – on my birthday!*

*Prime Minister Cook said, 'When the Empire is at war, so also is Australia.'*

*Father and Joe were talking about the German leader, Kaiser Wilhelm II. He's invaded Belgium and Belgium is our ally, that's why we have to help. Joe also said something about Archduke Franz Ferdinand. I'm not sure who he is. It was too windy to hear properly.*

*I wonder if war will change things for us here on Breaksea?*



*Kaiser Wilhelm II*



*King George V*



MESSAGE FROM THE KING

The Prime Minister (Mr. Cook) on Wednesday officially announced an outbreak of war between England and Germany. He added: "Australia is now at war."  
From His Majesty the King the following message has been received by the Governor-General, through the Secretary of State for the Colonies:—"I desire to express to my people of the overseas dominions the appreciation and pride with which I have received the messages from their respective Governments during the last few days. These spontaneous assurances of their fullest support recall to me the generous self-sacrificing help given by them in the past to the mother country. I shall be strengthened in the discharge of the great responsibilities which rest upon me by the confident belief that in this time of trial my Empire will stand united, calm and resolute and trusting in God."



*Mr Cook  
– he has a kind face, I think.*

Some days Fay wrote about life on the island.  
Other days she wrote about the world beyond Breaksea.  
Sometimes she wrote a mixture of the two.





## August 10<sup>th</sup>

*I'm sheltering in Lizard Cave – out of the roaring wind. The sea's too rough for Stan's supply boat, so we're living off rabbit and nettles. Again! When the rain stops, I'll go out with the rifle. We're desperate for meat. In the meantime, I'm snug and warm. This cave is my favourite place. I can hear mutton-bird chicks peeping in their burrows while seals play on the rocks below. The war seems so far away...*

## August 11<sup>th</sup>

*Young men are lining up at the recruiting centres. They can't wait to fight the Kaiser. Father says the government is gathering a mighty fleet to take them to Europe. I wonder if Harold will enlist? I can't imagine my brother as a soldier.*

## August 17<sup>th</sup>

*On Sunday night there were 1500 people at the railway station to farewell the Albany recruits. A local nurse has signed up, too. The Albany Brass Band gave the soldiers a rowing send-off. Joe reckoned he could hear them playing 'The Girl I Left Behind' from the lighthouse balcony. I couldn't hear anything above the racket of the petrels. They were cooing and calling from their burrows until dawn.*

### THE COMMONWEALTH

#### AUSTRALIAN-IMPERIAL EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

#### ALBANY'S CONTRIBUTION

#### SEND-OFF TO THE MEN ON SUNDAY

Albany's contribution to the West Australian contingent of the Australian-Imperial Expeditionary Force left by the train on Sunday night for Perth, and the departure of the men was made the occasion of a great popular demonstration at the railway station. It was only in the afternoon that the 30 men were chosen. Up to Saturday just over 100 applications had been received locally but others were expected from the country. The ranks could not thus be closed until Sunday. By the train then ten men arrived and they hastened to the drill hall to undergo medical examination by Dr. Blackburne. Some of these were unaware they would be selected when they left home in the morning but on being passed they accepted the condition imposed and left at night, with the other volunteers for Perth, employment and private considerations apparently being set aside utterly. The chosen few marched from the drill hall to catch the train preceded by the Albany Brass Band. A large crowd followed them through the streets and at the railway station fully 1,500 people assembled. The men pulled up in the station yard, where they were addressed at length by the Mayor. He talked a lot about going to

the front and the Empire, and enjoined them to behave themselves. The crowd chafed at the delay and kept moving forward. Ultimately the men marched on the platform and entrained. Sergt-Major Smith went up with them, as also did Lieut. Riley. Before the train left the band played "The Red, White and Blue", "Auld Lang Syne" and "The Girl I Left Behind Me" and the train departed amidst the most enthusiastic cheering. The following are the names of the 30 chosen men:-



## August 21<sup>st</sup>

*Last night I had strange dreams – German soldiers in pointy helmets were rowing across to Breaksea, but Jacko wouldn't let them land. He kept kicking the soldiers into the sea as they tried to climb onto the jetty. I wasn't the only one who had a restless night. This morning Father was tired and grumpy. I think he's worried that Harold will sign up. I'll make some bread and butter pudding to cheer him up.*