Chl. K. von Bilin 21st Cuti Tank Coy H.Q. 21st Inft. Bde. A.I.F. Abroad.

Dearest Doan, Today is Lord Jean's Day & I'm sitting in the J.M.C.A. but the walls of which are, like Allans Cottage, pasted with pictures, but oh, what different pictures. There are one or two carefully chosen chocolate box cover girls' heads, a Bourke & Wills reproduction, a tasteful church or so & there you have it. And as its Christmas the walls are hung with colored paper ribbon. The room is full of young men most of them struggling manfully but, not I'm afraid very successfully to follow the J.M.C.A. poster which says "While home first" - Last night I spent very quietly. Chris & I went too concert at 6 p.m called the Base Band. It was the usual Jewish setup a very good band playing & clowning down to the troops. I dont know why they do it because I'm convinced that the Australians as a whole really can appreciate good music. However there were a couple of bright numbers one was the Duke's, Caravan played really well. There was a harpist. She was pretty good. She came back for an encore & for a minute stood incoherent as if in doubt what to play so I called out play something Jewish (I suppose I should have said Hebrew) The boys around me were, Chris said,

very shocked especially one musical one who had insisted on whistling most of the better known airs throughout the concert. It appeared that they would not believe anyone would want to hear any Jiddish airs or that they even existed. Actually we've heard some & they are terribly good in a sensual, nostalgic way. After the concert we went to bed & to sleep until midnight. Then I awoke for a while as people yelled hooray, beat tins, sang loosely. It was all strangely vague & dream like. An hour or so later I woke again as a drunk party came into a nearby tent. They drank, then they argued fiercely. I've never known how fiercely men can argue until now, & then one went away to be ill. Its strange this arguing business. At Pachapunyal they were never so bitter. I can only explain it by a certain amount of bile that's come into them being away from home a certain fierceness at the future's possibilities. For instance I find that I myself often feel irritable, bad tempered for no reason that I can find. It doesn't often happen though. Today Chris, Vic, Jack Callejas & B went off to Escalon again. We got a lift half the way & walked the rest. At Nagdal, the half way town, an Arab who went with us last time, attached himself to us again & we finally all arrived on

the beach at about one. We had brought our lunch with us carried in a white canvas bag that we took turns at shouldering. What a lunch it was, two tins of meat, eggs, a plum pudding, two tins of preserved fruit, a small tin of cream. All these came from Lampers. We ate sitting in the bottom of a white lulled fishing boat while around us the ubiquitous Arab children swarmed, staring, offering coins. Our Arab ate with us so too did some of the Arab children fed by Chris & Vic who have, for some reason, what seems to me an unreasoning tolerance of these far from clean urchins. I think I must be a nasty bedman. Anyway it was a good lunch although I'm afraid you would not approve of it. We had just finished when up rode an Arab on a real Arab horse, one, that unlike the general run here, was in pretty good condition. For 100 mills (about 2/6) I hired him. The saddle was Arab so too were the strange stirrups, the rope reins the coloured headstall. But to ride he was just as our own horses. It was good. Lovely to feel his legs gather under him as he began & then to feel his mouth lightly, as neck arched he walked back. The others had wanted for me & we all set off along the beach. A couple of Russies, muscular & shivering bathed

a fisherman washed his face & hands & then went to bend over his coat spread out as a praying mat (a good title - Wash Before You Pray - for what I don't know. Maybe it sounds like Sing Before Breakfast) & all the time the children followed Vic & Chris. We climed up off the sand onto what was once the end of the semi-circular wall surrounding Ascalon. From there we could see just how the city had lain & maybe some would say that they could, in their imagination, re-create the city below. Then we came home. And now I'm going to end this letter Dearest & one. I've just written to the old lady & I want to go back to the other letter I'm writing to you. Somehow we go off on our Tel Aviv leave. I'm not very excited about it but doubtless we will enjoy it when we get there. You have all my love & thoughts Dearest & one I haven't been able to send you a birthday present sweet because I haven't had the chance to buy any thing you would like but I'll send something soon. Once again Dearest all my love Kenneth.

H.W.J.

Mrs Kenneth von Bilsen
Rowallan
Heathcoat
Victoria

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
AWM2019.22.43


BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION
2/3 BDE. H.
AUSTRALIA
PLATYPUS
9d
POSTAGE
Jan 17
PASSED BY CENSOR
No. 3090



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43

Cpl H. van Bibra VX23004 2/4 Anti-Tank Coy 9th D
2/2nd Syft. Bde. 7th Div A.I.F. Abroad

Dearest Joan I've just got a few minutes before the afternoon's work begins. We are still on the move although not by the look of it is now completed. I don't think it will be long, nothing unforeseen but still remember. I'll post you a copy back all by air-mail. Yesterday I received your last letter, the one in which you told about the arrival of the small white and the hours you have with T.T. By now I hope all that has ended satisfactorily. So you are getting a cow after all. In my last letter I suggested to you that it would be better to wait. Still it maybe a great success if you find it too much trouble you can always sell.

I have just realised the type writer is free. But about the cow. I hope its a nice young one so that it wont have already devloped bad habits under someone who probably hasn't looked after it the way that it should have been. On Sunday, Vic and I had a very good day. We were allowed to go to a place called RishonLe Zion to see some communal settlements. With these we weren't lucky. There was only one communal settlement close and that was a training farm for girls. It was not the real settlement. However, it was interesting as at this farm they prepare the girls for the life which is to follow on the farms. I wonder if you have read about the farms? Anyway, briefly I'll tell you about them. Actually they are more or less new development. Its true that ever since the Jews began to migrate back to Palestine, slowly at firs t when the Turks were able to oppose them more quickly following the defeat of Turkey by the Allies and the carrying out to a certain degree, of Balfour Declaration, they have had semi- communal settlements. For instance, early, somewhere in the eighties Baron Edouard Roschild bought a big area of ~~quickexactly~~ land not far from Tel Aviv and settled certain Jewish families upon it. But it was not communal in the sense that eventually the occupiers were to buy the land and this in fact actually happened. The current communal settlement is something quite different. As I said in an article it is the Jewish answer to an over-economised, over sohisticated hedonist world. Its a philosophy as well ~~as~~ as an economic plan. The basis of the communal farm is semi-socialist, I ~~would~~ would say entirely socialist but in these days people are inclined to fight shy of making any such statement. Incidentally they are most positive that it has no relation to Communism. ~~Anyway~~ To get back to the farm. The land in the first place is bought with the aid of some Jewish organisation and it is given to the settlers, they may number anything from one hundred to eight hundred, on a 99 year's lease The settlement, once begun is run on a completely democratic scale. There is equality ofsexes, the children are looked after under a ~~creche~~ creche system during the day only returning to their parents small homes at nights, there is no boss but an elected executive committee and no money in the settlment itself. ~~All the necessities~~ All the necessities of life are collected from a communal store. You get just what you need. If at the end of the year there are any profits, they go into a working fund or they may be used to raise the settlement's standard of living or more often, according to

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report, they are used to enlarge the settlemet so that more Jews can be accommodated. Not that you need be a Jew to be accepted onto one of the settlements. There is no doubt that its a great experiment. I'm intensely interested in it but so far I havent had a real chance to see how one actually works out. There is one quite close to the camp but I imagine they rather fight shy of soldiers and in any case your Jew is never a very friendly individual. I wish I could like them more as a race but there you are. Its interesting to note that most of the Jews and Jewwesses around these partsare physically very stronglyrecollective of slavs. I think a lot of them originally came from Russia. They are all rather shapeless, especially the women who, without exception, are heavy in the legs and thighs to a degree. Even the other day down at the girls' farm all the young Jewwesses and their ages ranged from sixteen upward, were heavy to the point of ungainliness. Nearly all persist in wearing shorts or trousers. Not that they care much about what people think of their looks I imagine, for none of the communal farmers use powder or lipstick. Still it doesn't improve the landscape. However all that's beside the point. The thing is that these communal farms are working and they are growing too. They are successful. They are proving that people can live on an equality basis, dictated by unselfishness and regard for the next person. At another time I'll have more to tell you about it. Now Dearest I'll have to stop.

Portentious clouds, metallic stars
A nearby wildnerness and silence,
Across this scene, they say
The camels passed, soft footed
Eager necks outstretched
Their riders' eyes upon that star
Will the curtain never come down
Some there are that say the play is yet to come
Others, that it never was nor will be.
How should we know ?

HOW IT PERSISTS THIS PLAY
THE SCENE IS SET

Is all that something of a shock Dearest. The verse libre, very libre but still I put it in for you. It wont be in the mag azine so dont worry. Maybe it could be worked up anyway. Ive just had tea. To eat we had roast beef, cabbage and potatoes and very good stewed figs. Did I tell you that now at the cookhouse there are great baskets of oranges. You can go and take one whenever you feel inclined. So that's something in the right direction isn't it.

Dearest I'm sure that Rowallan will be much nicer than ever main ridge can be. But it takes time and you musn't worry. and dont work too hard. Take it easy you remember the picture. Oh by the way, this morning, rather against our will the staff of the magazine had its photograph taken. It was done by one of the department of information blokes who happened to be around. Maybe it will appear somewhere so its me if you see it. At the moment of flashlight I was in the middle of a very phony set up reading Vic's poem entitled a soldier's I cannot remember the metre its set to but you would like it. It has the whole works and a bit more. Tonight I feel very restless for some reason. Maybe its beginning to write again. Dunno..... Wonder how I will go when I return. I was glad about your wanting to play the piano again. I wonder if you really will. Dont whatever you do make a task out of it. Not that I think it would be a task really. Ive had a couple of letters from the old lady and Don. They both seem pretty good. Mother, for some reason, though I was going to England. Quelle suprise. Your letters have been coming fairly regularly the last two weeks. You dont know what it means to get them. You must be crazy to ask if they are boring. You never are Dearest. Ive never never known you to be boring, not for one moment. Oh yes once. Do you remember the night we went to a party and Len Harvey was there and you said something about celebrities. Then I thought you boring. But God look at me. How often musn't I have bored you. Poor Dearest It must have been many times and always you've borne with me. God you've been good to me. I know it. That's something I love those letters. What else could I want to know except the things you tell me. That's our life. If you want to tell me more tell me more of the things you think yourself.

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Chris has just come in. Today he went down to have his hair cut and returned with it all completely shaved off. He reminds me of some good looking Turk. Apparently Cath's baby is progressing. They went to Tasmania for a holiday quite recently. By the way I got your cable acknowledging mine. Thanks Dearest One. I'm glad you were able to ring Cath. I wonder if you got my Christmas cable. Hope so. I've had to give up the typewriter so will have to continue with this pen, a strange one. And further Dearest One I will not go. Tonight for some reason I'm tired & I'll go to my cane bed. It still survives braced up with boards which unfortunately don't make the softest sleeping but keep you off the ground. I'll write another letter this week. You have all my love Dearest One & all my thoughts. Sometimes I feel it won't be so very long before we're together again. It's all I wish for

H.W.T.

Love to Molly. T.L.T love again Kenneth


BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION
H. N. Friend
AUSTRALIA
PLATYPUS
9d
POSTAGE
AUSTRALIA
PLATYPUS
9d
POSTAGE
Mrs Kenneth von Bibra
Rowallan
Hathaway
Victoria
Australia
PASSED BY CENSOR
No. 3197



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
AWM2019.22.43

Ch. K. von Bilra 1429109 21st Anti-Tank Coy N.Z. 21st Inft Bde.
A.I.F. Abroad.

My Dearest Joan, to letter from you this week so far. Today is Thursday. I got your last one on Sunday. Maybe I will get another tomorrow. Hope so anyway. Today we finished the writing part of our magazine. I did one of the last articles. It was on the Arab point of view. You see we found, when going through the stuff we'd written, that there was a strong bias towards the Jews so on my suggestion I was sent out yesterday afternoon to get an Arab story. I went to a village called Majdal. There, I met the headmaster of the local boys school. Together, we took Turkish coffee in the street & he talked. Much of what he said will be in the article & you'll read that in the magazine but space would it allow me to say everything. One point he made was that the Arab — "is no less civilised than the Jew" Now you see the Jews believe themselves to be the dominant race here, as they are fast becoming, & treat the Arab as far as one can see as an inferior. And judged on modern standards this is right I suppose. Whether the Arab, in the first place, ever offered a friendly hand to the Jew is more than I know. I have my doubts. But one thing is certain there is much to be settled in this country before it can be united. A criticism I've heard of the Jews is that much of their economic life depends on outside subsidies. When this is withdrawn, it is maintained, the whole structure will crumble. Who knows? Its impossible in a short while to get any where near the real problems of this country.

How I wish you were here so that we could see
then talk about it together. When all this business
is over we must make a tour if we've any money
left & will we just stay at home never leave again.
I cannot decide. But as long as we'll be together I
don't care. [ Now its pretty cold here, especially at
nights. From about two o'clock in the morning you want
all the bed clothes you can get. I wish sometimes now I
hadn't sent my sleeping bag home. But this weather won't
last for long only about another month. Apparently
November & December are the cold rear months. [ Last
night Curtis came across to see me. We were all
working in the room where we do the writing for the
magazine so it was quite a gathering. Curtis was very
gracious & made a favourable impression on both Vic
& Chris neither of whom, I suspect, liked him very much
in Melbourne. Curtis by the way has put on a little
weight which, although it appears to worry him, actually
quite suits him, makes him less predatory & hawkish.
He told me he'd received a most amusing letter from you.
Made him laugh a lot & you come sick he said. Apparently
his still living in hopes of the mistress of the beautiful
male cat, although he said you had advised him to
forget. Why? Have you received some later news?
[ Curtis apparently sees a lot of Mr F. Gamble in a wild
sense it would seem. [ I haven't been able to see Andrew.
I can guess where he is now as I suppose you can.
You are careful in your letters to say nothing
liable would censuring aren't you. The position is that
if you do it once you will probably have nearly all
your letters censored with a subsequent delay
in delivery. For instance its forbidden to say our friend
Jack Smith left for abroad in a division we though
you mention no actual facts. Understand Dearest
One? [ I gather Mr Noach hasn't done much in the
bush. Has he made a fire break up the fence. That
would be something. I wonder how long it will
take to clean up that bush, I mean re-plant it &
all that. Now for instance down the creek bed we could
probably grow, very successfully, big red gums.
And then all those stumps, I'd like a lot of them out.
How is our road standing up to the traffic. Not too
many pot holes. Don't let it get too bad. Martin is always
good for a load of gravel. By the way I supposed
I squared up with him before leaving. You might

magazine. There is the latest we are expecting Martin. I was very interested in your news about the P.O.W. selling & planning to sell. Dont worry about it Dearest Even Kings it all became over night like Beaconsfield & his cure it never will, we would still be quite afraid. Don't forget the buffet lunch we can always stand on the scales. My word his place we will not see Blackwell. It would have been a big mistake Tommie & Cora Davis is going to Tel Aviv with Chris We came to anaya in the shocking of the magazine. have taken Dearest. Today is Sunday and rahter a miserable one mainly I think because I have a cold. Apart from that its been raining very hard for the last twelve hours or so and that quickly turns the camp into a bog and isolates you, willy nilly, into a tent with eleven young gentlemen who for the most part dont believe in the too frequent use of the pocket handkerchief One young man nearly drives me to distraction. He says he has a form of antrum trouble, God knows what it is but every night and morning he snorts in the most terrible way for about half an hour. Ive suggested that he go and see a doctor but he appears to bear his cross ( I presume he does not realise what a cross it is to the other people) very philosophically and so there you are. Its not too bad really though. Its only when you are not feeling very well that it gets you down. Funny isnt it how little things like that are really much worse than serious ones. Well the magazine is getting near completion. The trouble now is the actual production. To do this we have to type out each page in a very careful and exact manner. Now I suppose we all have certain pretensions to being writers of sorts but none of us has any pretensions to being typists with the result that we are finding it very heavy going. Even Old Vic, full of his habitual optomism, gets a bit down to it at times. Its really funny working in this room as we do. Chris as I told you is the Editor and to see him correcti ng the proofs in the quick decisive way he does takes me back to the Sun as nothing else has since leaving it. No letter this week yet. There are all sorts of sinsiter rumours about us not getting any mail this week but I feel we will get it tonight. Hope so. I am hoping that by this time you will have received my little parcel from Egypt. Someone here the other day received a letter from Australia saying that a parcel had arrived from India. I do hope you will like them. Maybe they will do as a Christmas present. On Monday Chris and I had our trip to Tel Aviv in connection with the printing of the magazine. We had to see quite a few people about it including the Town Clerk of Tel Aviv a go-getting Whitechapel Jew who talks like a book, a Jewish book and is alleged to speak twelve languages. In between the business part of the trip we had time to get a look at the town or rather the city itself.. Its on first impressions, a pleasant place. Tel Aviv itself began as a suburb of Jaffa. Today Jaffa is a dirty old Arab town and Tel Aviv is a flourishing modern city. It has a strange atmosphere, hard to describe. At one minute it is Paris, all the continental cities you've known rolled into one and the next its something entirely new but vaguely familiar. That sounds a bit round about I suppose but the idea behind it is that anything to do with the Jews has the mark of ancientness upon it, a mark almost of illusion. The people are not very attractive. In a days march we saw perhpas four or five pretty women and that was all. The rest were the short legger, heavy hipped variety that Ive already told you about. Perhaps the best part of the day apart from a hot bath we were able to squeese in was the food we ate. For breakfast, we got in there very early, we went to an orthodox Jewish restaurant where the food was really ecellent. I made a mistake by asking for butter with my meat. The young Jew who was serving us hesitated a moment, he was the proprietor's son and then in an odd way said butter. I said yes thinking that for some reason he was offended that we wanted to many things. The very quietly he said You see we are orthodox here and we do not serve butter with bread. I'm very sorry. Of course I didn't mind and rather admired the way he'd said it.

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Actually it seemed a very good idea not serving butter with meat Lots of those ritual Jewish customs have a most definite commonsense basis. Dont they ? The other restaurant we went to was a Bulgarian one. It was a sort of very superior Society restaurant. I mean the Society in Melbourne. The food was eastern and reallyexcellent. Do you remember that Serbian grill we once had in London ? Well it was like that. Excellent food. Of course the Jews know how to eat. Do you remember how all the best place in Paris, all the small ones were always well patronised by the race. In addition to the hundreds of cafes that you can find anywhere in the twom there are just as many if not more bars, Paris type only not so good. We were having a drink in one of these when we noticed next to us two very quiet, almost morose young Englishmen. Friendly like we said How's the English air force. To which one replied nicely Very good than you. Then there was no more between us for a while until one said something about Tel Aviv. Eventually he told us that he and his friend who were stationed somewhere near Arabia were having their first leave for two years. It was the first day of their seven day leave But they were not excited. Only the English could be a strong minded as that. Well at last the rain hasstopped and already my cold is feeling better. Had a couple of boat letters from the Old Lady the other week. She said you had suggested she come over to Melbourne for a while but at the time of writing she had not made up her mind. I dont know why she doesen't write air amil. Is it that she doesn't know about it or i s it the Henry influence coming out. I dont really mean that.

Later. Its night now Dearest and we are just putting the final touches to the first pull of the magazine. There is a lot more work to be done on the proofs but it does look now as if we will get it out on time. I think its a great relief to Chris who as editor has been the one on whom the greatest responsibility has rested to say nothing of his professional reputation. which naturally must be guarded. Today Vic received a Christmas cake from wife. It was beautifully packed and there was a pleasant excitement as layer after layer of paper came off, revealing first a woodden box that had to be prized open and finally a sealed tin on which a tin opener had to be used. Imagine the Chagrin when the cake was revealed broken to pieces, icing everywhere. It looked as if the postal people must have played catches with it. But Vic was not unduly dismayed and all day we have been dipping fingers into the broken spelndour and enjoying it. Tonight I have learned that Ive missed the mail somehow and this will mean I'm afraid that this letter will arrive a bit late. I'm sorry Dearest One. I do like you to get two letters a week instead of one. Tonight I'm almost sure to be getting one from you. The mail was supposed to be sorted at seven and now its almost that. Yesterday in Tel Aviv I bought myself a new pair of beautiful boots. I went into the shop first to get the boots I was wearing stretched. While they were doing this I had a look around and found the bootmaker to be the maker of the most beautiful boots and shoes. Its not suprising. He came from Vienna an d once made for the Duke of Windsor. Anyway I came out the owner of a pair of waterproof heavy boots which made my purse lighter by £3. Still I th ink they were worth it. I wanted to get you a pair of shoes too but did not know you size. As soon as you get this wire me your size so I can get you a pair. Now Dearest I must stop. In the wire say how you are and thing s like that. Its very important to know.

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Monday night. Dearest this is just a few lines wend this letter. The magazine is still not finished but we reach on Whave it out on Christmas Day & I think we really will.

I haven't got a letter from you this week yet but haven't given up hope yet. The mail does all sorts of queer things. [Today I went to get my mended boots from a small Arab shopping centre. As I went into the bootmakers a boy, an Arab one said Hullo George (they always say George for some reason) & then said you went buggery you went buggery. Very outraged I told him to be off in no mean terms. But he still persisted. It took Chris to realise that he was trying to sell me a puggaree (you know the thing that goes around your hat) [Dearest I must stop. You have all my love & thoughts. I'd give anything to be with you. All my love Kenneth.

Love to Molly & T.T.

KMP.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
AWM2019.22.43

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION

Jan 11

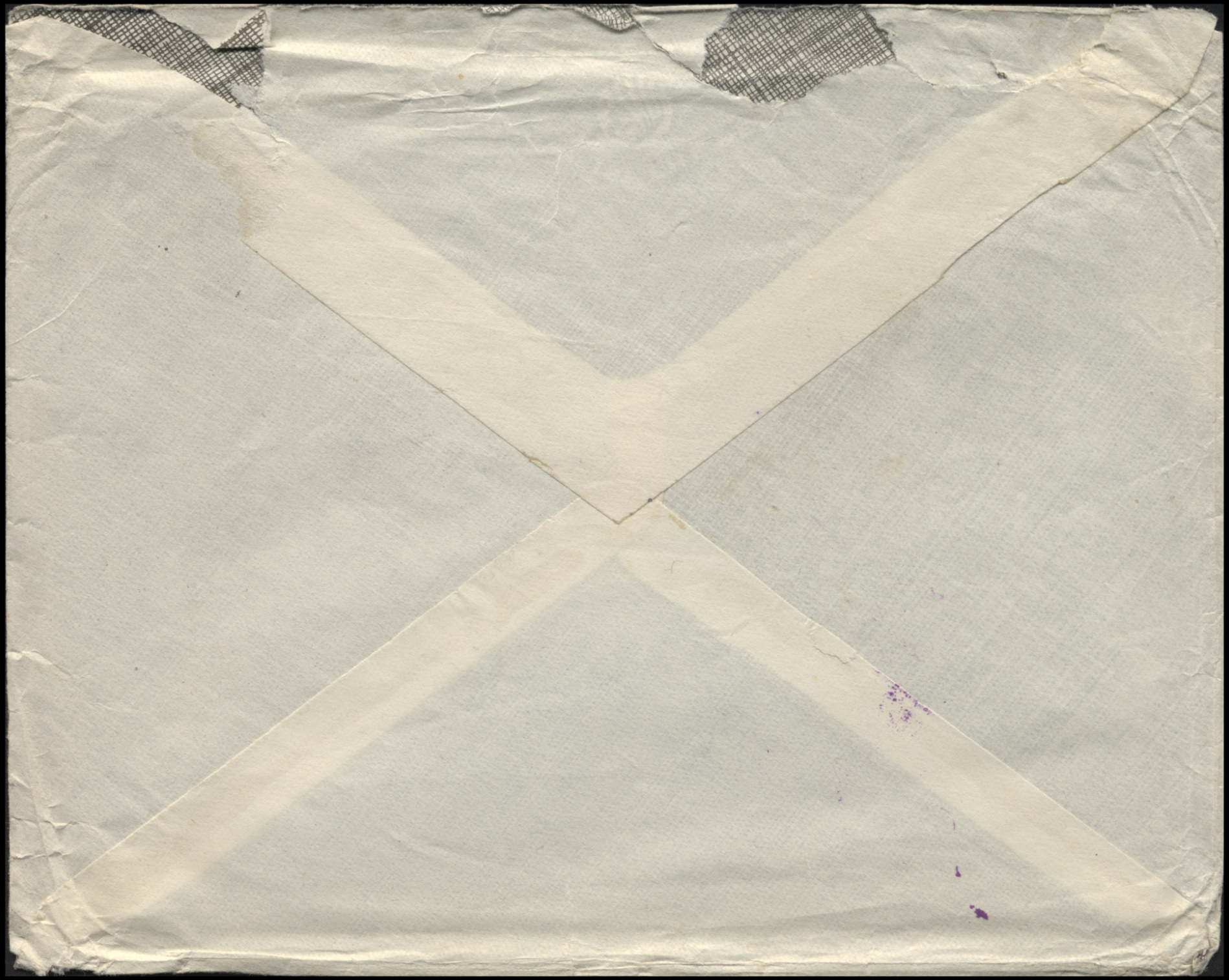
R M Pouley




Mrs Kenneth von Bibra
Rowallan
Starhaway
Victoria
Australia

PASSED BY CENSOR
No. 3090

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43

RED SHIELD HUTS-HOSTELS
ON SERVICE with the TROOPS

THE SALVATION ARMY

Date. January 6

From
No. V x 29 109
Cpl H. von Bibra
U.S. Anti-Tank Coy
H.Q. 21st Inft. Bde
A.S.F. Abroad

"My strength is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure"

Dearest Joan, This is the second letter so if they both arrive together read the other one first. [By the time this reaches you, you will I imagine be back from Shepparton bringing with you the little white bitch. Is she a Storm relative or not. If she is I'd think a name along those lines would be suitable. Say Surge (for surge they all do). I think I like Surge. I just said to myself out loud Steve Surge sit sounded pretty good. But of course not knowing her makes all the difference. Maybe it wouldn't suit her temperament at all. Stud name could be White Surge of course. I do hope you will be firm with her Dearest; right from the first day, otherwise trouble, especially with sheep. Accustom both her & N.T. to walk among the sheep. [About your birthday Dearest as I told you in a previous letter I haven't been able to send you anything yet but plan to get you a pair of shoes from the Austrian boot-maker when your measurements arrive. If you haven't already sent them be sure & give width as well as length measurements. You see he will make them to measure. [Did I ever tell you that the New Yorker & the protractor arrived safely. They were both very acceptable gifts. I'm still using the N.T. in my spare time, I mean reading it. Also

RED SHIELD HUTS-HOSTELS
ON SERVICE with the TROOPS

THE SALVATION ARMY

2.



Date.....

From

No.....

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*"My strength is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure"*

at the moment I'm reading or rather have nearly finished reading, Gogol's Taras Bulba & other Tales. I've enjoyed it, most of all Taras. He does not seem the great writer that I've imagined but he's pretty good. [I've nearly exhausted my supply of books but I can always buy more in Tel Aviv In any case nowdays I dont get the time to read. [I'm sorry Moya hasn't lost her "chaps-binding" complex. Some how I felt she would have. Its strange Moya seems to be able to suffer & suffer & yet nothing happens. She seems impervious. Talking of birds there's a postman, an ex I mean, who talking the other morning at breakfast said he had a friend who was a great bird lover & spent all his spare time watching specimens at Fishermen's Bend, all his holidays in the Mallee doing the same thing. The bird lover by the way is a postman too. Strange....? [What is the latest news of George? Chris by the way seems to think its pretty certain that either he is married or pretty well tied up. Or did I tell you that. I'm certain he has something that worries him any way. [You ask whether you should find a suitable match for Molly. Certainly yes. but has the divorce gone through or doesn't she tell you that. What's happened to the young man by the way

RED SHIELD HUTS-HOSTELS
ON SERVICE with the TROOPS

THE SALVATION ARMY

3.



Date.....

From

No.....

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.....

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*"My strength is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure"*

I mentioned in the tent to some of the Corsey boys that Liberal was going to serve Hungary & all were very suitably impressed. I was ashamed, not really, that I did not know any thing about him. I dont think we will ever come to Palestine when the war is over Dearest one. Chris wants to take Cath to the Southern States but do you know I dont think I'll want to budge from home for a long time. [ Murdoch, by the way, between ourselves has more or less promised him a job in the New York office after its all over. [ Tonight we had the word about Bardia's fall. Its been received quietly but with a lot of satisfaction & we're all wondering just what it will mean to us. I mean if Lybia is overrun there remain only Italian possessions at the end of the Red Sea & I cannot see them putting up any resistance But we are not allowed to conjecture far along these lines so you will have to work it out yourself. [ And now Dearest one I must stop. You can only get three of these pages in one letter, an ordinary one. I think of you constantly & it makes all the difference to life here. You have all my love & thoughts Kenneth. Love Wholly H. T.

H. W. Driver

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43




PAN[illegible]VION
H.W. Friend

2

By Air Mail
Wrdn Jan 6.




Mrs Kenneth von Bibra
Rowallan
Starhaway
Victoria

Australia

**RED SHIELD HUTS**
*for Australian Troops*

PASSED BY CENSOR
No. 3197

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43

Cpl Kvow Belia 21st Anti-Tank Coy H.Q. 21st Inft Bde
V+29109 A.I.F. Abroad.

Dearest Joan, The last mail brought two letters from you, one with a bright silver star upon it. Got them just a few minutes before we left in the bus for our Tel Aviv leave, & was able to read them on the way. First of all I liked the photographs very much. The one of you & T.T. was sweet & the other one was penibly good. It was characteristic too. Send them often Dearest one. It makes me very happy getting them. [In the first letter you spoke about the possibility of Tunyah & Liberal & in the second it was nearly un fait accompli. I think it an excellent idea Dearest one, quite the best thing you could have done. I wonder if she will make a good mother. How you will have to watch over her. I suppose she isn't too young to begin having a family. [And then when T.T. begins, what procession there will be; the place will be populated in no time. [The mail has just arrived, a letter from Don, one from Mother & another from Mac Good who is attending a school in Cairo. I was very disappointed at first, but then consoled myself with the thought that last time I had two letters from you. But I've better still news I've just learned that not all the air mail has come in yet. I'll probably get a letter tonight. [Mother seemed very well, so too did Don. She speaks of a proposed trip to Melbourne to see you in the autumn. Is nice of him I think. You would like to have him wouldn't you. And the affair holly. What of that. I'm sure it exists but as far as he is concerned would never get out of hand but what of her. She might take it hard or wouldn't she. I'm afraid you will have to decide. Still I must admit he's asked me what I think & I suppose I'll write back & say Good-ah

Ted Alister is doing an officer's course at the school. This does not mean he will immediately become an officer but if he passes he will, when a vacancy occurs, get his rank. He is, he writes, learning with some excitement wrote a motor cycle. Lollary Chris had a letter from Carth who is still in Tasmania & enjoying it very much apparently. In the letter there was an enclosure from Irma Pearl (who I'm sure is really a terribly dull girl) in which it was said that Mr Thos Dan Reid were the most beautiful & devoted couple that I saw acted often & very wonderfully, lost to the Pearls. I didn't like it somehow. Well the Tel Aviv leave wasn't half as good as we expected it to be due to two things drinking too much the first night & not knowing anyone really interesting there. I don't know why it was but when we hit Tel Aviv at about four o'clock both Chris & I were very low. Maybe it was in my case because I got two letters of felt sad at not being with you while in Chris's perhaps it was because he did not get a letter. Anyway we went to bed & there, sitting on three high stools, morosely & without thinking drank beer. Then that leaving done its work we went out wanning at the café about which I've told you. There we ate a great deal drank some more & talked with the Jewish people there until very late. It was so late in fact that Vic went to sleep.

Well to cut a long story short I did not feel very well the next day & the next one we had to go home. I really did not enjoy any part of it that I can recall. Actually all these leaves are pretty loftiers. You go into them with a sort of Jewish determination wrong yourself & that of course is fatal. Still they probably do you good although if I could find a nice monastry next time I think I'd take a cell. But don't feel bad about it Dearest. I don't truly. [I'm afraid I can never really get over the Jew bannied. Before I came here it was nothing much but Tel Aviv has given me an added obstacle. Its more an emotional state rather than a reasoned one. If you reason you've got nothing against them. Actually all our contacts with them have been good with these exceptions. I mean they haven't done us in or anything like that & yet I find that I have an active, growing dislike of them. Some how I don't feel in the mood to write about them today. Maybe in the next letter. [At the moment I am in the quartermaster's store. Mr Mervyn King has just come in. Do you remember him. Of course you do. Poor fellow he had an unfortunate accident on Christmas Day. In a stimulated moment he went to jump onto a donkey. Took so he took hold of one of its long ears. The simple little beast presuming he wanted it to come closer, moved inwards but unfortunately just at the moment Mervyn sprang to mount. The result was that he went clean over

its back handed on his face on the metal roadway. He was horribly cut about, mouth, nose chin. He boys shook their heads & said Manhood for life. Sought on a man who once rolled for Charles Macartney (someone of that name who ran a bush pump show) Mervyn himself felt it pretty accurately I think the more so because not only did his face look horrible but a bit comic too. Anyway now after a fortnight he is well on the way to being healed & I think & hope that no scar will remain. By the way, he said when he came in just now, how is Mrs Bob I said "Good, she will be glad to think you asked after her" the said "She's very nice, very nice." [It is Monday night Dearest & bue thought I am canteen corporal which means I have whang about the wet canteen for about an hour. I dont begin until seven & in the meantime I have time to finish this letter to you. Reading it back I dont like it very much. But its inevitable that one strikes a bad mood for writing sometimes. I didn't get a letter from you yesterday but that was because you went to Cheffarton. [Today I sent you a birthday telegram. It will probably arrive too early but its better that way. Dearest I do hope you have a good birthday. And here I will stop Dearest & later I will write you another letter maybe not so long but mean I hope. You have all my love & thoughts Dearest & bue Kenneth,

H W Friend

Mrs Kenneth von Bibra
Rowallan
Hawkesbury
Patrons

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION

H.W. Friend

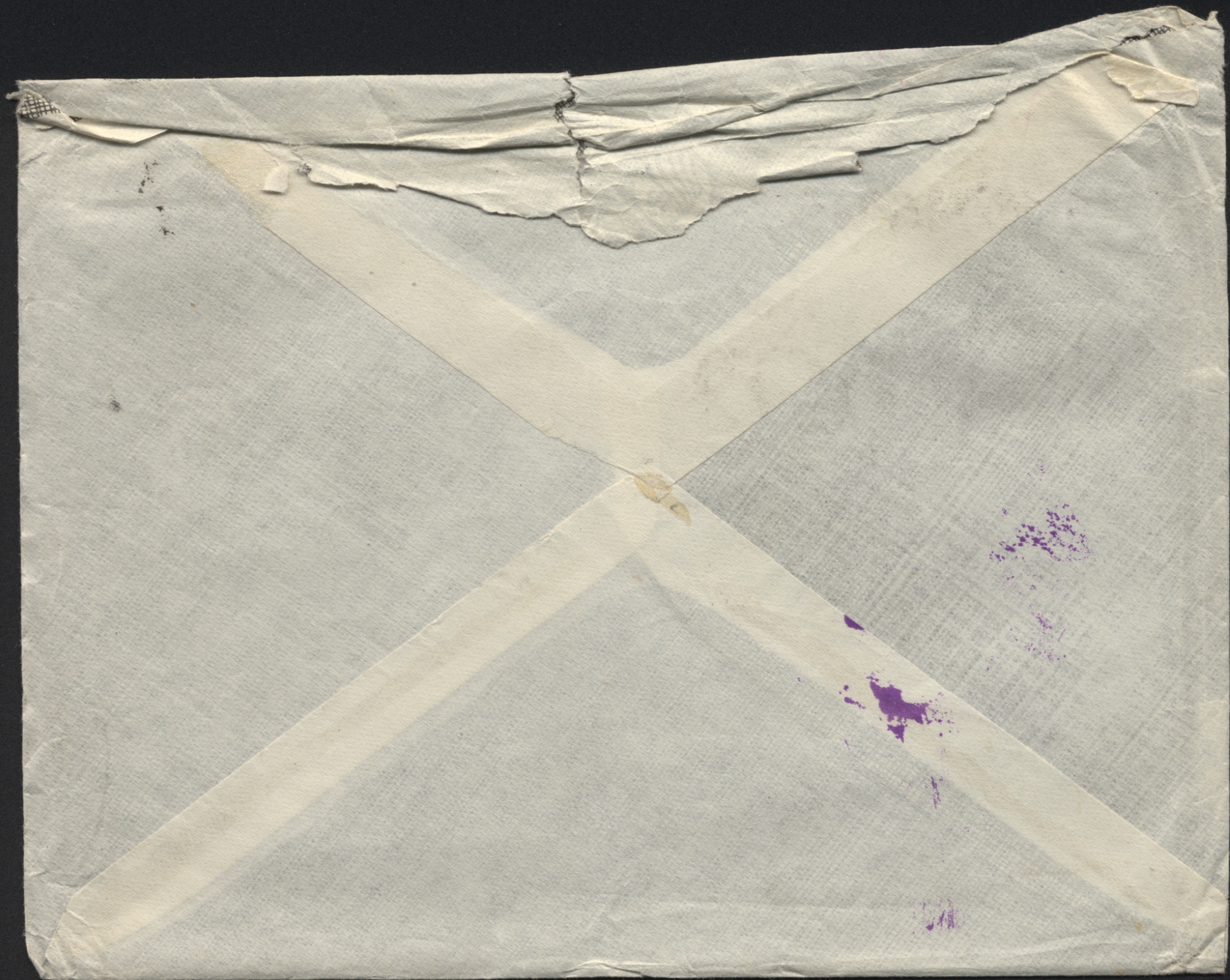
Jan. 41




Mrs Kenneth von Bibra
Powelltown
Healesville
Victoria
Australia

PASSED BY CENSOR
No. 3197

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
AWM2019.22.43



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Cpl R.C. von Bibra VX29109 21st Anti-Tank Coy St. 2
21st Inft. Bde. A.I.F. Abroad
January 7.

Dearest Joan With Chris Vic & Jack Callyan I've just been to the pictures. It was a most absurd show called The Tescans but Jack Oakie was in it & there were some titres en Français so I suppose it wasn't a total loss. Do you know we must go to the pictures at least three or four times a week when we are free. You see we have tea at five, by six, when the first session of the pictures begins, its already dark & there's nothing to do. Certainly there is the J.M.C.A. but where I'm now writing to you, but its not easy to come over here & so we go to the pictures. [Last night we were out all night doing sectional work. In between our shifts we were able to sleep at first but after two o'clock it got a bit cold. You see we only had overcoats & ground sheets. At about four, we began our march back to camp. We got there at about six. Then after breakfast we were free to sleep until lunch at twelve thirty (Now in a corner of the room a young man is talking about a trip he had to Cairo. "We got a guide" he said. "His name was Abdul") I slept & dreamt of you. What, I cannot remember except that we were in a café. I've often meant to give you a picture of my tent mates. I think I'll try & describe one in each letter. I'll start with the Englishman called Edgar who sleeps next to Chris. Edgar must be nearly fourty. He came from Coventry a good many years ago & since then has worked as a station worker, mostly in Victoria. He's tall, has white bandy legs that are inclined to give him trouble, a large bandy sort of nose, a non-descript mouth temporarily hidden under a reddish moustache & a pair of small brown eyes that remind one of a squirrel

Often he reminds you of a squirrel & this not only because of his eyes. He's a bachelor, there was a girl in Ireland years ago & I think he secretly believes that she is still free & that he will meet her again although he has not heard from her for years, & very careful in his ways. Apparently he always has been careful for he always has money. Anyway he's like a squirrel because he often has a goodly stock of chocolate or cake stored away. Once Chris met him at the canteen quite laden with stuff & he threw, with his small eyes, such a glance as might a frugal squirrel. Women worry him a bit. He's no oil painting & besides is what the boys call a regular Pom so that he has, I imagine, little success in this line. Nostalgically he's told me sometimes of the opportunities for happy times he missed as a young man in Ireland because of his conventional character. He doesn't put it that way of course but says mostly likely "You see I didn't think it was right then." Occasionally, apparently, he's had short lived affairs in Australia. For the copulative article he has one expression beginning with "n" which always sounds very odd from a prown man. He's made about cameras & is really not a bad photographer. Since leaving Australia he's sold two thought two cameras & now plans to get a Leica. He calls me Ken. Will lend me money if I want it & finds it hard to place me in his world, the English world, which divides the race into gentlemen & others. Perhaps he's not quite as constrained as that. I was thinking only the other day he's taken a veneer of Australian lack of class respect. I wondered if he went back to Ireland what his reaction would be to a real English gentleman. Lord that's all. Dunno why he's in the war feeling for Awlde Country I think. [But maybe that's not very interesting to you Sweetest one.

Do you know that I would like to see you all as you look now, and that includes Grandma. I can't see me like they used to see me dancing a Lancers. It wouldn't be very respectful I suppose. May be it's a good idea though. I don't suppose you can get me two socks woollen singlets from Knights - they know the size. How can send them by this mail. I just sometimes, whether this mail, you might send a Saturday issues of the Argus. It seems funny I can't get news in time now in a strange way. By the way the Donald cutting's have been most welcome. Chris too, is an assumption. I see the picture you sent me of you N.T.? What is that armed with that appears like thick handle arrangement beside you. It takes before the first ball has it? I see tonight, Dennis' Grandmother. Nothing much doing in Australia. It is just about time Mother was coming up behind the hills preparing your dinners. Wonder what you have Dennis' tea. Do you often stay in town long. You still have your breakfast there I suppose. Are you still getting Rabaul for Lunch or dinner. I see you are getting Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday Monday Tuesday

slow & the girl in it called Jean Parker reminded me of you. It was a terrible picture but she was really a bit like you & it pleased me to look at her. She did her hair in the brushed up piled high way that I've always said suited you. [ Today we are going out on an all day exercise again. Chris persists again coming out despite blistered heels & a sore throat. He really stands up to things wonderfully well. The mail here is late this week. Its not expected until tomorrow. Does mine arrive fairly regularly. We've had a strange visitor in our tent - a Palestinian ~~badger~~ mole. We haven't seen him, you never do see them only a succession of tiny dirt hills that mark their subterranean course. This one began by burrowing on one side of our tent & a couple of nights later some one heard noises under his bunk & then next morning found the tell-tale heap of dirt. A couple of days later the mounds showed on the other side of the tent. You see these lines of mole hills all over the fields & all thanks make a practice of trying to dig the moles out with bayonets. Fortunately, however, they never catch up with the wily little animals. And now Dearest Love I must stop. You have all my love & thoughts sweetest. Keep well & look after yourself carefully. I'm very well. Love to Molly T.T. All my love once more Dearest Kenneth.

H. Friend


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AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
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Cpl. Koon Bitra 21st Anti Tank Coy H.Q. 21st Inft. Bde A.I.F
Abroad.

Dearest Joan Tollay I received your letter dated December 14 in which you tell of receiving my first letter from Cere. I'm glad. It was a lovely letter & you seemed much, much brighter & I can understand that easily. It must have been horrible writing without getting an answer. [ I'm glad you went down to see Jack. I felt they must be working so hard as to make it nearly impossible to come up & see you. Did they enquire after me. You didn't say. [ Tollay is Monday & I'm back to real work for the first time since being on the magazine. Yesterday, Sunday, we went to Gaya Ridge. There wasn't much to see but it was an outing. We caught the bus back fairly late & as we rattled along at a bare fourty or so, it was an Arab driver, I was reminded of that day we went to Fountainbleau. Do you remember how the bus rattled there along so fast? Coming into the darkness I think we all felt a bit low. It was one of these misty cold evenings, when a match struck in the bus seems cheerful & warm & when its good to have thoughts of a warm fire & home. I felt it & Chris, when I asked him how it went said, "Pretty low". But it wasn't so bad, we had warm food when we got back other went to bed.

I had to stop there and go on the afternoon parade. Now I am in the orderly room minding it for the orderly room clerk who has gone to the movies. This suits me right down to the ground. It means I have a typewriter and a lantern to see by. But do you remember that bus ride ? How fast that frog went and then coming back to Montparnasse I can't remember where we went for dinner that night I wish I could But I do remember the evening very well. Do you remember that always Ive had a sort of obsession ~~xxx~~ that I'm to come into a city towards dusk one night and its to be a very important event in my life, a sort of success token. Often Ive thought momentarily Ive seen, in some place, the sloping street, the wall that marks the entrance to ~~xxx~~ this place but never have I really met it. Its something Ive had for years and its origins I can never remember. Anyway thinking back to that night in Paris I imagine now that I was on the look out in my subsconcious for that steet of my imagination.

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On Saturday afternoon, Chris, Jack Calligan and I went across to the nearby communal farm. We were well received and given as a guide a mysterious young man who talked like an American although he denied being one and would not say where he came from. Among other things he told us, things about himself, were his parents were among the richest in Tel Aviv but that he had felt himself forced to support by actual work the communal farm idea. He was not a farmer but a lawyer. He was an odd young man with red hair, a short nose, a slightly chipped tooth that looked as if its edge would be very sharp and a lot of hair that showed at the neck of his open shirt. He showed us the rabbits they breed, then the ducks, then the cows and finally they home pasture paddocks from which the cow food is cut and the market garden. Everything seemed to be pretty well organised. For instance all the water on the farm comes from a bore. This water like ours has a high mineral content. To lessen this, water is never put directly on the ground but scattered through the air by a big sprinkler system. In this way much of the mineral content of the water is neutralised in passing through the air. It might be handy for you to know that. Here they never put the bore water directly on the ground otherwise it harms the plant life. All the big paddocks were fallow it not being the season for growing. The acerage of the farm is about 500 and the people who live on it and work it number 150. He was a very enthusiastic young man and it was not long before we were onto the subject of Arab and Jew and English administration. He did not mince words about the English administration and made out a story in which he claimed that the Jews were doing the Arabs a favour by buying up their land. He put it this way. An Arab he says has 20 acres and gets a few pounds off it each year. We come along and buy half the land for a good price. This allows the Arab to buy machinery etc to develop the half he has left and he should think himself a very lucky fellow. Personally I couldn't agree with many of his arguments and told him so. He had that infuriating Jew sureness, the blindness to everything you say or thing. Still he was very interesting and we enjoyed seeing the farm, hearing him talk. Just before we went he told us that he was, in his spare time, studying English literature. The books he was studying or rather the authors were Shaw, Lawrence, Priestly (surely a strange choice) Galsworthy and Ive forgotten the other. Anyway he said Lawrrence was a great socialist . This I could not agree with either. At the gates, they were still barbed wired from the recent riots, we all shook hands and parted good friends. Oh I forgot to tell you that the creche system on this farm operates in quite an extensive way. Not only do the children spend their days in the creche but the nights too, the parents only talking them in any spare time they might have during the day or the evening. Just as we were leaving two or three couples had evidntly just been along to collect their infants and were standing watching them play about the farm yard. Is it a good idea or not ? Oh and another thing. Where the communal farmers those of the extreme left wing and there are all shades of political thought in these farms differ from the commos is that the communal farmers are nationalistic and that of course leaves a fairly big gulf. After we had left the farm we went over and sat down on a nearby hillock and Chris produced a tin of peaches and another of cream all of which he had got in his comforts fund christmas hamper These we ate and discussed the farm. Chris said its funny the way all thse Jews are the sons of rich parents and tell you so. Its true that they do. The christmas hamper was quite a thing. Everyman in the camp got one. In it was a plumb pudding, toothbrush, paste, sweets and God knows what else. In each packet was a card from the donor. Mine was given by someone in New South Wales and said Happy christmas and safe return or something like that. I suppose one should write..;. Incidentally in a letter from the old Lady received today she mentionned

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that a cake was on the way. I'll bet she didn't tell you. Its rather funny I think. Dont say anything but maybe she's told you. Anyway I shouldn't eat cake. The only thing is that the other young gentlmen in the tent periodically receive well sealed tins and produce home made affairs which are passed round. How nice of Justin to send you a cable. I'm afraid it was all my fault. If I had not been a bit upset by what he said maybe you would have taken it in the way he probably meant it. Yes? Its good to think they're oke. Maybe Eve is a real person Seems a bit hard to get me out of eve. Maybe its a little child Justin has adopted or is that too flighty. I cannot tell you how pleased I was when I got your letter this morning and you seemed so much happier. Have you seen anything of Geoff Hutton, Basil or anyone else or have you been keeping out of their orbit ? You seem to have been living rather a hermit life but I suppose having your Aunt Kitty made much going about difficult. And what of the Ebbos, Al and Moya. I cannot understand why the windmill is not behaving better. Why when I was there we had to turn the thing off. Are you using any water in the paddocks ? By the way as the summer advances be sure and see that Gunyah and the other horses get enough water. Probably the holes will dry up and they will have to come into the yard for a drink. How is Gunyah looking has she lost much condition. What did Cooper say about her. Nothing good as far as Mr. G is concerned I'll wager I'm glad Gardner's cows went away looking so well and that he was pleased. Does Mr. Lam ever put in an appearance, politely, unobtrusively ? Today Chris was on cook house fatigue. Imagine him in giggle suit, it never seems to fit him very well and on his head a woollen cap, washing innumerable dishes and greasy dixies. But strange to say he doesn't really mind cook house. I used to be able to tolerate it but Chris I'm sure almost likes it. I think he gets some satisfaction out of doing the job on his own and doing it well. That is something which you seldom do in the army. I mean do a job alone. Unfortunately he cut his finger. Not too badly though. On Wednesday as I told you in my last letter I think, Chris, Vic and I go to Tel Aviv for two day's leave. None of us are really very excited but I think we will enjoy it when we get there. At least we will be able to go for a walk on out own , drink a cup of coffe and think if nothing else. You know its extraordinary how one stops thinking here. I paused typing then and heard from down the road men singing they're the day's leave men from Tel Aviv. Your suggestion that you make a sort of diary out of some of the correspondence is, I think , a very good one from my point of view. All along Ive presumed you would keep all the letters and that they would make, in a sense, a sort of diary of certain things. Because after all the things Intell you are just the sort of things that have always mattered, had importance. I suppose before I'd ever written anything on towards a fairer land you had heard a great part of it and not in that form attall. Will it be much trouble though Dearest One And here Dearest One I must end. I am writing another letter to you and I want to get on with it. It is one which will go through a special post but should reach you quite soon. Its a matter of censorship. There's nothing in it to puzzle your brains about so dont be impatient for its coming. Darling you have all my love and thoughts. Keep well and do be careful in the car. It seems a long way for you to drive to Geelong and back in one day. Dont over do things, especially in the garden. By the way do you ever water the big oak trees. All love again Dearest

Remeth

H.W.F.

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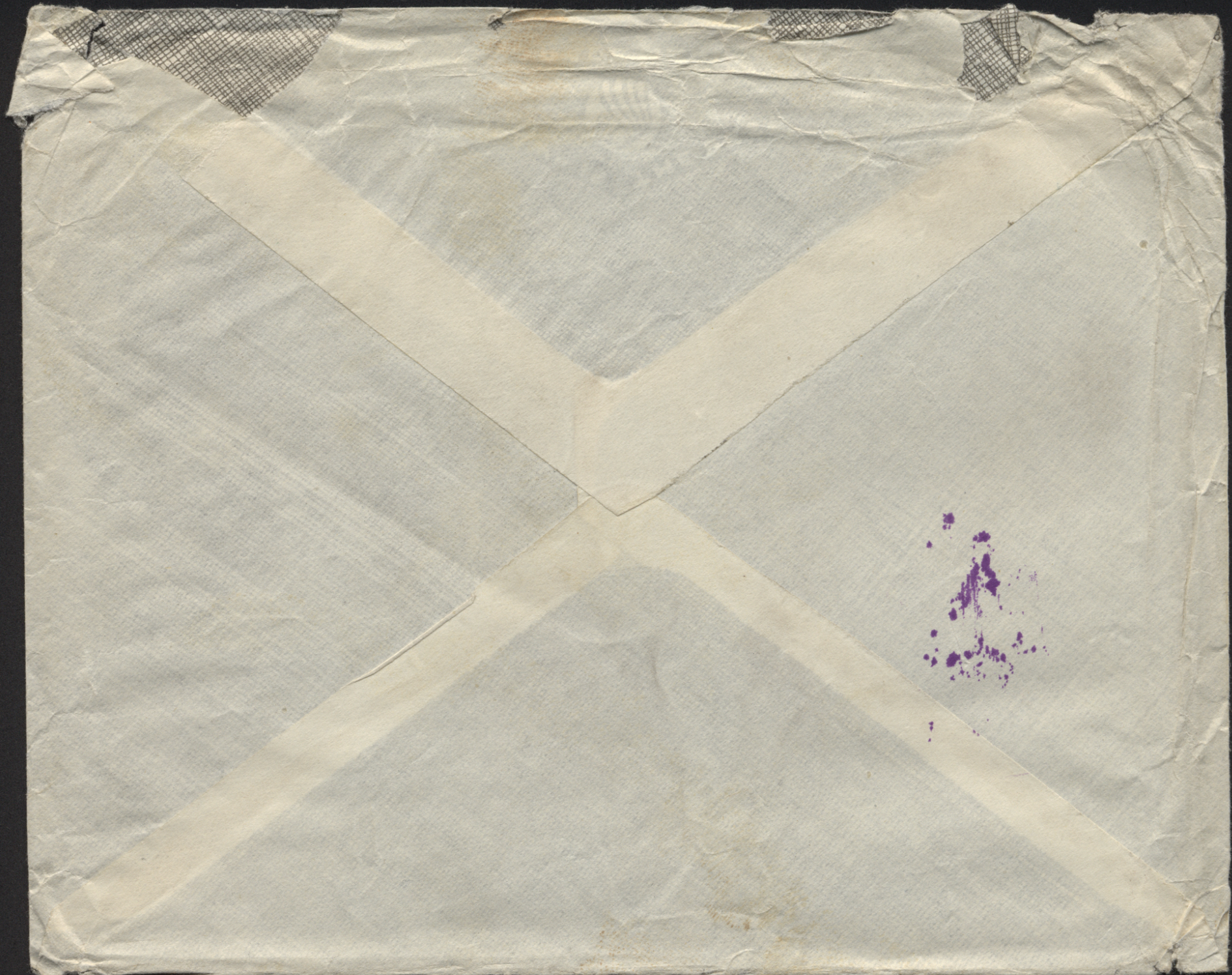

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AWM2019.22.43

Lt. R. von Bibra 1x29109 21st Anti-Tank Coy. H. Q. 21st
Inft. Bde. A. I. F. Abroad.

Dearest Joan, I'm in the tent, using my blankets as a table & its a lovely sunny Spring like afternoon. One of those afternoons when you can see clearly to the Judean Hills that hide the Wilderness & when light brings into being, at different times during the day, villages, scenes that are usually obscured by distance or shadow. It's a sort of false Spring here at the present time. This is trying for the farmers, all their crops have shot too early but fine for us because the climate is comparatively mild as a result. Yesterday I received three letters, two from the family one from you which had evidently been sent to the wrong unit. They were comparatively old. One contained your triolet which I loved. I showed it to Chris & he laughed & said it was fine. He, by the way, knew of the existence of triolets & was able to quote me one off hand. I cannot remember it but will try & put it in later. Also in your letter was the conversation between Dick & Wally which I read out to Chris to our mutual enjoyment. Then today arrived the mail that should have come on Thursday. Today by the way is January 11. (Your birthday. Did you get the cable?) I've never put the date on earlier letters as I was under the impression it was not allowed. Now I learn this is not so. Today I have been orderly corporal. This is considered rightly an easy job. Your letter that arrived today had more photographs. Thanks Dearest One. I really love getting them. I showed them to Chris. He was very interested & looked intently for the line which he has now decided is a roundness of the profile & as such is enviable. Of George, by the way, he said what a saturnine fellow he is. Of Mr Gaulie he said me.....

Chris by the way is very anxious to know how all his old Caunto - Stosie's, the Florentino, Mario's progress under the strain of war. If you should go to any of them let us know how they fare. Do they ever enquire after me by the way? [I'm sorry the Shepparton trip wasn't so exciting but if it did nothing else, it made home seem very good. Another day, another month to feed. Anyway it will make Mr Turner smile & doubtless since my departure he's had less sale than before. But who is going to train it Sweetest One? Neither you or Molly would be up to the job. It will have to be Walter I suppose. [I was very amused, by the way, at how in the letter yesterday you described how Walter was very much in the picture when Dick Smith was about. [Don't worry too much about the fee for Liberal. If they change the fuel amount it's still reasonable. After all I was not a member for very long & no one knew me. I hope it went off alright. It's likely by the way that having been reduced so little Hungary will be pretty wild when she foals so be sure & handle her as much as possible. The old cart & a day stunt & bring her into the stable regard every now again. A foaling mare by the way will generally make for water so don't have her in a paddock where she would get cast. Still that is a very long way off. I'm very pleased about it all.

I had a letter from Moya today. She seems to have liked Rowallan a lot. She told me too about the farm in France. Apparently she wants to go back to it eventually. It was good hearing from her. I felt she had altered quite a bit really, for the less foolishly intense I'd say. When I say foolishly intense, I mean worldly intense. Actually I know Moya's feelings & sensibilities are the.

I've just finished reading another of C. S. Forester's books called The Peacemaker. Its an odd book & I think you would like it. I read it in a few hours. Try & get it. Tomorrow is Sunday & Chris & Vic want me to go over to Ascalon again. I'd rather like to last fall I should do an article on Palestine today especially as I've got so much material from the stuff I wrote in the magazine. I'll see what the day is like. If it is like today I will find it hard to resist. The other night over in the Y. M. C. A. but I picked up what I imagine was a fairly recent copy of The Home. There was an article or two by Clarice, one on contemporary English art, interesting & very simply written so much so in fact that you wonder if she really knows her subject. There was also a short story by Basil. It was called The White Gloves & was the most awful exposure of he colonel that I've ever struck. It simply made me squirm for him. Now his enemies must have gloated over it. It was all about his gastronomic knowledge, his world travels, his knowledge of le Français et le monde, & a few lines about the white gloves, the waiter that found them, the girl who lost them. He really is an awful humbug. You must get the number. There was some quite good photography in it anyway. As a publication it seems to have improved. [What is the latest news of Andrew. Doubtless he's been in action by now. [Last night I met Wally Conder who is a sort of entertainments organiser out here. He's a major & runs the A.I.F. News a newspaper for the troops & all the picture shows & concerts that are put on. He's an odd fellow. Offered me a job with the A.I.F. News. It would be quite an impossible post & I told him no. He's full of bright ideas.

I think you had better send me some more money Dearest One. I have about £60 left in travellers cheques but you never know when you will go on leave & that generally costs me a good bit. I would have had a lot more from the original £150 but I've had to lend a lot & it cannot be paid back for a long time to come. You had better send £50. Get Dow to send it across so as not to upset your account. When you get it pay it into my Pay Book by going to Craig's Buildings. [Later. I'm the Y.M.C.A. but drinking a cup of coffee & eating biscuits. Chris Pas just gone on guard. With him he carries a newspaper cutting of the stars to be seen in this Hemisphere which I found the other day in one of the local papers. Unfortunately, despite a strong moon, he cannot see to read it. [It's strange to think that tonight is Saturday night. You see we work all day Saturday now so that it seems much like any other day. [I forgot to tell you that talking to Conder I asked him why he didn't bring the Palestine Symphony Orchestra, or part of it out to the camps. It's been my belief that des boys would & would appreciate good music as much as the trip the orchestra's now play. But apparently I've been wrong. Conder told me he once brought all the strings out on a tour of the camps. She lost over a £100 on the venture & since then it's been the old popular stuff. It's a pity not only for the people who would like whom he then stuff but also for the orchestra players for most of them are from the Symphony Orchestra & deserts, I imagine, playing trips. [Chris Pas a wonderful little for a book. It is "My Soul I Laughed". It's the stock expression of the boys. If they are going to tell you of some incident, comic or tragic

they inevitably preface it by - My God I laughed -
Lot once, but a dozen times you will learn it in a day.
What strange people we Aussies are, for here, we are all
classed as Aussies. There is a sort of bayen, unsureness
that because, of our new land toughness, becomes as
hard as nails in provocation or conjection. I was only
thinking of it one night some time ago in a concert when some of his
boys, hats well on the sides of their heads, marched
in while a woman was singing rather beautifully. They
made no attempt to move quietly & were self conciously
bayen about it & yet having sat down they were part of
a most attentive & appreciative audience. Strange. [You
haven't answered some of the questions I've asked you Dearest.
For example Lew Stutten or the Red Cross acknowledged the
cheque. Wasn't there a small thing in the parcel from
India. Did you find anything in the sleeping bag or the
boots. Maybe you haven't had time though. [Today was
pay day & that always means a lot of trade for the wet
canteen. We had a couple of bottles tonight, the beer by the
way is Victorian, & found like not too bad he told me. I
had one bottle, not because it was pay night but because
I felt like it, but I dont really enjoy the beer in
camp. Its terribly gassy & I find getting one bottle down
something of an effort. Show Mr Milne would sneer if he
would hear that. What has happened to him by the way.
Has he cut down many more trees. [Tomorrow being Sunday
there should be another letter from you. I'm hoping so.
And now I'll stop Dearest love. [But one word of warning Dearest.
You must not let T.T. get spoiled. You spoke of the noise he made in
the night at your Aunt Kitty's. You should be able to stop that.
I know his a wonderful comfort to you but you must remain
firm. Still like you all the better for it.

Monday Night. Sorry Dearest but I got your last letter. It was the one in which you tell of your visit to Allan's cottage & Henry's story that she dyes her hair. I thought the letter seemed a bit sad & depressed but by now, of course, you will have forgotten the mood in which you wrote it. Yesterday Curtis came up to see me and we had dinner together. He seemed pretty well. What an odd fellow he is, completely remote from us really. There's no denying he has plenty of ~~[illegible]~~ confidence in himself but not in an objectionable way. You decided by the way not to write the newspaper article. Curtis told me yesterday that the censors would probably never put it through or if they did it might take six months. I'm in the J.M.C.B. Cut, ~~[illegible]~~ & Chris is here too having apparently conquered his lady Lord of the place. I'm must end this letter on this page Dearest one. Tonight I'm rather tired. Just now I bought a cup of coffee & had to open my wallet to pay. The young Jew behind the counter said "Beautiful girl" seeing the photograph. I was half-pleased half-annoyed. I'm sick of the Jews. Lady all of them, like René, never listen to what you say & are only interested in their own ideas. You remember the young man who had lunch with us at the Society & who told you about his girl, I don't want to mention his name. Well its true he is a philistine & a lot of other things including complacent, but he's a much better fellow than I thought at first. There's a lot to him. He's got plenty of strength of character too. And here my Dearest but I must stop. You have all my love & thoughts & I hope & hope you are not too unhappy & lonely. You mustn't be Dearest. Its wrong & don't get homed. All my love once more sweetest

Kenneth

H.W. Friend




AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43



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Cpl K. von Bibra, 1st Eng Coy 21st Anti Tank
Coy. H.Q. 21st Inf. Bde A.I.F. Ahmed

A.C.F.



AUSTRALIAN COMFORTS FUND

January 14 1940

Dearest Joan, Today, late as only things can be in the Army, your Christmas telegram arrived & tonight I received another from Don & Barbara. Yours by the way arrived with the strangest signature address, one was Boubilra, the other Boubilea which I think of the many brilliant efforts we known, is easily the best. Thanks for the telegram Sweet One. Last night it rained very hard, so hard that it woke me & this morning when we went out to the 6.45 a.m. roll call, we sank deep in the mud, all ready for impressions. Marching along a road this morning it was hard to keep your feet firmly implanted. [Sometimes, on wet days, marching along a muddy road at which I have to look down upon, to avoid the bigger puddles, I realise more than usual, the drabness the regimentation of the army & all because I see a line of dirty, mud caked boots. [By the way I've just seen the Stone in which was Basil's Cut & Story It was November 1, 1940. You really

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must get it. I've just begun to read one of the last books in my library, Peter Simple by Marryat. [In a daily newspaper we get here from one of the cities I've read that there is a new Thomas Mann out in English. It has Goethe as the chief character apparently & is a most complicated story if story it may be called. Another book that sounds interesting is another Hemingway, greater than A Farewell To Arms according to the reviewer. Personally I don't think Larry capable of ever repeating A Farewell. I don't think he's got it in him any longer. [I'm writing this letter in very small writing because I seem to use too much paper. This morning I sent two letters off to you & they both cost 3/- each. Don't think though Dearest that I will stop writing long letters because of this though. It's cheap, I consider really. How hard it must be for some of the married men on their 2/- a day though. What a lot we've got to be

A.C.F.

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thankful for. Sometimes I feel bad seeing some of these 2/- a day fellows trying to make things meet. You see they really have to make sacrifices, pictures hardly ever, beer as seldom & even leave is often a treat they find hard to finance. It makes me feel rather a fraud. [There is one fellow in my tent. He got married just before we left. He's very horsey, a rough rider & a good one I hear. I think I told you how, describing his marriage day he kept saying how first his wife "got stirred up" & finally him, at the church. Well now he has very little money. He hardly drinks at all, I've never seen him at the pictures & the other day if we hadn't all thrown something into a pool he wouldn't have been able to go on leave. He didn't ask for the money. It was some of the fellows in the tent who discovered why he wasn't going

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on leave. And the sequel of the story is that when he went on leave he bought a present for his wife with most of the money. It was probably a terrible present if I know anything about it, an embroidered cushion cover with an incredible rising sun perhaps but there you are. And he's no sissy far from it. [The other day I was talking to this fellow about mares & their foals. It was about Gunyah actually I was suggesting that being handled so little she might be inclined to be wild with her foal. He said not necessarily so, & told me about an old mare ~~[illegible]~~ who was the wildest mother he'd ever known. He told it something like this. "Old Jack Patcher up there (he always mentions the names of places as if all the world must know them) owned her. Rode her for years he did, never got her in foal. She was too 'andy I suppose. Anyway one day

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there she gets out on the road & runs with a young ~~[illegible]~~ black stallion. She gets in foal so old Patcher sells her to James (the man the story teller was working for at the time.) Well we called her Patcher (Tasted her name) Well she foaled & the old devil was as wild with that foal as I've ever seen any horse. Couldn't get near her. Slat pleased with 'ersilf, I reckon. Why on the first day there she was in the haddock with a big draught & when it comes up to smell her foal why, she nearly goes mad. Screams & kicks like as if the draught had eaten her foal. Dunno how the foal escaped. Well do you know we couldn't get near her & that foal. She'd go round & round it, crazy if we shut her up in a stall. And in the end the foal gets killed. Shes always running with it & one night

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it goes smack into a wire fence
breaks its neck. Yes she was a
wild old b— "[Still I'm sure
Sunyah will be O.K. That's an
exceptional story like the one you
sent me in the newspaper cutting.
What brave fellow to pull that crate
through the icy Atlantic. It was
a lovely story Dearest. [And here
tonight I'll stop Dearest & bye. Tomorrow
we go out on bivouac so I will finish
this on Thursday night [Thursday
afternoon. We got back from the bivouac
this morning & at about ten o'clock. I
slept for an hour, then had a shower &
lunch, then slept for another half hour
& now am over in the Y.M.C.A. writing to
you. [The bivouac was quite a good one
We reached our positions at about 4 p.m.
Sea was at about six & from then
on till 4 a.m. this morning we took
it in turns to do duty. When we were
off duty we lay down on the ground
with our waterproof sheets under us
one blanket over us. It was pretty
cold but not really too bad. As I
lay wanting for my first sleep

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I thought how when, in summer time, you had suggested sleeping outside, I had determined not to be drawn. I had thought-far too uncomfortable. Conditions here, if I could have envisaged them, would I'm sure, have been completely out of the question for me. [From about 1.30 until 4 a.m. my section was on guard. I took the first watch. The moon was up light; the shadow of the tall barbed wire fence that surrounded a nearby orange grove, occupied only a few inches of ground & away in front of me were the sand hills hiding the sea that I could just hear. Occasionally a jackal howled & was answered by another. Near where I stood, a sweet smelling mimosa of some sort, pleased me. It was a lovely night & for a long time I stood thinking of you, Rowallan, nights there spent over the fire with a book. For some reason I remembered my old Bluey coat. I recalled how I promised to get Jack one once. And I thought I would like you to give Jack my old coat if no one at home uses it. I'm afraid it would be too

A.C.F.

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big for either you or Molly. But don't / we it away if you don't feel like it Dearest one. Maybe you like seeing it hard in the passage. If, however you should give it to Jack, have it cleaned first. You see I can get a new one when I come back. [ Do you remember the moles that I told you about? Well yesterday for the first time I saw one. An Arab had got it & was carrying it home, doubtless to eat. He stopped to show it to us. It was about the size of a baby puppy & not unlike one. In color it was grey, it was blind but had eye sockets, a tiny pink nail of a nose & a mouth that went right across the front of its head. To show us how it would burrow the Arab gave it its temporary freedom & in less than a minute it had disappeared from view. We dug down in front of it so that we could hear it fairly tearing the earth away with its powerful little jaws. I felt so sorry for it that I bought it from the Arab & last night doubtless it was still burrowing. [ Probably the act of buying put me down, for some of the boys, as having more money

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than sense. I'm having a bit of trouble with one of my big toes. When I march on it a lot, the bone above the ball gets tender, & although I'm not in actual pain it has its discomfort. Its nothing to worry about probably a shortage of lubricating juice which in time will right itself. I'm finding Peter Simple entertaining. I took him out in my respirator yesterday & had several opportunities to read. By the way as we marched along the main road at one stage Curtis & his general swept by with pennant flying. I don't know whether Curtis saw us or not. He was sitting hunched up in the back rather like poor-little rich boy. And Dearest one I must end. I will write, I hope, another letter for this mail which doesn't close for another day. Now have all my love Dearest & all my thoughts

Kenneth.

H.W. Friend

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43

H.W. Friend

By air mail.

Jan 29







**RED SHIELD HUTS**
*for Australian Troops*

PASSED BY CENSOR
No. 3197

Mrs Kenneth, von Bibra
Rowallan
Hathaway
Victoria
Australia

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
AWM2019.22.43



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43

Cpl. K. von Bibra 1 x 2 g 10 g 21st Anti Tank Coy
H.Q. 21st Inft. Bde 7th Div. A.I.F. Abroad

Dearest Joan, I'm in the picture show again. Chris is sitting beside me reading the Virginians & eating ice cream. He is only reading the Virginians because it has something to say about the South. His love of the south reaches, it seems to me, the proportions of a phobia at times. You know his little Southern flag I've told you about. Well when he's drunk a certain amount & finds himself in comparatively congenial company be it English, Jew or Arab he produces the flag not only to the mistification of the last named who never understands anyway but also to the other two who find it hard to understand how someone from Australia should insist on naming exactly the 12 (or is it 13?) states of the Confederacy to them. He's a strange fellow but we get on remarkably well & have, I think, a mutual respect. I'd be really lost without him. [Yesterday I wrote you a letter but this one is a special one. It's a Green Envelope one. This means it won't be censored by our officers but maybe somewhere else although not definitely. Before you can get a Green Envelope you must sign a declaration saying you will not disclose vital information. I believe you can have one envelope a month. [So you see Dearest one I can call you my most beautiful & cleverest of cats & I can tell you how I long to be back with you, how I miss playing & all the other things which, I've thought, but not written since leaving.

Sunday morning. Last night I had to end because the picture began Dearest. It was called the Earl of Chicago & was the strangest picture bordering all the time on the absurd, the ridiculous yet just jetting away with it, or so it seemed to me. After the picture was over there was no where to write so I went to bed. Too this morning I have about half an hour before Church Parade. [ First of all you must know that I love you as intensely as I've ever done & that physically you're everything to me. At night sometimes I lay in bed & think of your white breasts, your belly, always so taught & indrawn your lovely tail moving at my bidding & the other, & I remember the look on your face & God Love I want you. At other times I think about you giving me food, talking home, working in the garden, always being so good to me. I like to think of our dinners best. Such lovely food you used to give me & always you were so glad when I enjoyed it & then in the sitting room together with T.T. stretched out opening a sleepy, benevolent eye to take in the young people. And then going to bed to lie awake, never for long, holding you close perhaps or merely touching you with my hand. God Love good it was. You're the most beautiful wife Dearest one. I wouldn't change you for anything. I wonder if the night gown with the blue ribbon around it, the one you wore when you came back from England, still endures. I hope it does.

Here, sometimes I wear pyjamas, sometimes I don't. If I'm on guard for instance & must get up quickly, I sleep in singlet & underpants & also when my pyjamas are at the wash I wear the same costume. Yes, for some reason I have only one pair of pyjamas. I haven't bought another pair because it doesn't seem worth while somehow. Don't think I'm letting myself go. I still have showers & clean my teeth regularly. Does that sound funny. Actually quite half our people don't wear pyjamas at any time. And while I'm on this personal subject I do go to the lavatory regularly. I eat plenty of oranges & grapefruit & have no trouble at all. The only difficulty is finding paper. I use Don's letters, Mother's letters but I can't bring myself to use yours although I know you'd prefer me to do this rather than use some dirty old newspaper. Sometimes, however I'm able to get down on a roll of real sanitary paper. Nearly always I feel very well & if I don't it is mainly due, I'm sure, to eating too much stinking food. It's a great temptation to eat too much. You see eating is one of the pleasures in this comparatively primitive existence. Now I must stop for the present. Dorothy & Cornelius & one & so & heard some smug religious say his piece. More later.

[The church parade is over & how right I was; it was as usual Copeless. Even the boys themselves say "my word he's a poor speaker." Generally they are pretty tolerant & the more blood & fire & unexpected death the more they seem to admire a speaker.

He was really pathetic but it's annoying too. [ I'm in the tent now using my blankets as a writing table. In this tent there are 12 men. There's little room & privacy none, unless you can hide under your blankets. The worst feature of it is that there are three or four men who never speak but they yell. Every second word rhymes with truck, no exaggeration, though after hour, week after week, it becomes a bit wearysome. Still it could be much worse. They let Chris & I well alone so its tolerable. [ Actually our life here doesn't differ much from that at Puchapunyal. Only this morning I was thinking about a morning there. I think it was because we had poached eggs for breakfast. It made me remember one Sunday at Puchapunyal when I was on cook house fatigue & there were eggs for breakfast. I was worried that I would not be off in time to meet you. Then you came, looking lovely, with the Lettings & do you remember how very bravely we went off into the gully after lunch. How fovee they seemed those stolen plays. [ Do you want very often & very much Dearest one? Is it horrible. That big bed must be so wide but it can't be long Loveliest. Which side do you sleep on. Your old one I suppose so you & T.T. can see each other. I wonder if T.T. misses me much. Do you think he does. He surely must have forgotten me. [ This afternoon we are going to Gaza. We expect to see Samson's tomb among other things. I don't feel excited about this but it would be a pity to miss it. If only you were here. Chris says he would like to come back here after the war with Cath. Although I like this place I wouldn't want to bring you here a great deal. What will we do

5.

Its Monday night and I am in the orderly room. Ive just finished an ordinary letter to you, one that must be posted first thing in the morning. In it I said I was writing another letter but didn't say what sort. I though I would leave it as a suprise. It must seem strange to you reading this letter My Sweet. Like getting a letter from a lover who has suddenly become very loving all again. Can you and do you put in the things which I say in this letter ~~and mean~~ into the others Loveliest? I know its hard but when I write to you I always think of you in the most loving, wanting thoughts although I cannot bring myself to put them down on paper for the young gentlemen to read. You do understand dont you ? [Ive spent a good bit of the money I took away with me. I havent been very careful of it and in addition Ive spent a lot on Vic and Chris. You see apart from their three shillings a day they have nothing and that 3/- goes nowhere so I pay a lot. Ive still got over half left I think so dont plan to send any more. When I get low I'll write and you can wire it to some bank. Don will doubtless think Ive been very extravagant. How much did I have to begin with about £150 I think. How's your money hanging out. Do you balance your budget or not ? I had to pause there and do a little sewing. Do you remember the pugaree business. Well today strangely enough we were issued with these contraptions and before putting them on our hats we have to sew our color patches upon them. In our case this has to be done before the morning as there is some sort of ceremonial rehearsal for an inspection or in other words a pansy parade as the boys have it, tomorrow. I did mine quite effectively I think. Certainly my best bit of needle work to date. Not that Ive had to do a lot. Its amazing just how little the so called rigours of active service have touched any of us yet. The tent has filled with people Loveliest and now I will stop I'd like to finish this in Tel Aviv where I will be alone for a while and can think well. But maybe I will finish it before and get it off in an earlier post. Good night Sweet Pussy Cat You have all my love and all my desires, how big they are for you.

New Year's Day. Ive kept this letter in my pocket book & as I took it out I had a look at you. It pleased me. Ive always liked the new picture but I grown to like it more & more. Did I tell you that when it first came & I showed it to Chris he said do it did not half do you credit. This was nice. What particularly concerned him were the two lines ending your cheeks, you know the two one can feel if you bridge your nose with thumb & forefinger. He said in the picture they were much too deep. I said no yours were deep & I liked them the better for it. And this is true. Chris is oddly, like George, conventional in many things. [Ive just finished an ordinary letter to you telling how we

spent the day at Ascalon. It was a very good day. [Chris came over here, I'm in the Y.M.C.A., with me tonight to write a letter but he took one look at the place & said "I cannot write here" & then went off. I don't think he is a very good correspondent but all the same I think Cath understands. Still it must be depressing for her. [I don't know what I would do if I didn't get your letters. Walking over to Ascalon today I tried to think what you would be doing but it was impossible so I thought of last year. Do you remember Lord Buckley wouldn't have a drink or not a real one on Ten Year's Eve? We drank but the atmosphere of the war & the family was too overpowering. We were not very gay but still it brought us close together & we went to bed in that land, land bed quite happy as I remember it. I think I even woke up & wished my lovelies & a happy new year. She was very sleepy & just gave a little moan & snuggled close. Do you remember the plane trip back, coming over Cowes? No I've got it missed. We came by boat with our brave little dog & Vivian was down to meet us. How nice it was to get home. [In the next room a wireless is playing it has just begun to give the news. I don't even attempt to listen.

I've been writing this letter a very long time Dearest one & tonight I must end it. You see I've been adding a bit with each time after finishing my ordinary letters. [Recalling it back it doesn't sound all the things I want it to sound but you will be able to sense a lot I haven't said. You do know Loveliest that I love you more than ever & when I get back will need you more than ever before. Is terribly important to me that you know & believe this. Do you remember how I was always telling you & you were always pretending you weren't sure. Funny, Lovely Pussy Cat. [I'd have given anything to have had you in Tel Aviv last week. I told you in another letter that I didn't feel well the second day there. Do you remember. Well I bought a bunch of flowers & spent most of the day in bed. I smelt the flowers every now & again & thought & thought of you. What would have happened if you had been there. Do you know I always think of you with the cleanest & loveliest smelling flowers. Some.. Now I must stop Sweetheart. As always all my love & thoughts my desires Dearest one Kenneth.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43

A. F W3078.

C & Co (B) Ltd.

# ACTIVE SER

Jan 29

This envelope must not be used for coin or valuables. It cannot be accepted for registration.

NOTE :—

Correspondence in this envelope need not be censored Regimentally. The contents are liable to examination at the Base.

PASSED BY CENSOR No. 3197

The following Certificate must be signed by the writer :—

*I certify on my honour that the contents of this envelope refer to nothing but private and family matters.*

Signature }
Name only }

R. C. von Bibra




[Up to three
this Cover, but
same writer. T
in such case to t

Address :—

Mrs Kenneth von Bibra
Rowallan
Harkaway
Victoria
Australia

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43

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AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

AWM2019.22.43

A.C.F.
AUSTRALIAN COMFORTS FUND

Cpl K. von Bibra January 16 1940
V x 29109 21st Anti-Tank Coy
H.Q. 21st Inft. Bde A.I.F.
Abroad.

Dearest Joan, This afternoon I finished a letter to you & with luck this one should go by the same mail. This afternoon I received a letter dated January 2 also your cable with the shoe size. [Poor Tetho & the race. Maybe it was a good thing he didn't take Hungah anyway. What an undesirable old man Penny father has turned out to be. [I'm glad you approved of he vers libre. When I said it should be improved I meant lengthened. I've never done any more about it. Chris however with my permission took part of the idea & made a Christmas poem for the magazine. I didn't like what he wrote much, neither did he but his newspaper training made him feel that something of the manga-star business was necessary. You will see the result when the magazine arrives. I will post it this week by the way. About

A.C.F.

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the picture. We've never seen the young man since & now I suppose, never will. If someone takes a photograph of me though Dearest I will send it. [I'm glad that my Christmas money-present has eventually arrived. [About your doing a transport job. I'd say no. I'd say no to the vegetable scheme now too. You see when you get the shelf it will be a full time 156 & your land will in any case be doing productive work. [The plums of dog yard & fowl yard are excellent sweetest - most beautifully done & I've had no trouble in following them. [The wire was most welcome. Its so good to hear quickly that you are well. I'll get the shoes first chance I get. I suppose they will take a good while to reach you. I hope you'll like them. [I've just had biscuits & coffee. Goll knows what the coffee was made from but it was warm & comforting. I've forgotten what

A.C.F.
AUSTRALIAN COMFORTS FUND

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Mom coffee tastes like. Its
funny, taste is memoryless until
it tastes. [I'll stop for tonight
Dearest. & finish tomorrow evening.
Friday. It is eight time Dearest & I
have just posted the guard & am free
for two hours until the next relief
has to go on. Chris by the way is one of
the guardsmen. Tonight we had quite a
good dinner roast beef, a bit tough certainly,
cabbage, rice & stewed dried fruit. I try
not to eat potatoes as I find that in spite
of a comparatively active existence I still
tend to put on weight when eating starch.
Bread, however, I must eat for often you
cannot do without it. [I'm wondering when
you will be going to the sea. Is the house
big enough for you to have visitors to stay
the night. I hope it is because it would
be nice to have people down for week-ends
I would think. You'll have to be careful of
S.T. on the beach with children. You'll
have the little white bitch too. [What does
Edna & Walter say to the new arrival. I
suppose Walter will spread dreadful
tales not only of the brown terror but now
the white terror too. [Goodness I hope you
will train that little bitch well

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and not let her get round your heart too much. I know you will really. It's different when I'm not there isn't it? [Today has really been pretty hot. I don't know if it means the beginning of warmer weather or not. In a way I hope yes but on the other hand I fear that the dust & flies will be pretty bad. We've had a taste of the flies today. They are the sort that won't take a swipe for a no. [Did I ever tell you the story of Vic's camera. It happened on that two day's stay in Tel Aviv. Vic ran short of money so I gave him £4. Well on this morning we all went our separate ways, I felt I wanted to be alone, Chris felt the same way. Vic & I met again at lunch & Vic arrived carrying a camera. Proudly he told me about it & coldly, as you know I can be sometimes, I asked how much it cost? He saw I didn't approve & said but Ken think of the pictorial record I can make. He then told me he already taken a film & incurred three prints of everything, the deserted water front with the stranded ships, the main street of Tel Aviv with some Aussies as local color, bits of bombed houses. To all this I intimated that I wasn't interested. Then to cap it all on the last morning as we walked up

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the street to catch the home going leave bus on a rather bleak Saturday morning (Sunday for the Jews) Vic said wait on you two & I'll take your photographs going up the street. We both said to stell with you Vic. Then, momentarily turning upon us, for Chris when he first heard about the camera had been as rude as I had, Vic said you're the funniest pair of b— & we didn't talk much till we got into the bus. Since then no one has spoken about the camera. One day I'll suggest Vic does take some photographs & I'll send them to you. It's a pretty bad camera though. Vic is wonderfully even tempered with both Chris & me & God knows we provoke him at times. [Have you ever met the Jewells since my leaving? I don't quite know why I ask. I suppose, if you wished, you would go to the farm lectures there. And by the way Chris says he is a very good friend of Detective McPhee of fat lamb fame. Chris says that you need only mention his name, for the good detective to give you any advice or help with your lambs. For instance it would be interesting to see over his place for one thing. Do you

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Remember how coming home from town one afternoon we stopped a dog which was in among the sheep on his farm? Saturday morning. Dearest I have only a few minutes before parade so must end this letter. I'm in the tent & beside me Chris is making his bed & sending over a fine curtain of dust over me. Tomorrow is Sunday & Fresh day. Maybe we will go to Ascalon if the weather is fine. You have all my love Sweetest Dear. & all my thoughts. I think of you constantly & that helps me more than you can possibly know. Once again all my love Dearest

Kenneth.

D H Whitt

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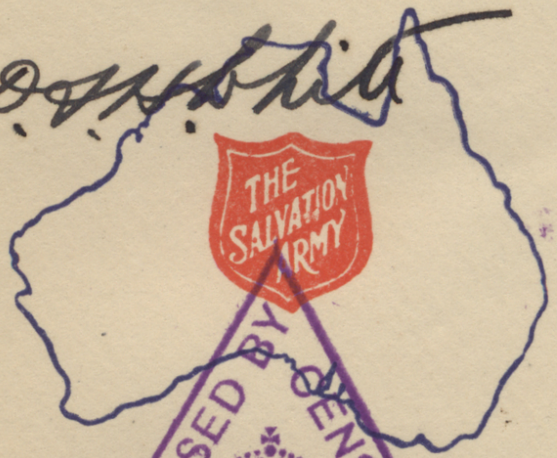
By Air Mail.

On Active Service

Feb 1.




PASSED BY CENSOR
No. 3197

RED-SHIELD HUTS-HOSTELS
ON SERVICE with the TROOPS

"The Army that serves on every front."

Mrs Kenneth von Bilse
Rowellan
Harkaway
Victoria
Australia

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43

Vas libre.
Photographs.
Camera.
Bombed houses.
Sewells
McPhee.
Smithy
Re-issue
Smiths.
Writing
What mine?
about mail.
Dept of Ag.
Bourne.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
AWM2019.22.43

Cfl K. von Bibra VX 29109, 21st Anti-Tank Avg. H. Q. 21st Inft. Bde. A. I. F. Abroad.

P.S. On "Active Service" on the envelope is supposed to hasten delivery. Has no significance

January 19.

Dearest Joan, It is a Sunday afternoon & I'm in the Red Shield Hut, next door in the recreation part of the Cut a writers is playing Sunday afternoon music but most of it is drowned by the wind that blows terrifically hard around the building. Its the worst wind we've known since getting here. Sis morning it was making the tent billow & creak like a sail. It made everyone feel bad tempered I think I know that I could have cheerfully done away with two young men who spent the morning sniffing as they lay reading on their bunks. I do believe that the sniffing in the army is one of its most trying aspects for me. Its very odd, get one man beginning to sniff, & very soon you will have others following suit. Does all that sound very low Dearest? I hope not. [Today I got a letter from you dated January 6. I feel its rather a sad letter & has left me wishing very much for your next which should arrive on Thursday. It was the letter in which you tell of Mrs White in Berwick, also your walk across the Kreokos & Boyd haddocks to the creek. You say nothing of letters received from me although as you discuss Steele Rudd I seem to remember having written about him in a letter off the ship that took us on board in [redacted] I know a lot of the ship mail has only recently arrived in Australia. But quite apart from this, almost without fail, you should get two air-mail letters a week from me. Do let me know when letters come Dearest one. I'm always glad when I read "Today I got a letter...." [About the name for the little bitch. By now of course you will have received my letter suggesting

White Surge. I think actually, if, temperamentally it suits her, I would prefer this name to Smith. I feel that Smith is well suited to a male but not a female. To me it suggests a lady's maid. Still I may be wrong. Actually I liked Laura. All my feeling in this matter may of course be conditioned by the fact that I hear so much surname here. You see its all Walter, von Bibra etc. Its inevitable here & I wouldn't wish it otherwise but you see what I mean. In any case Dearest there is no hurry about the name. We've always found that one comes eventually. In the part of your letter written in the train I like to think of you in your grey dress & wearing the newscarf also that your face is brown. Its funny isn't it that the only time we travelled into town in the train was the last time that I was at home. Do you remember what a lovely morning it was. [I'm glad you are not going to accept Penny father's offer to bring the sleep up. Walter will do it quite well or failing him Cooper or Richardson. [I'm not against your getting a cow Sweetest one as long as you realize that it is something of a tie & I'm not at all sure that the Krotos's will milk it for you & maybe Walter is not a very certain quality these days. But if you feel that you can cope with all that then go ahead. It certainly would be very nice to have your own milk & cream. With lambs coming too, extra milk may be needed for pets. [Today I received a letter from the old lady also. She asks that I try & write a little more plainly as — they do like to know all my news —. Do you

find my letters any more illegible than usual Dearest. Are they very hard to read. [Chris has just come in & is sitting writing in front of me. She's pretty fit at the moment & has really lost weight. She's naturally very glad about it. [Tomorrow Le Vie & I have a day's leave in Tel Aviv. We leave here at about eight & come back at about seven. We will go to our orthodox Jewish restaurant for all our meals I suppose & drink some of the Rishon wine that I've told you about. The son of the restaurant proprietor is a really nice fellow & I think likes me. I feel a lot of sympathy with him & have had with him some of the best talks. Jack Callighan is coming with us. [This morning, for some reason, there was no church parade. Co-one was very disappointed. I've always thought that the character of church must improve under service conditions, at least take on some form of rationalism & simplicity, honesty but it is not so. There's the same word spinning, the same gulf between the real life & that envisaged by the church. [God I've just got a neighbour the sniggs. I'll have to move if it goes on. Today I cannot take it. [Yes I've moved. [Some people in Australia, believe, apparently, that we have already been in action. This of course is not true & we don't expect to be for some time to come. More than that I cannot say but you can depend on that. Also that here we are as safe as we were in Australia. Its really as far as the camp life is concerned very little different from Pachapunyal. Outside the camp routine of course its very different. No little job with you in it waiting, so patiently.

at the gates. How it used to gladden my heart.
I would like to know more of what you do each day.
Do you think in your letters you could make a small
diary? For instance if I can picture you waking &
thinking something, getting up, what you ate for breakfast
what you saw going for the mail. I'm happy. I think I
would do the same more too. [I've just been re-reading
your letter with the violet in. Its a lovely piece about T.T.
I think. I've torn it out for my note book. You see I keep
your letters a certain time & then destroy them. I'd like to
keep them permanently but it wouldn't be a good idea
for space of course is restricted & I rather tear them
up, than have them lost. [If you really think my verse
libre is good you might try it somewhere. The Home
or The Bulletin. Maybe its not worth it though. I don't
really care. [I'm posting the magazine to you this week. It
will take some time to arrive I'm afraid Dearest One.
I must end this letter Sweet. I hope its not too low
I'm afraid it is a bit but really I'm not unhappy.
The only thing which makes me really unhappy is
the thought of your being sad & depressed. All the
rest I've come to accept as inevitable. We both know
the adaptability of the average human being. But I
really cannot bear to think of you being lonely
Try the happy Dearest One Its my fondest wish. You
have all my love & thoughts & everything else that
I cannot or wont speak of. All love Sweetest

Kenneth.

H B Brain

Love to holly, T.T. the Ebbs Al. I'll try & write to them
all. I've written to Sunny. Will try Al next. Must
also write to Moya. Why not ask her up for a few days?

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION

Feb 1

2ND BDE. H.Q.
W. 2.



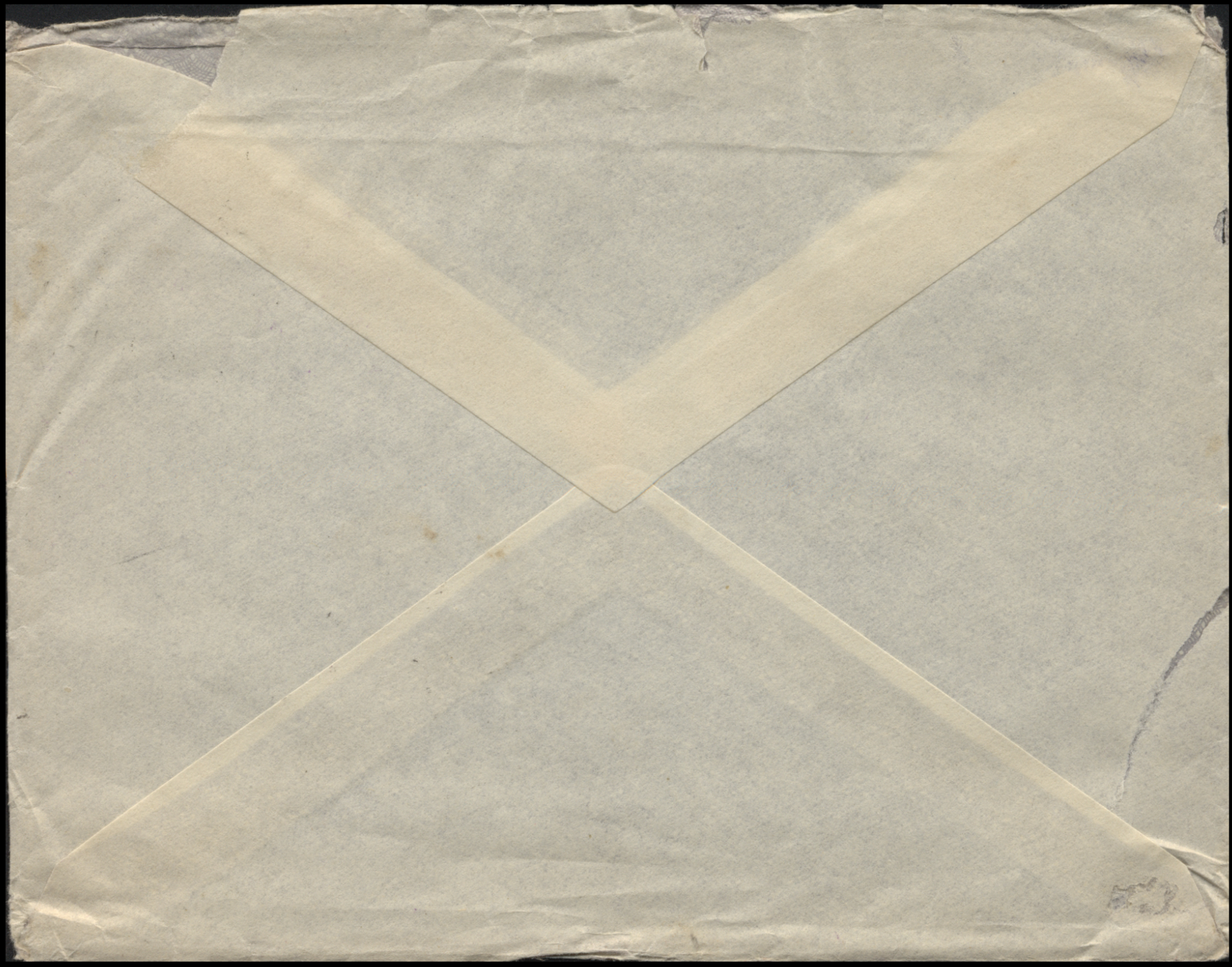

On Active Service

H.B. Brain

Mrs Kenneth von Bibra
Rowallan
Starkaway
Victoria
Australia

PASSED BY CENSOR
No. 3090

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43

ERNEST J. HAREWOOD O.B.E.
LT.-COMMISSIONER

TERRITORIAL HEADQUARTERS:
Eastern Australia—140 Elizabeth St., Sydney, N.S.W.

THE SALVATION ARMY

RED SHIELD HUTS-HOSTELS FOR AUSTRALIAN TROOPS

FROM:—
No. V x 29109
NAME Cpl. K. von Bibra
UNIT 21st Anti-Tank Coy
H.Q. 21st Inf & Bde A.I.F. Abroad.

Patron:
RT. HON. WM. HUGHES, P.C.

CAMP

January 23 1940

Dearest Joan, Today is Thursday. Last night I wrote half a letter to you but reading it over it doesn't please me so I'm beginning again. [On Monday with Chris, Sic Jack Callighan I went to Tel Aviv on days leave. It was a lovely morning going in. The country was drying out in the early morning sun after the rain of the night before. Chris & I talked most of the way about James Joyce, the news of whose death had just appeared. Chris has read Ulysses & Finnegans Wake or rather parts of both. He makes no bones, in that characteristic narrow moral way of the Walters, in condemning the pornographic aspects of both works. But apart from this he was interesting, thinking, as we think, that we can appreciate Joyce's urgent, but for the reader difficult, need of avoiding the already so often written word. [We reached Tel Aviv at about nine & all went straight to our Jewish restaurant for breakfast. I had a beef-steak & then a plate of delicious vegetables - canots (very sweet) cauliflower & spinach. It was all washed down with a bottle of Rislon wine. [I suppose its not so odd drinking wine with breakfast but I must confess to a slight feeling

ERNEST J. HAREWOOD O.B.E.
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Eastern Australia—140 Elizabeth St., Sydney, N.S.W.

RED SHIELD HUTS-HOSTELS FOR AUSTRALIAN TROOPS

FROM:—
No.
NAME
UNIT

Patron:
RT. HON. WM. HUGHES, P.C.

CAMP
19

of depravity. But the feeling grows less & less. I find that gradually nearly all my gastronomic prejudices are ~~[illegible]~~ disappearing. Chris, I think, struck one of the first blows at them. On the ship coming here when we had to wait a good while for the food he invariably, at breakfast, began with his bread & jam & finished with porridge & eggs. Still in this topsy turvy existence where you eat dinner at 5, nothing seems very strange. Anyway to get back to the wine, an hour after drinking it & I only had two glasses, I felt ill in the stomach. I then recalled that I had drunk the same wine & felt ill on my last visit to Tel Aviv. To cut a long story short I felt so miserable that I left my friends & went off alone. After about an hour I felt better so went & had a quiet lunch alone. I met the others at 3 & then while they waited chose & paid for your shoes. They are suede quite plain, but to my mind a beautiful shape. Only hope they will fit well. He's making them for me & I expect them here in about a week. I will then post them on to you. Goodness I do hope they arrive safely & that you will like them. They are a

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No.
NAME
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CAMP
19

Patron:
RT. HON. WM. HUGHES, P.C.

3.

birthday present Darling one. [We left Tel Aviv at about half past five. All les boys were pretty gay by this time & there was a good deal of not very tuneful singing & a quite fair ~~of~~ amount of sentimental talk. It was quite an interesting journey though ~~[illegible]~~ [Leave is really a pretty Copeless business though. If I like I can get a week at Cairo soon but I don't think I will apply for it. In any case its very expensive. It would cost at least £40. And the word pictures brought back by the young men who have been there have a horrible familiarity. Apparently its impossible to avoid seeing the Pyramids. Not that I would mind seeing them except that the represent all the other dreadful routine of sight-seeing there. [Chris had a letter from Cath yesterday in which she said jocularly that I had spread & embellished the story of Chris' odd boots. She was determined to maintain the Walker Concord & was busy dressing up the puggaree story for home consumption. [Apparently things march pretty well for Cath. Do you think you might get see her sometime. I imagine she

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FROM:—
No.
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UNIT

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RT. HON. WM. HUGHES, P.C.

CAMP
19

4.

cannot get about much now. [ One reason why I didn't write well last night was, I think, because of a movie I saw before coming over here to the hut. It was called Ebb Tide & if I remember rightly we saw it in the last week together in London. Anyway I came away saddened & rather depressed. Do you remember the film? [ I've just torn a page of my letter in half by mistake. It can, however, still be read easily [ Yesterday I had a note from Curtis telling me of Andrew's arrival in a Palestinian hospital. It was a typical Curtis effort beginning with "seriously wounded" & ending with "progressing satisfactorily. I was upset at the news. Today however I learn he's going on well & is likely to be moved into a nearby hospital. Whether he is moved or not I hope to get leave to see him soon. He may need money or something & anyway I would like to see him very much. Apparently he was hit with a bomb. Poor Andrew... but maybe he will be sent home. I know nothing of this possibility of course. [ Anyway as soon as I see him I will wire you & you can pass it on.

ERNEST J. HAREWOOD O.B.E.
LT.-COMMISSIONER



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FROM:—
No.
NAME
UNIT

Patron:
RT. HON. WM. HUGHES, P.C.

CAMP
19

2.

Today I received a very welcome letter from you. First of all about your doing Red Cross work. There are two good reasons for your not doing it. First of all you are not strong enough Sweetest (besides you are manicel) & secondly we would probably never see each other. Then if I were to get wounded or something twas can't come you'd be out here. Actually I don't think you were serious in suggesting it. Very interesting about the colonel. I wonder if we will meet out here. I shouldn't think so. Poor Darling being frightened by that possum. What a rat Kel is not to spring & frighten him away. I never could understand it. I wouldn't be surprised if Kel thought it a lion. Certainly there is enough noise for that. Its good about the oleander shooting thro fine that the old apple tree bears so well. Hes Walter cemented the hole in it up yet. It really should be done. I'm glad you are leaving your hair long. Why the dislike of the schoolmarmish air. You look so pretty & intelligent that I rather like the schoolmarmish hair. It suits you like anything especially when you have really good clothes on. Dear one when you

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FROM:—
No.
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UNIT

CAMP

Patron:
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19

6.

insist about my not liking your letters, you make me sad. You know I love hearing about les chiens, the pear days & everything else about Powallan & that most of all I like hearing about you.— When you get up. What you think. Nothing is too small. [ How brave of you to undo the bag with Trash inside. [ I do hope in this hot weather you are wearing your top boots when walking in the long grass. If they are worn out Dearest get a plain leather pair. [ Am glad the Bone & Gristle Club meeting went off so well. [ I think the idea of planting ixias & other bulbs in the orchard, an excellent idea. The plan I find excellent. How you are making things grow. Do the big hobs at the side represent trees? [ The country here is beginning to look wonderful. The crops are up & everywhere wild flowers, many of them bulbs, are in bloom. There is one kind of wild orchid rather like the big one we found in the bush which you found again on Lens Years Day. This one is white with purple markings. There is one just outside our tent & often as I look at it a great, black glistening Palestinian bee arrives to gather his harvest

ERNEST J. HAREWOOD O.B.E.
LT.-COMMISSIONER

RED SHIELD HUTS-HOSTELS

FROM:—
No.
NAME
UNIT

THE SALVATION ARMY

Patron:
RT. HON. WM. HUGHES, P.C.



TERRITORIAL HEADQUARTERS:
Eastern Australia—140 Elizabeth St., Sydney, N.S.W.

FOR AUSTRALIAN TROOPS

CAMP

19

2.

By the way Dearest be sure & get my address properly. It does make a difference. Today your letter had H.Q. before A.T. Coy. instead of before the 21st Inft-Bde. Make it like my heading. [I find I'm putting on a bit of weight. This is partly due to the stenchy food & partly due to the fact of my giving up smoking I think. Still it probably won't hurt me. If we ever get into the desert a bit of condition probably won't be amiss. [It's funny you know I don't feel any better for giving up smoking. The only visible effect is that my teeth have grown whiter. Still I suppose one must be better without it. [I'm still reading Peter Simple. I'm enjoying it. [Yesterday I received a Newfoundland & a New Statesman both very acceptable. I'd like it if you sent them fairly often Dearest one. After you've read them though. You ask me to name the birds here. The article in the magazine I sent you the other day covers them pretty well I think. It's by that young man out of Spencer's called Bentley. Do you remember him. [On the strength of the magazine a major in the medical supply service came up & offered Chris

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19

Patron:
RT. HON. WM. HUGHES, P.C.

8.

a job the other day. It was turned down. I would miss Chris a lot if he went. [George, according to a letter received by Chris the other day, is contemplating enlisting. I wonder what he will join. [It would be good if eventually we could join forces. [Do you wonder about the political future much nowdays. I can see no solution in Europe Take Austria after we've won the war. What will happen there? [Did you see The Week had been banned in London. Its not, or was not a communist paper, only very outspoken when I knew it. I'm afraid to a certain extent this war is making me selfish or rather plan selfish for the future. But maybe once out of it I'll get a different perspective. Now I feel I'm only justified in being selfish. The majority of people you come into contact with bring that about of course.
[I'll stop here for the moment Dearest me & finish off my weekly letter to the Old Lady. Incidentally I find it very hard writing what. Its strange isn't it. [Well I've finished the letter to the Old Lady. Not a very long a

ERNEST J. HAREWOOD O.B.E.
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RED SHIELD HUTS-HOSTELS

FROM:—
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THE SALVATION ARMY

Patron:
RT. HON. WM. HUGHES, P.C.



TERRITORIAL HEADQUARTERS:
Eastern Australia—140 Elizabeth St., Sydney, N.S.W.

FOR AUSTRALIAN TROOPS

CAMP

19

9.

interesting one I'm afraid. In her letters to me she sometimes mentions hopefully that I'll try & improve my position. Henry I think feels that it should be otherwise. I find this funny & Love, except when people sniff too badly, no particular desire for what they so ardently wish. [Today early, going out to do an exercise, the road we marched along gave us the most wonderful view - green crops over which hung a magic purple mist in the distance the blue opaque, seemingly, Judean hills. As we marched I looked at it all & thought happily of you. Whenever the nicest things happen, you are generally never far from my thoughts.

[Next week we go out on a three day manoeuvre. I wont be able to write twice that week so you will understand Pet. We will be sleeping out every night. It wont be too bad though because the weather is warming up considerably. [At the beginning of the week we may get a bit more leave. I'll be going with Chris if we get it. We may go to Jerusalem.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43

ERNEST J. HAREWOOD O.B.E.
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RED SHIELD HUTS-HOSTELS FOR AUSTRALIAN TROOPS

FROM:—
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CAMP
19

Patron:
RT. HON. WM. HUGHES, P.C.

10.

I'm glad that l'oncle Ted still comes over occasionally I can imagine him saying "Why do you want all these dogs." I'm glad too Mrs Potter has sold out. I wonder how she got out of the place. Foolish woman. I always knew it but actually I feel rather sorry for her. There was something nice about her & its hard on Audrey's little hang-brother & sisters. [ I wonder how Audrey is? [ Dearest I must end now. Be patient & try to make your life complete at Rowallan You will soon have many responsibilities over Gungal, les moutons etc. I think of you constantly & with happiness. You're everything home & I think of the end of the week in terms of you. You have all my love Kenneth.

Love to Molly S.T. & Smith or is it to be Surge

D.A.H. White

By Air Mail







RED SHIELD HUTS
for Australian Troops

PASSED BY CENSOR
No. 3197

Feb 5.

Pte Kenneth von Bibra
Powellan
Harkaway
Victoria
Australia.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43

Wally a the jack.
Windmill.
Boos.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.2

Chl. Yoon Bibra 1+2 qwg St Anti-Tank Coy
H.R. 2. 2nd Inft Bde A. I. F. Abroad

January 24

Dearest Joan, I'm sitting on a mound of earth outside the tent waiting for Chris to come up from the kitchen where he has been serving out the tea. [ It's rather a lovely night & an odd bird calls & down the road Quals are calling to each other above the noise their hammers make against the stones they break. [ In a few minutes Chris & I will go off to the pictures which last until 8 p.m. After that I will go to the Salvo hut & finish this letter to you. [ I wrote to you last night but I'm very much afraid I missed the mail. This week the days have been changed & my letter went in some hours late. I'm terribly sorry Dearest one if it missed. [ Today has been very easy. This morning we had two lectures & a lesson in flag signalling. I've never done semaphore & find it quite an effort to read & write by this method. To my mind it is probably good fun for Boy Scouts but its hard to imagine it being used much in modern warfare. Still I may be wrong. [ As I told you in my last letter I applied for leave to go & see Andrew but without much success. There are all sorts of complications apparently & it looks as if I won't be given leave. In this case I will write to him or Curtis may be able to get up & see him. If I could do nothing else for Andrew I could get him some good books. [ Tomorrow we are leaving this camp for a few days. We are not going on the manoeuvres I spoke of, but have to do some work at another camp. It will be labour work. I'm hoping we will be able to get our mail away on time. [ Well we went to the pictures it was Laurel & Hardy; rather funny but somehow the team is always a little too physical pause for me. There was one funny but

when Laurel, in prison with Stanley, takes up his wire matters & imitates Harpo Marx playing his harp. Before the show began I had time to read a story in the New Yorker called Select Clientele. Its the story of the four men who said "Jew bastards" The story is well done & made me momentarily ashamed of any of the anti-Jewisms I may have uttered lately. Here, strangely enough, its all "Jew bastard." That sort of feeling doesn't come up in me but I'm predjuiced. I try & analyse the feeling but nearly always arrive at something trivial as an explanation like – Its because the Jews have no natural good manners – by that I mean the average Jew would look coldly at you rather than say by-pardon if he bumps into you or lets a door slam in your face. I dunno. Wish I could understand my feelings. Of course there are exceptions. Take for instance the young Jew, Sherman, the son of the proprietor of the restaurant we go to in Tel Aviv. With him I've struck up a real friendship. I find him completely sympathetic & a relief to talk with. We discuss, in French, everything from the disillusioned older Jews of Tel Aviv to war & anti-semitism. But he's an exception. But I'm determined to understand, & name their fault to myself & try to conquer my aversion. [I've just about finished my library. I completed Peter Simple today. [Just now I bought from the canteen, among Free Love, Adventure, Crime Series, Triple Fugue by Osborn & Litwell. How it came to find a place in the canteen is more than I can imagine. Do you remember a picture called Lost Horizon. Its coming here next week. I want to see it very much but I'm afraid I'll be away. I wonder if you recall the reason I want to see it.

I'm full of wonder how you will manage with the sheep. I hope there will be plenty of water for them & that Walter will give a constant eye to them while you are away at Frankstone. They will take a bit of looking after you know Dearest One. If they get dags on them Walter will have to wield the shears otherwise they will be struck by fly. I wonder how much Molly knows about these things. A lot I hope but in any case you know a bit & you are both full of common sense. Next door the piano is playing & the boys are singing, very unmelodiously, about the blue gums & mummy & daddy. It's odd to hear lesguys and bring it out, hanging onto the notes. One of my friends in the section is sitting nearby & has just told me his worried about his wife because she has lost half a stone in weight. He produced a photograph to illustrate. To me the young woman looks just in mid pettle & so I said "she the Jack that's just a fashionable figure". He pinned knowingly, half pleased at me & said "to Jesus I like her with a bit more condition on than that." He's from the country. Old Mac I learn is still at his school & having, in his time off, a good time in the city where the school is located. I admire the old devil the way he enjoys himself. It's funny you know in this war there seems little of the last war hysterics. Very very one-ely you know-tomorrow we die sort of thing. Of course there is a bit & it will increase I suppose once we've been in action. In my case I've felt no stirring of this feeling & hope to God I never will. It's a low (rather a harsh word) but I mean if people

took a good look at the sky, a greedy look, breathed more fresh air than they wanted you would say fine instead of which they enjoy themselves in the basest way. I dont blame them but can find nothing to recommend them. Dots all that sound freudish. Maybe..
I haven't received your parcel of nuts yet but am hoping to get it any day now. Loone has received, as far as I know, any parcels since just before Christmas. There is a good deal of bewailing about the cakes & good things which letters told people, were on the way. Doubtless they will all arrive in a bunch one day clogging not only the post office but the digestions of his boys. [ Dearest one I must end this letter. I have to get back to my tent before lights out. Somehow I won't have time to write more as we leave early for the other camp. Now have all my love & thoughts as always Dearest one. I'll think of you before I sleep tonight Love once more Sweetest One

Kenneth.

Love to Molly & I.T. Regards to Edna & Wally.
Tell the latter I want him to care well for the sheep.
Don't forget to keep the front gate closed.
Has Zoach done any more in the bush? Do you remind him of it?
Oh & get Walter to clean my twelve bore occasionally. It wants plenty of oil.

R

RMP

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION

A M Poultry

On Active Service Feb 8.




2ND 26 JAN W.2.

Mrs Kenneth von Bibra
Rowallan
Harkaway
Victoria
Australia

PASSED BY CENSOR
No. 3000

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
AWM2019.22.43

Cpl. Koon Beira v 29/04 21st Ambi. Tank Coy
R. 2. 2. 2nd ~~[illegible]~~ Supt. Base A. I. F. Abroad
January 27

Dearest Joan, I've seen Andrew & he is definitely mending & in time his legs should be perfectly alright. I went to see him the day before yesterday with Curtis. We found him in a very nice hospital. He has a room to himself overlooking the sea-front & he says the nurses & doctors are satisfactory. [In the face, Andrew really looks quite well. Maybe his color is a bit high but apparently the fever has completely left him. She's in no pain at all now. When they dress his legs, once every three weeks or so, they give him ether or something like that. He says that in about two months he should have graduated to a convalescent hospital. [Its been a bit of a shock to him I think but of course he had a pretty harrowing time one way another. I haven't got time to tell you all about it in this letter but will write fully later. [I'm out at the other camp you see its very difficult to get mail done. [Anyway the main thing is that Andrew is alright & there is no need to worry. There's a chance, I should think of his being sent home for a while later but dont say anything to Jennet about that yet. Andrew himself doesn't think he has much chance of getting home. She's pretty lonely I think & fed up but that's only natural. She knows practically no one in Haifa although at the moment he has a friend in General Blamey's son who is in the town & gets down to see him pretty regularly. [I'm

Coping that I will be able to spend my next leave with him. I dont know when that will be. [I've had three attempts to write this letter Dearest One. I've been using a shovel for the last hour or so. I must end on this page as I have to get the letter in otherwise it will miss the mail. I got your letter, the one written just after your birthday yesterday. It was a lovely letter & made me very happy. [Will you ring Jenner up about Andrew. I will write Wher myself as soon as we get back to camp. [Last night I dreamt you didn't like White Surge for Smith. You were firm but very nice about it. [I will write a long letter in a couple of days Dearest One. Now you should be getting two every week. You have all my love & thoughts. Kenneth.

Andrew was interested Wheen about Smith I said you planned to give him a puppy.

H.W. Friend




AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

Cpl K. von Bibra V.A. 29109 21st Anti Tank Coy
H.Q. 21st Inft Bde A.I.F. Abroad.

January 27.

Dearest Joan, Today I sent you a short note only. I only had a very short time in which to write. Now I will go back & give you a detailed account of my visit to Andrew. You remember that in my last proper letter I told you that I didn't think I had much hope of getting leave for Staiga to see Andrew. But I had reckoned without Curtis this general & that night when I got back to the tent after writing to you I found the necessary leave pass on my bed. Curtis arrived for me at a quarter to eight the next morning. With him he had a major, no other than your friend Jean's husband. Curtis had a beautiful car a shooting break but more of this later. It was very pleasant driving along & Freddy of course is a good talker, although Curtis was able to kiss, during one of our stops, that it was not by his wish that Freddy was accompanying us. It appears that when Curtis had been given the car Freddy had mentioned that he had never seen Staiga or Acre & so the higher powers said he had better go along with Curtis. Well we arrived at Staiga at about 11.15 a.m. We had no trouble finding the hospital, not a big place. Strangely enough it was before the war, an Italian hospital. There was no trouble in getting admittance & in a few minutes we were standing looking down at Andrew, a very surprised Andrew & shaking his hand. Freddy by the way came with us on the strength of having known Andrew at Mandon. [Andrew, as I told you in my note really looks pretty well. I think he

is suffering from shock a bit nothing serious. I don't think from a medical point of view it would even be recognised. It's a matter that you feel he's been through an awful lot & remembers it pretty well. It will help you to understand if I tell you his story. I got it all in little bits of course. To begin with Andrew's unit was one of the first to arrive in the Bandia district & for a day or so his guns were ahead of the infantry, a very unpleasant state of affairs. They were bombed & shot up pretty heavily. Then a couple of days later just as the main attack was developing Andrew, with one lieutenant & a signaller moved up into an advanced observation post very close to the enemy lines, so close in fact that observing from a nearby hut he was machine gunned at one stage. However when the trouble occurred they were all in the o.p. which was concrete & had been built & then abandoned by the Italians. Andrew had just finished telephoning back to his guns that they were to put down a barrage at a certain time when an Italian infantry patrol burst into the block house. The Australians were three against a dozen & the Italians had them covered before they had a chance to put up any fight so they surrendered. As Andrew put up his hands an Italian threw a small bomb. It fell between Andrew's legs. It exploded broke both legs, tore his hands & spattered, not badly, his seat & back with shrapnel. Andrew says he doesn't know why they did it, he felt it was because they were frightened more than anything else. Anyway having disposed of him the Italians took the other two men

who were not hurt back into their own lines. Andrew, left alone fixed ligatures around his legs & awaited events. He was in a good deal of pain. He wasn't alone for long. The patrol returned & putting him on a stretcher carried him into their own lines. As they went, the barrage, ordered by Andrew, came down & they had to pass right through it. Some how or other they did & Andrew was put in a casualty clearing station. I don't know how long he was there but long enough to be machine gunned by our Hurricanes. Eventually he was taken into hospital in Bendia. There, apparently, they treated him reasonably well but he was in pain & doubt about his legs & the town was being hammered from the air, the land & the sea. After two days an Australian corporal put his head in the door demanding "Any Aussies in here". Through this angel, for angel he must have seemed to Andrew, an Australian doctor a fellow called Orme Smith was brought up & probably because of his work Andrew will eventually be perfectly ok. Apparently Andrew was brought back all the way from Libya in a boat. [ And that the end of the story. Of course there are big bits missing but doubtless Andrew will tell that story fully himself.

I think I told you we'd heard that Andrew was likely to be sent back home for a while at least. Curtis was told this by General Blamey who went to see Andrew. [ I think Andrew has everything he wants. He says he's ok for money & as its an officer's hospital that he is in the attention & food is good. His room for instance is a really charming one as hospital rooms go. It overlooks the harbour, the walls are pleasantly coloured in blue & the furniture is modern & quite pleasing. Its the sort of room

P.S. If you think Andrew's story may upset Jenner don't send it to her, only tell her bits. I've just written to her but not very fully. Love R. I did not think I would get time.

that you had at St. Ives only better. He says by the way he wants nothing only to be out of the hospital & be away from the boredom of it all. Now he has my address & if he wants anything he can write home & I should be able to fix most things quickly & satisfactorily. I forgot to tell you by the way that he has had rheumatism very badly in his arms & hands. This with the shaped splinters which have now however all healed, made it very hard for him to write. He still finds it a bit difficult. I offered to write a letter for him but he said he would be alright. I promised however to write to Jenner. I'll do this within a couple of days but in the meantime would you cut this part of my letter off & post it on to her. [I expect Dearest Love that we will move back into the other camp tomorrow or the next day. Then I will be able to get down to my writing. Here its very difficult. We have no lights in the tents. I'm writing this on a shelf in the Q.M. shore with a hurricane lamp supplying the light. [I'm glad Dearest Love you had a happy birthday. Evidently my telegram did not arrive in time although I sent it pretty early. Won't it be lovely if we can spend your next birthday together. If your shoes haven't come yet but I'm expecting them at any time. [Did I tell you that Curtis & Freddy, who more or less quarrelled before the evening was over, both have Contax cameras. They paid 30 Palestinian pounds for them which means about £50 Australian. They both use them inordinately & argue over each exposure that they differ upon. Dearest Love I must end. You have all my love & thoughts. Last night after I received your letter I was on guard. It gave me a warm happy feeling for the whole night. I've re-read it three times already. Once again all my love Dearest Love Kenneth. H.W. Friend

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION

Feb 11




On Active Service
H.W. Quiend Andrew, F. Gamble
description of Ascapture etc.

Mrs Kenneth von Bibra
Rowallan
Starhaway
Victoria
Australia

PASSED BY CENS
No. 3090

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43

Cpl. Lawn Bilna v & 29.109 2nd Lt Ambt Tank Coy Tt. 2 21st Inft Bde A.I.F.
Abroad.

January 29

Dearest Joan, We are still over at the new camp & I'm sitting on the floor of my tent writing this. We have partly constructed this camp & tomorrow, with a bit of luck, the new occupants should arrive & we will return to our own camp some couple of miles away. [ The last couple of days have not been very pleasant. Yesterday there was a dust storm all day & at night it turned too cold to get under a lose, the only available shower at the moment. I feel very grubby. Last night from 8 till 10 & then from 2 till 4 I was on guard. [ Old Ancient Pistol who has returned from his school sat talking to us for a while. His eldest girl, he told me, had got a job - that should be educational & help her to meet a lot of nice people. She is in Perth's best library. Of course he said, she is only sixteen & should have had a couple more years at school but we couldn't afford it. A.P. by the way left the school before his course was finished. He was told as the reason for his being moved that he was too old to become an officer. She's pretty disappointed I think but as you know he's plenty tough & nothing seems to hurt him much. She had some funny things to tell about the school which was run by English officers. The officers said for instance, that it really was necessary for a good officer to be able to handle his cup of coffee or tea properly & like a gentlemen. [ The Commanding Officer of

the school an elderly & apparently somewhat eccentric Englishman had a habit of crawling up beside cadets while they were in the field on manoeuvres & saying "Boo. I'm a bomb. What're you going to do now". [I forgot in my last letter to tell you about the wonderful Englishman who came to see Andrew when we were there on Saturday. [Apparently they had met at some school & being in Haifa & hearing that Andrew was there he had made one of those calls which the English always make but might as well save themselves the bother. He blew in shoot hands rather suspiciously with Curtis, more so with me & then for five minutes treated us to a masterpiece of talking without saying anything laughing without amusement. It was "You had a pretty rotten time but out of it now by Jove. Ha. Ha. And so on until having felt his duty done he took his leave. [And getting back to the Haifa trip I told you that Curtis had a wonderful car but did not describe it. It was what is known in America as an Estate waggon, in England a shooting break. You know the sort of thing. Its like a sedan in the front seat but the back is made of wood. This one Curtis had was wonderfully roomy. There was the front seat like an ordinary sedan, then a second seat like the seat of our coupé & then at the back of that a lot more space where you could

carry a tremendous amount of stuff & there are also two small dickey seats. The two front seats fold down into a bed & there are all sorts of gadgets like folding tables, nets in the roof, spare petrol cans that would make the car an ideal thing to travel around Australia in. I'm determined that we will, if we can possibly afford it, have one on my return. Not only would it be wonderful for the long trips which we must make but also it would be just thing at home. We could carry all our stores from town in it & do ~~of~~ odd jobs on the place with it. Actually I think its only about the price of an ordinary body. This one Curtis had was built on a Chevrolet chassis. Fool it will be wonderful if we can make souce of the trips we've always planned - Queensland up the coast & Central Australia. There would be plenty of room in this car without the encumberance of a caravan. You see most of the time we could stay at hotels but if we didn't feel like it we could carry gear to cook our own meals & of course we could sleep in the car whenever we desired. [ Chris had just arrived. It's tea time Dearest so will finish this later Dearest bue. [ Later. I'm in the Q.M. with a Hurricane lamp. We, Chris, Jack Callighan & I have just had tea. As we walked down the hill afterwards the moon was already up & it was beginning to be cold. I said one of us - How nice a warm fire would be tonight. And I said to Chris imagine that big room at Rowallan with fire showing up

the white grate & shadows on the blue walls & the green chair inviting. Chris made the clicking noise with his tongue that he always makes when words are unnecessary. Tonight or rather today you won't of course, have a fire in the big room. Maybe there will be shadows from the sun though & those lovely bowls of flowers that made look so wonderful. [You ask about my Italian. Do you know Sweetest One I haven't begun it. I don't seem to have the chance. I talk French whenever I get the chance though. Its remarkable how its helped me. So many people here, speak French fluently, English only a little. I'm glad you are doing a little on yours though. I'll bet, as you say, that mon colonel has been studying like hell. [I'm glad that Smith or Surge is receiving a firm upbringing. I don't know what to say about her coming into the house although I feel she should be let in enough to become house trained. I'd suggest for the first fortnight her entrance will not extend further than the kitchen or the sun verandah. It will be a great saving on the carpets. [I'm rather upset about Rel marking Al. I'm afraid its partly our own fault that he developed the car biting trick. You will certainly have to do everything you can to put an end to it. [Is Cynthia coming to Australia or not? You don't say in your letter only that le mari is in Budapest. Its funny to think of Cynthia married. Why would she think I was at Alice Springs. [Mother, in her last letter, told me she was sending you the Spode coffee cups & jugs. Do you remember I saw it in the Medley & nearly bought it when I went to Tasmania alone. I think its a lovely little set. But don't wait until I get home to use it Sweetest. I'd love

to think of you using it. It was nice of the Old Lady to remember that I had seen & liked it. When is her birthday by the way? Don't forget to let me know this. Sometime in April isn't it. [In my last letter I didn't have the time to tell you how, when we went to see Andrew at Haifa, we also after seeing him ran up to Acre. You remember Freddy came so that he could see it. Acre as you may remember is the place where Napoleon's army, fresh from conquering Egypt, was halted & beaten back by Sir Sydney Smith. Its really the most wonderful old town. Walls, high & thick enclose it, jutting on the sea-ward side, right into the water, giving you a wonderful feeling of armed strength. There's a lovely mosque with a thin tower that has a green roof, narrow crooked streets & arcades in stone that are better than anything I've seen in Palestine. You enter the place by a magnificent old gateway, genuine crusader they say. Around the town the land is very, very barren. The only vegetation are numerous palm trees their leaves all blown so hard by the wind that they look like the ~~candles~~ burnt wicks of candles used once in a while to celebrate the birthday of the ancient town.

[The room here is filling up. I'd better stop now Dearest & One write a note to the Old Lady. I haven't done so this week yet. You have all my love Sweetest One. Good-night. I've just heard that this mail closes tomorrow so must end ~~it~~ this letter now. You have all my love Sweetest One. I think of you constantly & wish only for the time when we will be together again. All love Dearest One Kenneth.

H. W. Friend

Mr Kenneth von Belra
Rowellan
Henhawery
Victoria
Australia

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
AWM2019.22.43

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION




H. W. Friend
McLeod
Acre.

Feb 11

Mrs Kenneth von Bibra
Rowallan
Starkaway
Victoria
Australia

PASSED BY CENSOR
No. 3197

On Active Service

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
AWM2019.22.43



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43

Cpl. R. von Bibra 4x29 109
21st Cntl. Sanit. Coy. H. T.
21st Inft. Bde. A. I. F. Abroad

January 30.

Dearest Joan, Its Friday morning & I've been free, & sitting in the sun reading the new statesman you sent me. They are very good & you could get no better condensation of affairs that matter. But why don't you read them & the New Yorker before you send them Dearest. I got back from the new camp yesterday late. In the evening I went to the movies alone & saw the Broadway Melody of several years ago. Fred Astaire & E. Powell were in it. I enjoyed it. Last night I received a letter from Curtis. He says that Andrew is still going on well & is likely to moved soon to another hospital which means, I presume, that they think his improving satisfactorily. Curtis enclosed the two photographs he took with his Contase. I'm afraid the close up isn't very nice & other one is so far away that you can hardly recognise the gentleman in the hat. Maybe you would though. The other gentleman by the way was a sort of mosque attendant. He had on a beautiful beaded coat & did not speak one word of English. In spite of this however he insisted on maintaining

a terrific flow of conversation which may or may not have been about the mosque. Anyway he demanded payment for the explanations or curses, as the case was, at the end of our tour. For some reason the mail didn't come in yesterday. Its expected today. I suppose often its late you end too. It annoys me very much when it is late because I dwell upon mail days. I'm writing this letter in the mess tent. From the opening in the side I can see the main road with its constant procession of army trucks, Arab buses & Arabs on donkeys. You've no idea how the little donkeys carry people in this country. I suppose it must be alright, a donkey carried Christ & his mother but to see great lubbing Arabs, heavier than the donkeys themselves, sitting astride, kicking the little animals seems horribly cruel. They are such lovely little animals. Often they are a sort of mousey dove-grey ~~[illegible]~~ color that completely fascinates me. Rather the color of Butch as I remember him. When they are this color they have lighter colored noses. Always their feet are miracles of neatness & dutifullness. I've seen them, when they have a very heavy man upon them fairly bend at the locks as they pop along the road. But I mustn't fail to tell you that they are great courtiers, I mean the males.

I saw one the other day lee-lawing lustily & repeatingly risking the kicks of a female who was interested. [The mules too are good. I've seldom seen animals pull like them. As Bob would say their heart was almost too big for them. One day I went to pat one or rather rub his face. - Never was there a more surprised mule. It was his first experience of anglo-saxon animal sentiment apparently. He didn't like it. [Its strange the way the Arab is picking up out Lones & Australian vernacular. They unlike, out Lones & boys, know only the vernacular so cannot condition their language to environment. The other day over at the new camp an Arab ~~who~~ contractor who was seeing a job & did not speak English enlisted the help of a small Arab boy to state his business to the guard. After a prolonged & animated conversation with the contractor, the Arab boy turned to the guard & said simply - "He wants to cart shit". [I'm over in the orderly room now & with three or four others am waiting for the mail. There is one particular corporal whose job it is to collect the mail & this poor fellow is asked a hundred times each day "Is the mail in Arthur? Any mail today Arthur?" Its become a sort of obsession with the poor fellow. Its understandable when you have about eighty people asking the same question.

Goodness, I hope there is a letter from you.
I've just about finished Osbert Sitwell's Triple Fugue. Apparently its a collection of his first short stories. Some are pretty good but often show a certain amount of amateurism. Also the ones that were written a long time ago are often dated by their language. Still in their time they must have been read hot. The book is in Penguin. I think you would enjoy it.
[ Its afternoon now Dearest & I'm still free. It looks as if we will have the whole afternoon off. Its very pleasant. [ The mail has just arrived. With Vic I waited for it at the Post Office. But there were no letters for either of us nor for Chris. They say maybe some more will come in tonight. I'm pinning my hopes on that. Still maybe you missed a mail its easy enough to do, especially when you write twice a week. All the same I've a feeling I will get a letter tonight. [ I've nearly read the New Yorker I received last night. Its funny once I used to be surprised that you read them through from cover to cover. Did you, by the way, read the racing notes? I dont know, if I did, could not tell you anything about our future movements but inevitably I imagine we will move in the not too distant future. I wont be able to give you any warning likely as not so if you dont get a letter for a little while, dont be alarmed. We're a

long way off action yet I should think, so don't worry sweetest one. If we do get a move I'll let you know the very first moment I can, by cable. Its a funny thing I haven't worn my spectacles since leaving Australia & yet my eyes feel ok. The cinema doesn't hurt them either. Maybe I won't even have to wear them again. I'm wondering if Hungal is home again yet. It will be wonderful if she has a foal. Think how nice to look out the sitting room window & see the little thing with something at her side. A very wayward mother I'm afraid she'd make. Stow is my spelling these days - about the same. Leo boys are always asking me to spell things putting me in a most embarrassing situation when I'm not sure myself. Dearest I've just heard I can catch a supplementary mail so am posting this yet in a hurry. You have, as always, all my love & thoughts

Kenneth

H.W. Friend




AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
AWM2019.22.43

Cpl. Koon Bitra vx 29109 21st Anti-Tank Coy. H.Q. 21st Inft.
Bde. A.I.F. Abroad.

Dearest Joan As I told you at the end of letter not., it is Sunday morning & raining very hard. There's been a drought on here & only on Friday the Arabs asked Allah for rain, while the Jews asked Jehovah yesterday & the Christians were to ask God today. As the rain began early this morning I suppose there will be a certain amount of division of opinion. [ Chris I think, has escaped going to the A.I.F. Lord. There is nothing definite yet but he is still with us & it looks as if he has a fair chance of avoiding the job. It's a very complicated story & one that, unfortunately, I cannot tell you in a letter. Taking everything all round though I'm very glad for his sake that he's not going. As I told you before he never really wanted to move. Vic, on the other hand, has now put in for his transfer. I don't think he wants to go much really & wouldn't be surprised if he ~~[illegible]~~ made up his mind to stay. I'm glad you thought the photographs alright. Would you really have recognised me in the far one. It would have to be from the way I stand. Since that day I've heard nothing of Curtis. I don't know what he is up to. Maybe he'll take a Sunday off again soon & will ask me to accompany him up to see Cendrew. [ Later. It's night time & I'm in the tent writing against the fading light. It's rained nearly all day & this afternoon I went to see a film The Lady & the Butler. I think we saw it together once

Tonight I had meant to go over to the Salvo hut to finish this letter but somehow tonight I dont feel like facing it. Instead I'll go to bed as soon as its dark & think about you, Rowallan. It helps a lot thinking like this. Today the mail hasn't come in. They say it will be two days late which has depressed me. Still I will get two letters close together. Tonight old Vic has been up & doing a little gentle cooking. He turned on some very good tomato soup. The Really is a good cook. Tho a terribly clean one but still you come to accept a bit of grime etc. Dearest one the light is going. I'll have to stop. This isn't a nice letter. Maybe today I'm a bit depressed, mainly I think because my tummy is a bit out of order. Its not the old trouble I just feel not quite up to usual. Its nothing to worry about. Tomorrow morning I will write a few more lines. Good-night Dearest one. Monday morning. My tummy is better. Its still training. I'm sorry this isn't a very nice letter Sweetest but my next one will be better. You have all my love & thoughts. I thought for a long while about you last night. Once more Dearest one all my love Kenneth.

Ken

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION

R M Pouley

March 14




Mrs Kenneth von Bibra
Rowallan
Starhawley
Victoria
Australia

PASSED BY CENSOR
No. 3197

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
AWM2019.22.43



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
AWM2019.22.43

Cpl. R. von Bibra 4429109 21st Anti-Tank Coy
H.Q. 21st Infd. Bde. A.I.F. Abroad.

February 3

Dearest Joan, Yesterday when I wrote no letter had arrived from you. Just after I'd posted the letter I was sent out on a job. This took me first to a railway station, a place of only occasional light where first a great goods train shunted with noisy, metallic, efficiency but seemingly purposelessness. Then another train arrived & I was off to another camp from which I wasn't released until after 2 a.m. When I got home I went to the orderly tent where Vic sleeps & there, in the place Vic had promised to leave any letter that should arrive, stood your well known typed square. I was terribly glad & sat down at once to read it in the light of Vic's Hurricane. The photographs were lovely ones Dearest & one what a wonderful composition with P.W. Trash stepping so daintly through it. Chris admired it immensely. And the one of Jack was most appreciated.

You know the cloud of dust the small pigs are making, I thought until Chris told me, that some light had got into the Leica. I was most concerned. Silly of me wasn't it. The shot of the Gethings & Kel thrilly like a spirit picture in the background was very good too but I would have preferred it to be of you. There is no doubt however that your photography is rapidly improving Dearest. When I'd finished the letter I went to my blankets upon my cane bed, well contented. I only thought last night what a fuss I used to make if my bed wasn't made in such a way that my face could never touch the blankets. Nowadays I pull my blankets, rougher ones than I ever had at home, well around my neck & like it. [But to get back to your letter I don't remember what I told Walter to do exactly except that the big fences were to come down & that the boundary fences were to be made

secure for sheep. I wouldn't worry too much Dearest one. That old fox knows what he's about. I'd take a bet that when the sheep arrive not too many pass master Walter's fences. [I'm glad your throat is really better but promise to get the injections if it should ever recur & if its going to do others it will this winter. What you say about Dr. Wilson is noted & approved. What Molly says doesn't apply to us much though, does it. [But did you look inside the sleeping bag. The hooks were but there. Turn the whole bag inside out. [How glad I am that the little rising turned up & that you like it. I thought it was good. [No Dearest one don't send me cakes, papers & a few nuts but no sugar, ever now again would be very welcome. I did tell you that the parcel arrived didn't I. The nuts kill one I mean. It came a few days ago & the contents all except the sugar of which there is no shortage here, were very much appreciated. On the morning I got them Vic & I had figs & walnuts

before breakfast. [You never told me why Marie Dowling's engagement was broken off. [I'm annoyed about that money I gave to the Red Cross. There should have been a proper acknowledgment made. Now remember half was to go to the Soldiers' Fund the other half to the ordinary Red Cross. I told Triplett this. I want you to ask him if this happened & if it didn't demand why I write to the President expressing my strong dissatisfaction. The whole thing has been most careless. If they don't fix it up satisfactorily you can tell them the next donation will be sent to Melbourne where I'm sure of its being properly handled. [You say that one of the pages in your letter sounded lame & uninspired. Sweetest one it was a lovely page. I enjoyed every word of it. [I'm glad Mrs Jean made your hair look good. I wonder if it was filed high in the way I suggested in a recent letter.

Is Basil's old lady a lady in the sense. You were n't very explanatory. [On Monday Chris & I are talking a days leave to Tel Aviv. I'd hoped to be given two days & to apply for Haifa so that I could see Andrew but apparently thats impossible at the moment. Maybe I'll get two days in about ten days time. Sunday morning. Deares & I'm sitting upon the side of a hanning aug out 20 ft far from my tent. Its on high ground & to the left of me I can see the Judean Hills that hide, as we told you before the wilderness of Gethsemane, behind me is the sea. Its a lovely spot. Larks are busy in the sky. [I've just come back from church. The preacher is a strange fellow. Has an educated man probably a bit of a sceptic. Anyway he chooses the most strange things to speak to the boys. For instance he began his sermon this morning with a talk on the roots of the word Catholic & religion, somewhat strange stuff for les boys. The sermon was delivered by the way from the stage of the concert hall where last night The Troupers, a collection of ladies, disported themselves in semi-nudity. [Chris Vic & I all went to the show reviewing late found ourselves in the very front

now from where we more or less ogled the ladies & the ladies more or less ogled us. There was a band composed entirely of women one of these was a powers of about fifty once very good looking in an Augustus John portrait sort of way & she, to everyone's surprise, clowned remarkably throughout the whole concert. It was amateur clowning too yet it was funny. [There were some quite nice figures in the ballet & the sight of bare flesh, after so long, rather tended to upset us all. Chris had several bottles of beer afterwards said my God occasionally. I would have liked the relaxing influence of beer too but had that day ~~[illegible]~~ taken a vow to drink little or no beer as I find it puts condition on me. Elixir a pity as beer is the only alcohol that is procurable in camp. Still it doesn't matter I suppose. [I wrote to Don last week that my official approval on his proposed visit to Rowallan. I suppose he will come now. [Old Mac has just come up & Chris, who is sitting beside me, gave him your last New Yorker to look at. We showed old Mac that lovely pose of the man who got the liquor brandy glass stuck on his head. The old gentleman had to admit however that he would not see the pose. I'm afraid the New Yorker is not his cup of tea. [Chris however like me reads his New Yorker pretty avidly. The boys in the tent content themselves

with saying "My word these Americans get a magazine up extra". [I must stop for the present now Dearest One. I'm going to have my hair cut by young Mr Brookes from King Island. I think I've told you about him before. He used to be a cheese maker on the island. He knows, he tells me, how to make only one kind of cheese. He doesn't believe in chemistry other fancy ideas. I don't think he cuts hair too badly. [Later. It's after lunch Sweetest One. So eat I had roast beef, cabbage, a slice of bread, an orange. Then I came up & lay down in the sun & slept for about half an hour. It's a heavenly day one of the nicest we had since coming here. [Curtis may be is coming up this afternoon because of this I have stayed in camp. Otherwise I think we might have gone on some sort of expedition. Anyway I'll give him until about 2.30 p.m. [Thanks for sending the Joyce cutting by Geoff. I was interested but disappointed. I'm afraid Geoff is letting his political angle quite warp his judgement. As I said to you in my last & one of my late letters. I've always felt Joyce's explanation lay in a revolt against the conventional. A wishing to get away from the words almost ruined by the mouthings of an age of undimmed cheap literature of glib tablers & catch words. You've felt

the repugnance for words just as I have. Admittedly he carried it too far but to suggest as Geoff does that his work of an artist living in an artificial world of foreign saloons or an artist retiring from a sick world, is loony mind nonsense. God these guys with the slant like Geoff get as selfish as hell to the thing they believe in. Maybe that's good. Politically, I'm afraid, I'm a bit less ready to sympathise than I was. This doesn't mean I've changed my fundamental ideas but I don't think I'm impressed so much or depressed if it comes to that by the one track angle of Mr Dow & Co. [ Thicked you a couple of little flowers just now also a sprig of herb. I'll try & get them both in this letter. [ The mail has been delayed again today. Blast it. I hope its not the same your end. It reminds me of wanting for your letters from England when sooften the mail was late. Maybe, though, it will come tonight. [ Dearest one I must end this letter. I'm in the tent now & its nearly five o'clock, tea time. The boys are making their beds when they have, all take up varying positions. One sits reading a book, a novel which he finds hind. Whell me about, another Lebanon orange, next to him, a big young man

lies full length upon his bunk reading the Argus camera supplement, another one re-reads the letters from his wife, Chris has just come in from his afternoon siesta in the sun. He's still getting thinner but unfortunately his medium of measure has been broken. This medium was a particular belt. From the time he began wearing it at Puckapunyal till the time it broke beyond repair, he took it up about six holes. We used to look at this together admiringly. [There is no doubt no one has an excuse for getting fat if they wear a belt. In my case for instance I finish Tin now back to the hole I wore mine in at Puckapunyal that means I've (one) down & up three notches since then. That's one of the reasons Tin off beat. Maybe its the wearing of belts that keeps the Americans so slim for they are a belt wearing nation. [Loveliest one, I must stop. I wish I could tell you how I miss you how I think about the future we must have together. You have all my love & thoughts

Kenneth.

I will soon a photograph of you & Smith
n is it Surge?

Love to Molly & regards to Lena.

H.W. Friend


BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION
AUSTRALIA
PLATYPUS
POSTAGE
9d
PASSED BY CENSOR
No. 3197



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43

Cpl. Roon Bilra 1439 Wg 21st Anti Tank Coy. H. Q.
21st Inft. Bde. A. I. F. Abroad.

February 5

My Dearest Joan. I'm in the tent writing this waiting for tea parade. Tonight I have a lecture to attend so won't have my usual time to write to you in the Salvo, writing room. Your last letter came safely on Monday every glad, as always, was I to get it. First of all to answer a discuss things in the letter. [Yes, I think Mr Knight right in suggesting we sow down the crop paddock next to Noach's. I hadn't done it because there were so many other things to do. Now, however, that you have the sheep, maybe you will need it. I think you had better discuss this with Don when he comes over. If he thinks the sheep won't need it I reckon I would wait until I come home before sowing it down. However Don will know best. Be guided by him. How clever of you to fix the old bark into position. I was really proud of you. And what a victory over the omnipotent Walter. I can just hear him saying "Oh you'll never fill her." Who fixed the pump up by the way? [About the horse. It seems a pity to pay £16 for him if you don't really like him. I think for that amount you would get something pretty good. I would like you to have a good little horse for riding at home. Maybe Cooper or Gethro could help. Well its tea time My Precious. [Well I've had tea & am back in the tent. To eat, I had some sort of stew & bread & butter & marmalade. Not a very exciting meal tonight. One doesn't really mind though

I'm puzzled in a way about your getting both letters on one day. You see I write every mail tit closes here twice a week. Sometimes it is true I write two letters for the one mail so that you should get three letters in the one week. [ I had a letter from Mother on Monday. She says Don is determined to enlist in the A.I.F. She doesn't say when but I presume it is the near future. More is the pity in the circumstances. I wish he would wait three or four months at least. Mother seems to be quite reconciled to his going as far as I could gather. [ I have had no more word of Andrew but hope to hear from Aunis again soon. You see he has ways & means of finding things out where I haven't. I will wire you as soon as I hear anything more. Well the shoes have arrived. I don't know quite what to think about them. The finish of them is not as high as I expected. Of course they were very inexpensive actually three & half Palestinian pounds only. Still I think they are nice really & that you will like them. They'll do for the country any way. [ I'm own in the Salvo but now. I'll post the shoes off within a couple of days now. Don't know how long it will take for them to arrive. At least a couple of months I would imagine. Goodness I do hope they will fit. Your measurement arrived on Monday by the way but I had already ordered. I plan which the beautifully shaped little foot for my own personal property

It brought me close to you when I opened it. It's a really beautifully shaped foot. Do you remember what Little John said. How right he was. [ Well we had our days leave in Sel Aviv on Monday & had the usual measure of food & drink & that was all except for a lot of talk with various other people - all talk that was pretty foolish. As I've told you before these leaves in places where you know no one & no one wants to you anyway & you, like a fool, have a feverish desire to have a good time, are quite hopeless. [ Jane sounds a nice child. I imagine that of necessity she is fairly remote. What else would you expect being moved around in the manner she is. I wonder if Mother sends her off the way Father does. What an old Fosc. B.B. is. Does Kel like Jane by the way. [ I'm afraid I've taken up smoking again. It doesn't really matter I suppose but I've found that smoking a cigarette after the meals here, which are not very satisfying, often curbs the desire to go down to the canteen & buy a cake of chocolate or an ice cream. In this case I think its better to have an odd cigarette. There now the weather is getting warmer warmer. Soon I hope to be able to give up wearing a pullover Sodley Chris was able to take a sun bath stripped to the waist, on the ground outside our tent. She is looking very fit by the way & stands up to

the work in a wonderful way. I admire the way he's come through things very much. [I'm glad old George was able to get up. If he hasn't petrol tickets he could always come on the train couldn't he. [I'm wondering how les chiens are regarding les moutons. You must be careful Rel does not get among them at night time. That would be disaster. I'll bet the sheep are a good line, a beautiful line (little) as Walter put it. Trust Brother to send nothing but the best. Where is the ream coming from by the way? That was interesting about the comet. It's been seen here too. Chris claims he saw it with ses yeux propre the other night while on guard. [The book about the anti-semitism is an original but not, to my mind, a very satisfactory explanation. I'm afraid its a matter of the people themselves. Any way I don't believe in the existence of a Christ hatred. Even those who do not accept him as a diety at least concede he talked sense & died pretty well. Still its interesting. [On Monday in Tel Aviv I bought one of U.S. Prichett's books. I've forgotten its name. I also bought a French book about Algeria that was going cheap: [I finished O. Sitwell's book. The last story: Triple Fugue didn't seem worth the trouble he took with it. I'm afraid I didn't even bother to finish it. The other stories I enjoyed very much: [Yesterday we had Whanade for a visiting

Australian politician. There was a great line up of men to listen to him. He spoke for about ten minutes not half as well as he usually does I thought. His choice of words might have been effective for Parliament but was not, to my mind, very happy as far as we were concerned. It seemed funny seeing him stand up on the platform dressed in his civilian clothes, assuming tone, to represent very forcibly, my life before, which was so far away from me now. Dearest but you are still addressing the letters incorrectly. Its not H.Q. 21st Anti-Tank Coy but H.Q. 21st Inft. Bde. Do you ever hear anything of Clarie Jocelyn. I suppose they don't come to Melbourne. Did you ever read the articles in the Stone. Also Basil's short story. When you've typed bits out of my letters do you then throw them away Sweetest one. I'd like you to keep them if you wouldn't mind. There are odd little things I'd like to look up one day. And now my Precious one its nearly time to get ready for the lecture. Maybe I'll have time to write a little more after the lecture. I think of you constantly Dearest. You are that source, that future on which my thoughts hopes always rest. Or in other words you're the only thing I really look forward to. So do take care of yourself properly Dearest & don't be too sad or lonely.

The lecture is over. It was on Italian explosives & I think that I saw one of the bombs that caused Andrew his little trouble. Quite small it was painted pillar box red very attractive rather like a child's money box. The lecture was given by the way by the man, now a captain, that I used to see at lunch in the Society in the old days. Do you still go to lunch there. And does Jack or doesn't he ever come to town now adays. I suppose its a bit difficult about the Tasmanian visit. I dont suppose you want to go very much & I can understand that. How would it be if you went for a week only. Lolly, les chiens les moutons etc seem a reasonable excuse. Would you fly over? Tomorrow I am nearly corporal so with a bit of luck I will have time to write to you again tomorrow. I must also, if I get time, try to write to Moya. Her salad by the way sounded very good. What news of Sammy? She should get a good view from that place she is in. How do she & Molly get on. [ I must stop Dearest One. You have all my love & thoughts You know I have the feeling it won't be so very long before we see each other again. Do you feel that sometimes. I feel so close to you always spiritually that physically I never feel terribly isolated from you. Once again I wishes & one all my love Kenneth.

R M Pouley

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND HUTS

By Air Mail

Feb 19




W. 2.

On Active Service

Mr Kenneth von Bibra.

Rowallan

Harkaway

Victoria

Australia

PASSED BY CENSOR
No. 3197

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
AWM2019.22.43

Cpl. K. von Bibra 21 st Anti-Tank Coy. 21st Inft. Bde. A.I.F. Abroad

February 6.

Dearest Joan, In a few minutes I hope that Vic will come in with a letter from you. At the moment he is down at the post office awaiting the mail. It is about six o'clock and I am in the orderly tent, for tonight, I am corporal of the guard. The guard by the way has just gone on. Chris is in it. He is standing not far away from this tent very military with fixed bayonet and tin hat. Poor Chris, he has rather a painful blister on one of his heels but in spite of this, insists on going on with his work.
Today I have had rather an easy day. This morning, with three others, I was out in a car as a guard for the Brigadier. We saw a lot of interesting country, white rock strewn hill tops, valleys with new crops just showing, an odd Arab village more sordid and dirty than the usual run if possible and the usual exciting Palestinian sky. We got back in time for lunch and afterwards I addressed and posted off your parcel of shoes. I cannot decide whether they are nice shoes or not. The shape, it seems to me now, is not very exciting nor the finish terribly good but I suppose the finish in hand made shoes is never quite as neat as it is in machine ones. Anyway as Ive said before they will be a good solid shoe for the country if nothing else. Doubtless when they arrive there will be something of a suprise in the parcel. A suprise which I cannot disclose now. Its not a letter or anything like that just something in connection with the shoes themselves. I couldn't register them by the way. The parcel was too big.
Tonight Dearest One I feel oddly purposeless and disorientated, perhaps not disorientated as muted. Time seems, this afternoon to have lost temporarily its significance and has left me stranded on a bar outside itself where strange to say I seem to lie in an inertia that gives me no concern. As I pause in my typing, my hands resting heavily on the machine, I look up at the flame in the hurricane lamp, see the reflections it casts upon the dirty canvas roof and hear from outside, the passing of transports on the main road, the noise of men walking up the nearby gravel. It reminds me for some reason of a night many years ago at the Bushby's place. Jack and I were children and had been put to bed on the side verandah. My bed faced a brick wall. It was a very red wall and in its surface there were small holes in which, if you had one, you could insert a stick or knife and excuvate in rather a pleasing way. Well I remember on this night I had been gazing at the holes in the wall and listening at the same time to the occasional tram car and motor which passed and feeling much as I do at this moment — not being really at all happy in the position in which I found myself but tolerating it in an outside sort of way.
You have heard of course that the Bushby boys are going or are in the militia. Now the Old Lady will have nothing to feel concerned about. Graeme, I understand, is determined not to remain a private very long. I shouldn't think he would either. I wonder how poor Pat gets on without him. I'd hate to have Pat in love with me. Imagine being loved by a wife and almost a mother at the same time for I'm sure that's what it almost ammounts to. Actually of course that isagreeable to Graeme. I wonder what the army will do for him.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43

Does time pass slowly for you at home Sweetest One ? Do you find that the old swift tempo of which we were always complaining has disappeared. Here I find time moves at once swiftly and slowly.
The mail has just arrived brought in by Vic and followed by a crowd of young men anxious to get their letters. I got one from you. It was a very nice one. It was undated and not, as you explained very long because L'Oncle Ted had arrived with lettuce and this cut down your writing time.
First of all Vic too received a letter and enclosed in it was a cutting from the Women's Weekly. Under the heading of Seaside fun it had the intelligence that Mrs Ken von Bibra is installed at Carr's Cottage on Oliver Hill. Odd...
Now for your letter. How I can imagine L'Oncle Ted saying but why get the sheep from Tasmania at all that expense. It would completely outrage him. Bad enough for people like us to have a property like Rowallan at all. Poor old fellow. I always remember him saying to me when he began fencing. "But why do you want such a big place. What'll you do with it."
Dearest dont woory about my drinking a lot of beer because I dont. If I do have a bottle at night it is partly because it is helpful in ~~xx~~ a lucerne tree way.
No Dearest as I said before you cannot consider the Red Cross idea. It would be too foolish. Honestly, and I know. I'm glad you are still carrying on the lamp collecting. What was the last one like.
The photograph was lovely Dearest One. I like it an awful lot. What was amiss with T.T. Just one of those unaccountable lapses of self-conciousness. You look lovely Dearest One. Well, and very, very pretty. And the funny little hat too. Is it worn very much ? I imagine its a bit hard to keep on when working in the garden. I love that photograph. It will take pride of place in my collection.
You say that the three months are nearly up. Well yes that is true but it may be longer. Quite likely in [redacted] fact despite anything I may have said in earlier letters.
Ive just begun to read Mr. Prichett's Dead Man Leading. The style is stimulating. I think Ive read something of his before but cannot remember what. I wonder by the way what has happened to Coppard. I would like to read Guilty Men verybmuch. Maybe you would not be permitted to send it though.
By the way dont worry about the stimudents. I can always get plenty of the woodden sort here.
Now Dearest One I must end this for the present. I may write a little more in the morning and post it off on the thin chance of its catching this mail (Ive already one letter in it) or keep it and wirte lot more for the next mial It will depend on how much time I have in the morning.

Dearest I'm going to post this off. It is Sunday morning. You have all my love & thoughts Dearest One Kenneth

Rmf

R M Pontey

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND HUTS

By Air Mail

Feb 19

On Active Service




Mrs Kenneth von Bibra

Rowallan

Hathaway

Victoria

Australia

PASSED BY CENSOR
No. 3197

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
AWM2019.22.43



RED SHIELD HUTS - HOSTELS FOR AUSTRALIAN TROOPS.

"My strength is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure"

February 9.

Cpl Noon Bilna
Ex 29 109
21st Anti Tank Coy
H.S. 21st Inft. Bell
A.I.F. Abroad

Dearest Joan, As I began this letter I thought the color of the paper rather flighty for the Salvos but its more or less their color I suppose. Anyway its light-weight & therefore good. [With me tonight are Chris & Mrs Callighan. We have just had a cup of coffee brought in. It is hot if rather tasteless, still not bad. [Today we have been out on manoeuvres. Our part was to play that of the enemy. It wasn't, or for us, a very serious affair. We waved flags to represent machine gun fire & eventually the attacking boys passed through us as we lay ~~[illegible]~~ concealed behind ledges & ditches, saying "Bludgers" for our task, compared with theirs, was a very easy one. Two or three nice things happened during the day. As we lay in our first ~~[illegible]~~ position upon the slope of a hill, I saw down below us in the grain, two jackals. They were evidently mates. For a while I was able to watch them through glasses. They were excitingly cautious and very "fleuve" They would scent the air, sneak forward, sit or squat back to back watching the country on opposite sides. They moved with an odd pig like gait but of course much faster. After a while they disappeared down a gully. Did you know that actually they are savage? Only the other day a mob of them attacked a telephone linesman mauling him pretty severely. Doubtless I've told you how they howl at nights. Its not what I would describe as eerie but it has the peculiarity of being easily imitated by man, a sort of semi shreak. The boys often put it on as an act so that when you hear it in the



RED SHIELD HUTS - HOSTELS FOR AUSTRALIAN TROOPS.

"My strength is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure"

distance you are never quite sure whether it is man or beast. [Talking of imitating things les boys give excellent interpretations of falling bombs, all the more praiseworthy as none of them, on this trip, have yet heard the real thing. [But to get back to today. During the afternoon when we had been resting I awoke from a sleep in the sun to hear music. It was a shepherd piping. I walked across the paddock & sat down beside him. He played for me. His pipe was a brass tube perhaps a foot long broken by five holes. He played it, blowing sideways with his dark thick negroid lips, his henna stained finger tips & nails moving slowly over the holes. The music had that thin, reedy quality of ancient tunes. As he played, occasionally his eyes looked from me to his flock feeding over against an orchard where a few almond trees were beginning to loose their early blossom in the wind. Some of the time I looked at him to see his eyes that were big, dull with Arab eye trouble that showed its marks in a trace of white discharge that had dried upon his cheek or looked at his bare dirty feet with their broken toe nails. He played two things. Then I gave him a cigarette & went back to Chris. "You heard" I asked. He nodded & said, as he'd said once before days ago when hearing such music at dusk one evening, "music as old as the world." Lot long afterwards we piled into a lorry & drove home over the bumping road. Old Mac was in our bus. One of his eyes was



RED SHIELD HUTS - HOSTELS FOR AUSTRALIAN TROOPS.

"My strength is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure"

red & inflamed from the wind that had blown all day. He was rather quiet sitting lunched up among the others. [When we got home I went down for a shower. It wasn't hot but had the chill off it. Some men who had been playing basket ball came in. I smelt them hot & unpleasant until they were under the water. And now I'm in here writing to you. The wireless is giving the news, ping-pong balls bounce next door. [I've applied for leave next Sunday to go across & see Andrew. I'm hoping Chris can come with me. I know my leave will be alright but I'm not sure about Chris. I'll have to take a taxi. It's quite a long way nearly seventy miles. I'll wire you the next day of course. But I've just realised that you will, or should, receive the telegram before this letter. [I've been thinking more about the seat for the verandah. How would it be to have a semi-circular affair with a very high back over which could be stretched a piece of white canvas so that you could have protection against any existing wind. I have in mind something resembling the stern seat on a small river boat if you can understand. I'll try to draw it. I've tried but I cannot draw it so have described the ship stern idea to Chris & he is now at work upon it. The result I enclose. I did not ask for such superfluities as rudder & propeller but the artist in Mr Walker needs must include them. Do you get the idea. I don't want it to be nautical it just happens to be a good shape. What do you think. The seat part could be made of



RED SHIELD HUTS - HOSTELS FOR AUSTRALIAN TROOPS.

"My strength is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure"

wood & the back part, over which the canvas screen could be stretched, would be wire mesh supported on pipe. I believe Walter could do it. If you don't understand the sketch have a look at some of the boats down at Prince's Bridge. Of course our seat would be on a greatly reduced scale & would not look like the stern of a boat. I've just asked the artist to sign his production. The signature is his in Chinese. It looks, after all, as if we may be moving on from here pretty soon. We are all very glad. You mustn't worry if, for a while, my letters are a bit irregular. You will know that if I cannot write I'm constantly thinking of you. Don't think this means we will be really in la guerre. That won't be for a bit longer yet. I'll end this letter now my Sweetest. It's nearly 10 p.m. & the hut closes then. But I will write again to catch this mail so you should get two letters. I'm enclosing two slips of Palestinian flowers. They are not very good ones I'm afraid. You have all my love Dearest one & all my thoughts. I'll think of you before sleeping tonight. All love again Kenneth.

Love to Al, Ebbos, Molly, Moya. Regards to Edna. A touch for T.T. & Smith (in Surge) R

H.W. Friend

THE SALVATION ARMY

By Air mail.

Written Feb 9 '41.

PASSED BY CENSOR No. 3090

2ND BD

AUSTRALIA 9d PLATYPUS POSTAGE







RED SHIELD HUTS
for Australian Troops



on Active Service

enc. flowers & back sketch by Chris.

HARKAWAY

Mrs Kenneth von Bibra

~~Rowallan~~

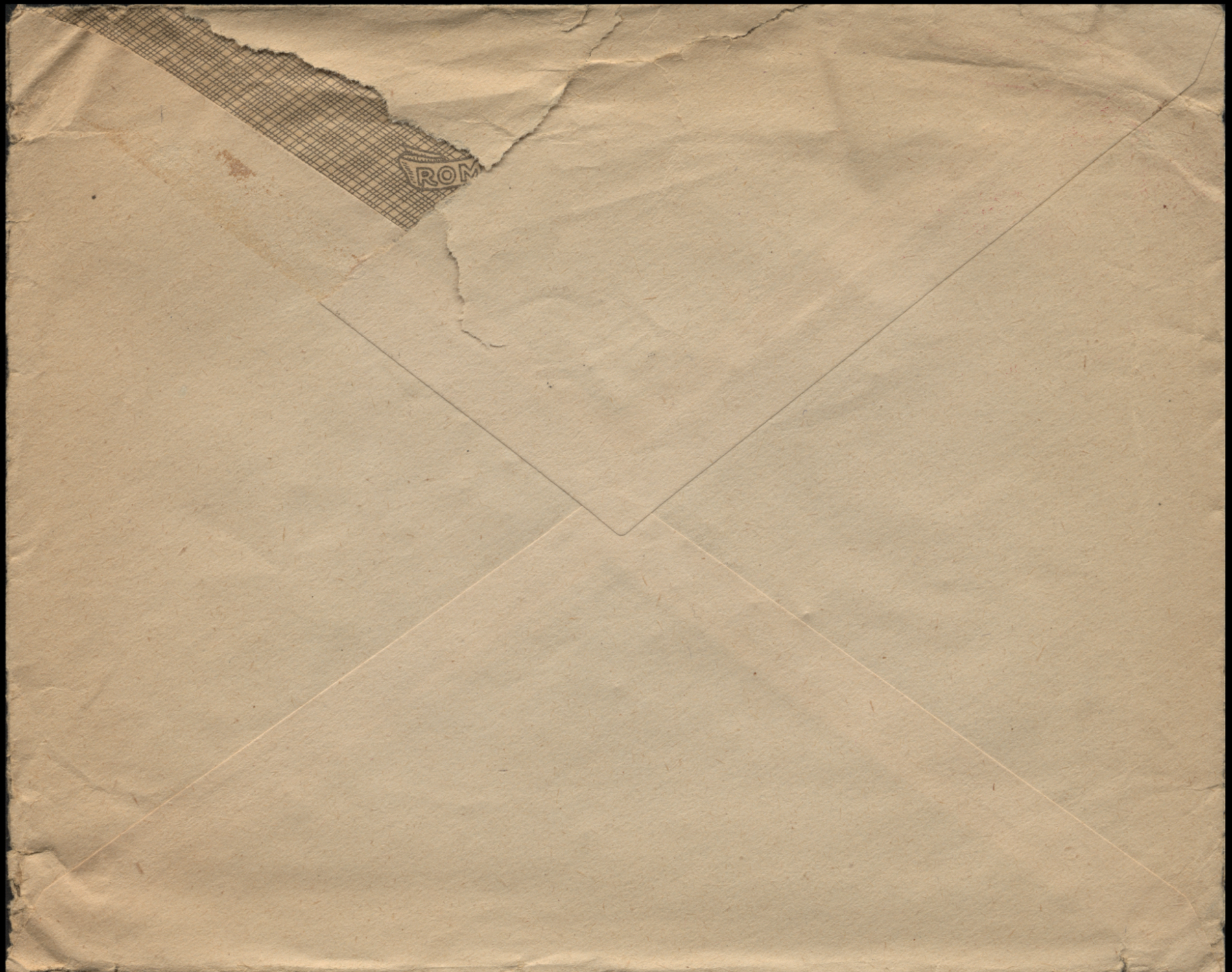
~~Harkaway~~

Victoria

Australia

"Ehyl Cottage"
Olivers Hill
Frankston

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43




AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43

Chl. K. von Bibra [illegible] 21st Anti-Tank Coy
H. Q. 21st Inft. Bde A. I. F. Abroad

February 9.

Dearest Joan, I'm in the tent. It is Sunday morning church parade has just ended. I dont know what the pardre said this morning, it was an open air parade & with hundreds of others I just stood, conscious of my feet upon the ground the invigorating morning air. Occasionally, I heard words about Christ once my attention was arrested by the parde who, when speaking of Christ's death upon the cross, held out his own arms in imitation of the position upon the cross. I dont know why he should have done it. [ Yesterday we were out all day on manoeuvres marching back to camp about six miles over a succession of Arab crops. We had one or two shops on the way & then I lay down on the ground using my tin hat as a pillow let the sun warm my face in a most soothing glow. There, when the sun is out now, its warmth is the most pleasant of sensations. It has a strength & at once a softness that we seldom find in our country where the sun is mostly hot or not hot. [ Last night Vic cooked us a meal on a primus stove. We bought the supplies in the canteen thad a famous meal, finishing it up with a tin of preserved fruit & ice cream. The meal was really beautifully cooked & Vic received out congratulations very happily. Afterwards we all went off to the pictures where we saw the man In the Iron Mask (Sous titres en Français). It was quite a good show in its way as long as you were not

one of those pedantic people who like to see history or fiction, for that matter, played as it was written. The pictures over we went to the canteen for a drink & then to bed. [In the canteen les boys were in dancing mood. It all began the other night when two or three decided they were dance hungry. Since then there has been a dance every night. After the dances they are discussed quite seriously in the tent. One says for instance "My Hoot young — can dance, wonderful partner. — Takes time to get into talking the 6 — woman's pant. Jesus, how that fat Anton can dance Does that jitter-bug stuff or whatever you call it."

Still no word of Andrew. I'm hoping that maybe Curtis will come over today but of course it is probably difficult for him. If I don't hear anything from him this week I will apply for leave to go over & see Andrew alone. I would hire a car doubtless. It may be the last chance I'll have of seeing him for a good while. I do hope they send him home. Andrew as I told you doesn't think they will although there is no doubt he would be terribly glad if it came about. [We had lunch & am back in the tent with Chris, Sie & Mr Callighan. Our mail came in just before lunch & now all of us are in fine humours. I've read little bits of yours out to Chris & shown him the Donald Mickey which we both enjoyed. Sie is still chewing over one of his letters. [Your letter was, as usual, a lovely one. I will talk about it later when I go over to the Salvo Stut & have a table to write upon.

Today I also received two other letters one from Mother another from Don. Enclosed in Don's letter were four photographs of Barbara & Don, the children, one of the Craig's little girls & a little English girl who the Craig's took under an evacuation scheme. The little English girl looks beautifully decadent beside the little Australians. Don seems pretty cheerful, apparently they have had a good year. Mother's letter contained little news except that Don still intends to enlist. [Since beginning this page I've been to the afternoon performance of the pictures. I went with Chris and saw an inane show called The Return of Arsene Lupin. It was such a cold cheerless afternoon that I believe we would have gone to see anything. [And now for your letter. Thank you for the spelling correction first. [No Chris didn't make any remark to Edgar about the chocolate but he, is like George in as much that these sort of cracks are in his line. Sometimes he says things which remind me very much of the Old George. Show annoying about Gunyah. They are, I'm sure, awfully stuffy people. Really don't worry about the thing too much Dearest One. It doesn't matter one way or the other. Gunyah is young yet. There is plenty of time. Plenty of time... You are right to let Smith (or Surge) into the house. I'm glad she is going to be beautiful quite T.T. in manner. When will a photograph of you both arrive. [I also think you could well afford the verandah seat. If you have it in the place you propose I'm wondering if you

get any sun. How would it be to have the seat made to the measurements of the place you propose, but constructed so that it could be moved. I'll think about this more & write my ideas later. [ I don't know about the Cub garden idea. It would be nice whenever them so close I feel yet the tree idea appeals to me too. But do you think it wise to have such a big tree so close to the house. Sun thing question you know. You will have to decide the question yourself Dearest One Actually I think I'm almost inclined to favour the Cub garden idea. [ Its after tea & I'm in the Salvo Hut Tonight we have another lecture on something with a film to explain it. That will probably interrupt this letter. [ I've been trying to think out an idea for the verandah but its difficult. Its not an easy place to handle. How would it be if you had the couch I suggested mounted on little rubber modern wheels so that it wouldn't be too heavy to handle. You see I think it would necessarily need to be a pretty bulky sort of thing with a handle otherwise it would both be uncomfortable when pulled away from the wall & also it would look dwarfed just like the furniture we have there now. Whatever you do get something pretty big. [ I was interested to learn that Basil's ex wife had had other children. That was something I had never thought of. It makes it even more difficult for Jane doesn't it. I'm pleased you are looking after her for a while & that she

seems to be happy. Tell her I'm glad she likes Rowallan & les chiens. [Your cutting about McCain interested me very much. Things must be moving in the right direction at home although on the surface, all the strikes seem unfortunate, when the movement seems to be in the right direction anyway. Obviously after this is all over things must go that way. Chris, by the way, is most conservative in politics. He did the Steadies Stall round as a young man & has never been able to get over it. Seems unreasonable. [Yesterday the young Mr Brookes, the cheese maker from King Island, cut my hair. I sat upon an empty box. He snipped & cut & when he'd finished said "Well there you are Ken, 'she's the best I can do. So be it'll suit." It looks alright in front but my friends tell me that the rear is somewhat unusual. Apparently it gives the impression that I'm wearing a wig. Still it will grow. This war is making me up more than ever over the ever present problem of wealth distribution. On one side I'm made conscience stricken at the advantage, my money, for instance, can give me over the average fellow. With money you can get away with so much more than the other fellow & your life can be made so relatively easier. Yet on the other hand the war has brought me into contact with the unlucky

ones (in the monetary sense I mean) & I find that my life & theirs is so removed that it would be very very hard for me to be on a level with them. Of course it can be argued, given your money & advantages they would, or some of them would, be as sensitive to the things important as you are, They would not have objectionable personal manners & habits. Still, I must admit sometimes I wonder if they would ever really be the same. I must be wrong but sometimes, when things irk me a good deal, I find myself feeling completely ruthless towards them. But don't take all this too seriously. Don't forget the circumstances I'm in are completely artificial & unsubstantial, thank God.

[Someone has just come in with a telegram for me. I'm always a bit nervous when telegrams come thinking all may not be well with my Precious One, & always they are the very devil to open being clipped down on the four corners with wire. When finally I did get this one open I read unbelievingly on this day, February 9, 1940 Happy Christmas Pal Love Vivian.— I think that has beaten any existing speed record in the unit. Maybe the address was not quite full enough. I must stop & go to the lecture I've been at. [The lecture has just ended. It seemed a very long one thou I have no more time to write more. Tomorrow we must be up at 6 a.m. There are special manoeuvres. Dearest, one you have all my love & thoughts. I mean go for very long without you coming into my head & that coming always makes me feel better & happier. Once more all my love Kenneth. Thank Vivian very much for the telegram

A.W. Fried

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION




On Active Service
H. Friend

"Ghyl Cottage"
Olivers. Hill
Frankston

Mrs Kenneth von Bibra

Abat Mar 12 ~~Rowallan~~

~~Harkaway~~

Victoria

Australia

PASSED BY CENSOR
No. 3197

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
AWM2019.22.43



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43



RED SHIELD HUTS - HOSTELS FOR AUSTRALIAN TROOPS.

"My strength is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure"

Cpl Avon Bilra
V x 29 109
21st Anti-Tank Coy
H. Q. 21st Inf Bde
A.I.F. Abroad

February 11.

Dearest Joan, Tonight I will write only a few lines. I've been to the pictures with Chris. We saw a film called Honolulu. It was tenibly fool, & made us both laugh a lot. Chris was in a very good mood before it began for the two preceding shorts were, by a co-incidence both about the old Southland. After the pictures we went to the canteen & drank back a bottle of beer. Here, in the background, a young man discussed heatedly the English governor-general that came to Australia. As I came across to the hut here I looked at the camp. The canvas tents stood taught, their ropes rigid under a sky lit by the nearly full moon & crowded by clouds & stars. It was one of those times when you think "Yes-Palestine." Tonight I'm tired. I have no particular reason, the day has not been heavy. This morning we worked in the camp, this afternoon we went for a route march. I'm still reading Dead Man Leading by Prichett & find it better & better. Its wonderfully done. I think he is an English-man but I'm not sure. Chris has never heard of him neither has the young man from Spencer's, the only other bloke in the unit who would be likely to know. Do try & get the book if you are able. Vic, as I may have told you is away in Jerusalem. Its strange. It looks as if Chris & I may miss the Holy City. Yet I don't really care. I'm not sure that I want to see it very much it & its conducted tours its phony footprints of Christ, its wrangling monks. Still I may make it. Outside its just begun to rain very, very, hard. In a few minutes I will have to climb the slippery hill to my tent. Most people in there will be asleep, vague shapes under their blankets. Quickly I will undress. My tunic & trousers I'll hang on a line stretching between the two ten & pegs & all my



RED SHIELD HUTS - HOSTELS FOR AUSTRALIAN TROOPS.

"My strength is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure"

2.

other clothes will be shoved under the mattress where, in the darkness of the early morning, I will be able to find them. Maybe I will eat an orange as soon as I get into bed & then sleep. I must stop Precious bue. The Tatoo man is packing up the chairs. He wants to go to bed. [" It is Wednesday morning & I am in the tent. Today I am orderly corporal which means most of the time I am a free agent, a rather pleasant state of affairs. Luckily too, I have the tent to myself, a thing that very rarely happens. Its wonderfully beautiful, this morning. Everything around me is quiet & only in the distance can I hear the noise of traffic on the main road, an odd bugle call from the main camp below me. Looking out the tent opening, which is beside my bed, I can see first a pair of my underpants hanging damp & limp upon one of the tent ropes, then a few tent tops & then open country, dark under a sky that still promises rain. For some reason it has made me think of sitting at home at my desk on a similar day when I could hear you & Leena passing up & down the passage doing those things which, because I could not see them, intrigued me, led me on to conjecture. And then maybe there would be the sharp characteristic noise down the passage & I'd know who that was & why he was there. Maybe there would even be a scratch at my door & when he came in that look which said "Why be a chump & stay in here moping. I know you are a fine bloke but why do you do it. Oh, you are determined to stay. Well alright, I might as well sleep. All very foolish though even though it is raining" [" You said in one of your recent letters to get you a pair of Arab shoes if possible. Well



RED SHIELD HUTS - HOSTELS FOR AUSTRALIAN TROOPS.

"My strength is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure"

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I'm afraid there is no such thing as an Arab shoe in this country or if there is I haven't struck them. As far as I've seen the Arab women wear no shoes or western ones. The majority wear none. The men are much the same only I would say that more wore shoes. Some of them wear a cut of rough semi-sandal others have western shoes & by treading down the back portion over the heel also form a kind of sandal. But there are no real Arab shoes for women. Still I'm always keeping my eyes open for you & anything that is good will be bought & sent back to my Dearest love. Talking of clothes & things isn't it time you had some new ones for the winter. You certainly need some new pullovers I think for one thing. Be sure & get good rubber boots for working about in. The pair you had last winter were really too heavy. Mine, by the way, you might give away. They will only perish & that seems a pity. Doubtless they would fit Walter or failing him Vivian. By the way did you have my clothes cleaned. Look out for moths. You have never told me if Green did the job to the bathroom & if it was successful. I'm wondering how the roof is going to stand up to this winter's rains, especially the spouting. If anything goes wrong Hartwell is as good as anyone I think. Don't worry about not counting the sheep correctly to begin with. It takes time to be a good counter. Eventually you will find it comes easier to you. Have you got some of the paddocks shut up or have they the run of the entire place? About lucerne. I don't think I would plant it near the vegetable garden. Once it takes root in a place like



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that it's the very devil to get out & someday, doubtless we will be using all the orchard as garden. Even then it wouldn't be as big a garden as Beaupont which always seemed to me a good, workable size for one man. [Have you decided about tree planting. I'm hoping you are going to put some in. We must keep at it each year. I know you intend planting around the engine shed but you haven't mentioned any others. [You haven't said anything about fires so presume we've been lucky this year. Don't worry too much about hoach. We will get it all fixed one day. After all we've a long time ahead of us to do many, many things. [Have you lost or put on weight these last few months. The last picture, the one of you looking at Kel on the veranda steps & the one I like terribly you look so pretty in it, seems to suggest that you might have lost a lot. Tell me about this now Joan. I want to know. You cannot go loosing weight. And another thing, I would like you to go & have an overhaul by Dwell, if not him, go to the other man Fitzgerald whatever he's called. Please do this Sweetest One. It would be terrible if you weren't well while I was away & besides you must be in bounding good health against my return. It will be Beaupont all over again only nicer because it will be at Rowallan & there is another reason too. I wonder if you can guess There was one unavoidable flaw there, wasn't there. At Rowallan that won't exist. I must stop for the present Precious One. [Retreat has just blown & I am in the underlying tent. I've just posted Chris on his beat (sounds strange doesn't it) & now I have nothing [illegible] me

RED SHIELD HUTS · HOSTELS FOR AUSTRALIAN TROOPS.

"My strength is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure"



until I have to post the next relief at 8 p.m. I worked this afternoon & quite late went for a military driver's motor licence. Here the traffic keeps to the right of the road but unfortunately the cars are from Australia & are therefore right hand drives. This makes driving a bit tricky to begin with, you are apt to attempt passing things on their incorrect side. [Vic has come back from Jerusalem. He reckons it is pretty good. [In my last letter I said we might be moving soon, in the one before that it was unlikely how I don't know so forget anything I've said. We might go any time - soon or later. [Well I've finished Prichett's Dead Man Leading & I reckon his one of the best people writing today. Hemingway, to whom, in a way, he is distantly related, he leaves miles behind, hidden in the jewelled cloud of his still simple but lovely, chosen words. And from the psychological angle Cory doesn't exist by comparison. You must get some of his books Dearest one. For me its been an exciting new experience reading him. [Vic is, I think at the moment, rather out of sorts with both Chris & I. To explain this is difficult. Where has it begun. Perhaps in my case by my forsaking him for periods during our leaves together. I think I've told you on a couple of occasions when we've been in Tel Aviv I've wanted to be alone, to do exactly what I felt like at the moment & more important still to remove those influences which ordinary, in camp, it is impossible to escape from. All the time, or nearly all the time in camp, people are

RED SHIELD HUTS - HOSTELS FOR
AUSTRALIAN TROOPS.

"My strength is as the strength of ten,
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intruding in upon you. If you are not actually listening to their words the very loudness of them, breaks through your consciousness. Is inevitable of course but when you get the chance its good to escape it for a while. Well that may be one reason. Then on the other side Vic often annoys me doubtless, although I've never quarrelled with him, he is sensitive enough to feel my disapproval. What are the things he does that annoy me? Well he is physically incapable of sitting down at a table without bumping it, knocking over my tea, spilling something or kicking me in the shins. Then he makes a noise eating, a lot of little things like that, in themselves nothing but things which easily magnify, in a mind not very occupied with anything important. And so there is a certain resentment that comes out occasionally & yet in spite of it we are all constantly in each other's company. Doubtless it will pass. Vic really is the strangest fellow. He's completely mercurial, changing in his attitude towards things & people, almost overnight. He's the most colossal optimist I've ever met. But disillusion him, I'll become, especially on matters pertaining to the rights of people, ~~he will become~~ inspired in his denouncements. I wonder what he thinks about me. I have an idea but maybe its as wrong as Hell. If you have always told me I am not a selfish man, & so convinced have I become evidently, that as I went on to say maybe I was one, that I approached the writing of it with a complacency that led me to think I didn't for a minute consider the real possibility of my being ~~[illegible]~~ selfish



RED SHIELD HUTS - HOSTELS FOR AUSTRALIAN TROOPS.

"My strength is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure"

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And yet I honestly do wonder if I am unselfish. You see Dearest & One if I was unselfish with you it was the old story of being unselfish because I loved you & it made me very happy. The question I ask myself now is whether or not I'm ever really unselfish. You see I have so much, comparatively, that its never any sacrifice to be generous. Its very very seldom I have to deny myself anything. I don't know how I got onto all that. I can just hear you, as I've often heard you saying "Darling you are the most unselfish of men." Dearest & One how I wish I could hear you say that. And now my loveliest I must stop. Tomorrow the mail is due. Its one of the happy days for all of us. I've told you before how everyone looks forward to the two mail days. Unfortunately we will be out all day on manoeuvres but we will be back for tea at night. [Do you remember how you were always accusing me of groaning to myself when putting on boots etc. Well all the boys do that every morning when they are putting their clothes on. You mightn't like it much I think its curing me of the habit. So that is something isn't it. Must stop Dearest & One. You have all my love & thoughts. Do look after yourself Precious. You know that you are my l'avenir. I mean I think not so much in terms of the war ending but of being with you. All my love - Kenneth.

H.W. Friend

THE SALVATION ARMY

RED SHIELD HUTS

for Australian Troops

By Air mail

PAR AVION

Palestine

Feb-March




HARKAWAY
25 FE 41
VIC.

on Active Service

H.W. Friend

Mr Kenneth von Bibra

~~Powellan~~

~~Harkaway~~

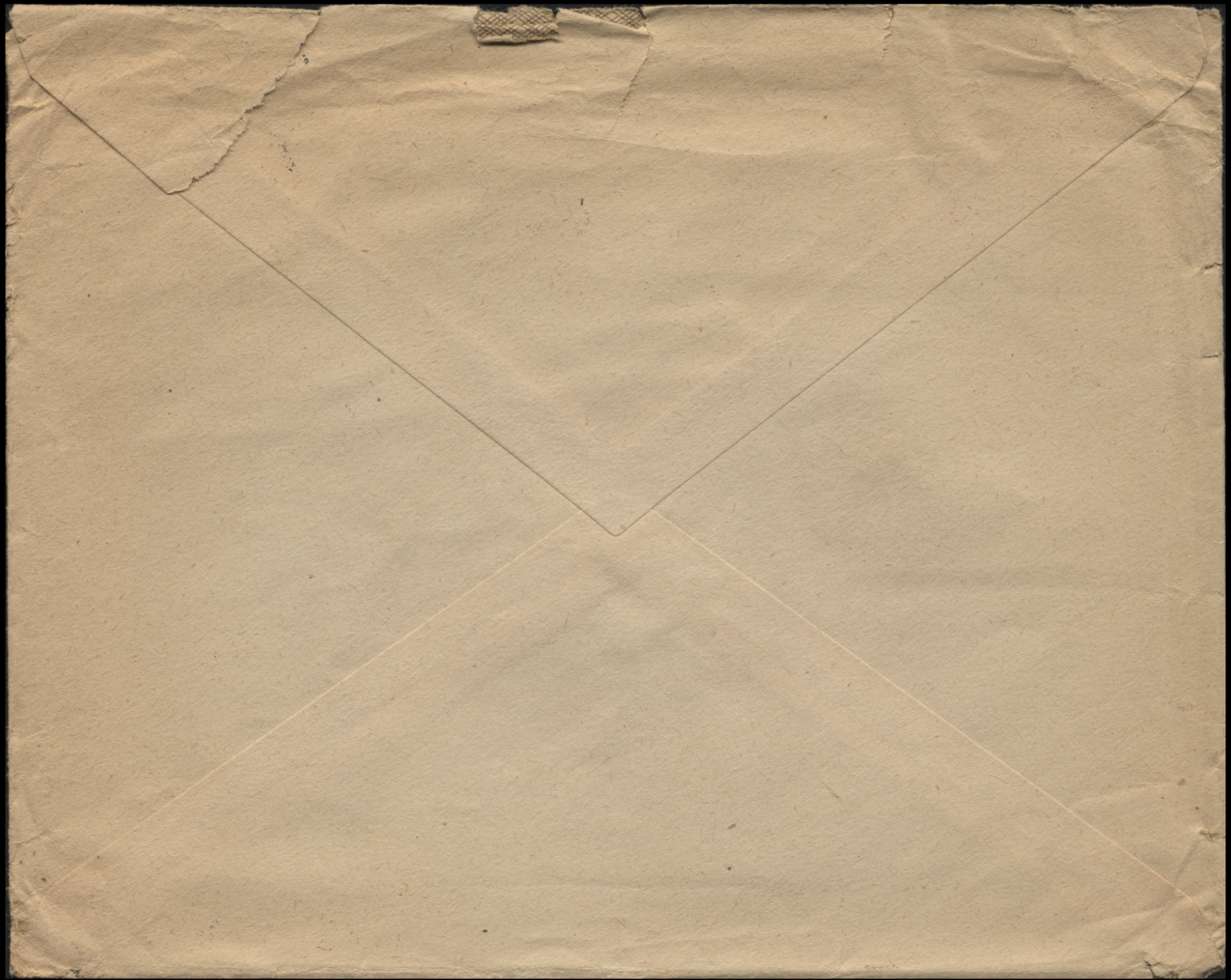
Victoria

PASSED BY CENSOR
No. 3090

"Ghyl Cottage"
Olivers Hill
Frankston

Australia

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43

# PROSS' RESTAURANT
# HAIFA

MANAGER: D. GEORGE
TELEPHONE: 138 (Restaurant)
826 (Management)

CARMEL AVENUE
P. O. B. 555

Cpl K. von Bibra
V x 29109
21st Anti-Tank Coy N.Z.
21st Inft. Bde
A.I.F. Abroad.

Date: February 16.

Dearest Joan, This is merely a note written as I wait for the taxi which is to take me home. As you can see I'm in Haifa. I've just come from Andrew. He's progressing, definitely. I had a talk to the doctor, or rather one of them, & he tells me that Andrew has made quite a bit of improvement over the last fortnight. In looks he's improved too, in spite of the fact that he has lost a little weight since I last saw him. Altogether, he's brighter & more himself. His leg gives him some pain I think but that is only to be expected. I read & him bits of your last letter & talked for a while this morning & again this afternoon. & when I left an Australian officer, General Blamey's son, had just come in to see him.

I must stop now Dearest one. I will try to write fully during the week. You have all my love & thoughts

Kenneth.

H.W. Friend

By Air Mail

H.M. Friend

March 12

"Chyll Cottage"
Olivers Hill
Frankston







Mrs Kenneth von Bibra

~~Powallan~~

~~Hathaway~~

Victoria

Australia







AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
AWM2019.22.43

PROSS' RESTAURANT
HAIFA
P.O.B. 555

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43

Cpl. K. von Bibra v x 29 109 21st Anti-Tank Coy
H. Q. 21st Inft. Bde. A. I. F. Abroad.

Dearest Joan, I'm sitting on the ground, in the sun behind a cactus hedge. It is about nine o'clock & we are again out on manoeuvres & again we are the enemy. This is our third day of it. As I told you earlier, our duties are very simple; when the attacking troops appear we wave flags to represent machine gun fire & the rest of the time, that is the majority of the time, we ~~[illegible]~~ lie about in the sun, reading, thinking, sleeping, playing with the cactus hedge. Now we all play with that hedge. Its high, about four & feet, & has great leaves spike covered; a pin cushion with the pins upside down. As we sit or lie near it we try to pull out spikes, stick pieces of sharp wood into the fleshy leaves until the juice runs, & the more destructive slash at it with their bayonets exposing the white flesh, covering their bayonets in juice. Once every now & again we are prickled, sharply, painfully for our pains & we swear & leave it alone until the next idle moment. Part of the hedge has been attached by some kind of insect or disease & has been left covered with dry grey scabs, distressingly human flesh like, & on these, although they repulse me, I'm able to satisfy that unwholesome love of picking at things which is so strong in me. [At the moment there are four of us

& one officer here. Chris is lying on a ground sheet reading Dead Man Leading, sighing with effort as he turns a page moves a hand, another one sits on a vine & reads a letter, the others read magazines. Its beautifully peaceful. Cocks have just stopped crowing from a nearby village & around an almond in flower, where I pause each morning to take a breath, bees are suspended on a magic orbit of its smell. [ Here the summer insects are beginning to appear. The bees are unlike ours. They are bigger & are black & shining where ours are tawny. [ Yesterday I saw & heard again the piping shepherd. His sheep fed up in front of our hedge for an hour or so we heard him playing, scolding thoughtily when the sheep moved in the wrong direction. Not long afterwards the attacking troops came across. As they moved towards us an irate headquarters officer ran down the slope & said "You've just come through an artillery barrage. You are all dead" Not long after that we went home. [ Last night we all went to the pictures & saw Margaret Sullivan in Slop Worn Angel. It was very good. Then I went over to the Salvo Cut. I'd just begun to write a letter to you when Jack Callighan brought a letter over from you. I gave up writing & slowly read your letter & then went to bed. It was a lovely letter & very long. I've got it with me now & will take it out & answer things. [ I'm glad you want to keep my old blue coat. I only thought of Jack

because I imagined no one at home used it. It makes me very happy to think of you inside it. [If you think you can afford a coat for Jack do get one. The pyjamas sound lovely. Yes, I dont think they would be good in camp. Its not that I would mind wearing them but feel they would look & feel troublesome by contrast. I too feel your worry about Molly. Isn't it bloody awful that such a nice person as she is should be alone. Thinking about her last night I couldn't visualise anyone I know who would suit her. She is such a very, very nice person & the people who would suit her are not numerous. Don would you know really. Strange isn't it? Still I feel that she will meet someone. But you cannot force these things only you might go out occassionally if you are invited anywhere. That's the way these things happen. After all remember a Journalists Ball. [ Goodness I felt indebted to T.T. when you said you didn't know what you would do without him. And further on when you said his warm little rump was against your foot I felt a great affection for him. What a good child. What Anti's told you about the Anti-Tank Guys. I've known for some time but didn't tell you as there was nothing definite. Now, in fact, I believe we are going to remain as we are.

Your picture of mon colonel made me laugh. Do you think he's happy about his job. Here of course he will be able to talk French to his heart's content. I'm glad you opened the sleeping bag. There's no reason why you should have in the first place. I'm glad you got the things anyway. I'll have to stop Sweetest one. L'ennemi are in sight. This morning as I wanted outside the lavatory, a man said, pointing to the distance where in the clear sparkling morning you could see the white smoke of a train, "They say that train goes to Paris in peace time" I wished very hard for peace but not to go to Paris. [ We've moved to our second position behind another cactus hedge. Now I'm lying full length stripped to the waist with the sun coming down beautifully on my back. One of the young men, well he's not so young, was particularly destructive on the hedge this morning slashing & digging away with his bayonet. It was pointless & destructive for the hedge had been planted there by an Arab to protect his vines from cattle & the wind. For a while I debated whether to try & get him to stop. If I hadn't been his section leader (here I am finding excuses for what was weakness) it would have been easier to tell him to stop. But you see actually it wasn't anything that mattered to me as a section leader

& to have said anything to him would have had the feeling of a command. And commands, I try to be as economic with, as possible.

Now see a corporal or any Australian officer for that matter, has I feel, just a certain number of commands in him & no more. The Australian soldier cannot be interpreted with too much. And so I didn't say anything except to point out, friendly more or less, that the ledge was there for a purpose. But of course that is only a small thing among the wanton destruction that goes on day & night in the life of the army. I've become hardened more or less, to it now & watch, conscious of it but more conscious of my own tacit acceptance of it all. [The shepherd has begun playing again. I haven't sighted him yet only heat his pipe. [In a few minutes we will have lunch. - bully beef (its quite nice really) cheese & hard biscuits. The hard biscuits I like very much most of the boys profess a hatred for them, once someone broke a false tooth on one, but I find them most palatable. They are made by Cobbs. To drink we have water. This meal is called hard or iron rations. [Here in this new position I cannot get a comfortable attitude in which to sit & write & therefore my

writing is becoming worse. [Next week we go out on extended manoeuvres for about four days. We sleep out & it may be impossible to get letters in so if you miss a mail from me you will know why. I will do all I can to write but it may not be possible. Yesterday a very welcome New Yorker arrived. There was no New Statesman in it. Maybe they are closing down on it. Hope not anyway. [Andrew's hands by the way are quite alright. I may have forgotten to tell you but they were injured by shrapnel. You see when the Italian threw the grenade Andrew put his hands down & probably it was a good thing too. Anyway when I saw him he had the bandages off. I'll be able, I hope to tell you more in my next letter after my visit which I think I will be able to make on Sunday. [I hope Jenner got my letter. It was rather garbled but I was over at the other camp at the time & had no facilities & little time for writing. [Chris received a letter from his mother the other day. In it she referred to a commission I was supposed to be getting. I don't know where she heard it. Its quite foundationless anyway [Chris has just sat up & said "Midday Gents". That means lunch time. – [Lunch is over. With our bully beef we had each an onion a raw one, picked up by Chris at the cook house. It made the meal much nicer. [I've just read the New Yorker review of The

Dictator. Apparently the writer didn't think it good but was pretty cautious about saying so. I suppose it will be a very long time before it comes to Australia. Once here, when Chris had a magazine from Australia showing some stills of the film, all the Jews who happened to be in the eating place where we were, clustered around full of interest. Chris says C. Chaplain is a Jew himself. I'm reading at the moment Percival Keane by Mayanat. (Mary & I believe) I'm enjoying it. Percival is a stimulating guy; a good book for one going to war. Its all blood & thunder & told in an off hand way, the only way I suppose to consider these things when they have to be gone through. [ I've just turned around to get the sun on my stomach. Soon I'll have to put my skirt on for the sun is getting really pretty hot & I've been exposed now for about an hour. I've just thought of the back lawn at Wandeen & the dilo. What a funny little place it was but we were very happy there. Have you ever heard any more of Mrs Wood. I suppose that by now she is doing the war work she returned to do. [ And by the way what of Mrs Stephens. Did you ever call. If you haven't by now, you never will be able to. And Mrs Milne.... [ Have you ever seen Grant. [ The boys are arguing. One of them can never argue unless he shouts almost & very

second word rhymes with truck. (work it means) He says to the other I've done more hard yacket than you've done. Then they argued which was the harder work, pressing wool or lumping wheat. It goes on & on. Now I think they are going to sleep thank Yoll [I'm beginning to sweat in the sun. Wish you were here. Its the awful waste of time when we are doing nothing that hurts most. I was amused at Curtis saying that he didn't like nurses even in moonlight. So Chris & I the nurses, we see passing us on the roads in officers' cars look pretty good. Certainly they have everything on their side, they are in fast moving limousines, we haven't seen any your own women or any Angelo-Saxon women for a long time, but even so they still look pretty good. Its true we've never been close to any except an odd one seen in the street & I must admit they weren't so good then. I think the important thing is that the Jews don't like us & so we naturally feel warm to our own people. Not that I blame the Jews.

[I'm back home in the tent. Its a bit after pound & not long until tea time. Tonight I will finish this letter & write one to Molly & may be key in another Green Envelope one to you. Got the green envelope this afternoon. I still don't know definitely about the Haifa trip. I'm hoping that Chris will be able to come with me. In any case his brother

(Ristrother) 9

Lachin (is coming with me. Not to see Andrew of course. By the way the bone Curtis referred to was the tibia not fibia. Chris says Curtis learnt the word as a police roundsman on the Melbourne Hospital. [ I've just had a shower feel pretty good. My chest & shoulders are glowing from the sun that has been on them all day. [ Later. I'm over in the Salvo hut. Chris is here too. He says it stinks. I dont doubt it but personally dont notice it. Its strange how one's physical & mental self becomes toughened to circumstances. In instance over at the new camp the first night I was devoured by sand fleas. The same the second night. I went through all the old tricks of garment discarding, searching etc. It did no good. The third night I let them bite me & was uncomfortable, the fourth night they bit me but I slept through it. I believe I'm capable of doing that now. Its a great burden off my mind I've always had a horror of being driven foolish by fleas in the army. Here by the way, there are very few of the little fellows.

I've just written to Molly. Not a very nice letter I'm afraid. Still maybe it was. Among other things I said she must always feel free as far as you are concerned. That was right wasn't it Dearest one. I told her too of how much it meant to me her being there. Sweetest one I must end this letter. I want to begin tomorrow night, your green envelope one. I was pleased about what you said the other one made you do. You have all my love thoughts. Tonight they are both extra strong towards you.

All my love Dearest one

Renneth.

Regards to Ebbotts, Al, Moya Edna, & Smith family. Also Gethings.

Love to T. T. & Smith (n Surge)

RMP

R M Pouley

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND HUTS

By Air Mail.

March 12 "Chyll Cottage"
Olivers Hill
Frankston

AUSTRALIA
PLATYPUS
9d POSTAGE

17 EP
W. 2

HARKAWAY
VIC
1 MAR 41

Mrs Kenneth von Bibra
~~Rowallan~~
~~Harkaway~~
Victoria
Australia.

PASSED BY CENSOR
No. 3090







AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43

Mt. Rowbilna v x Sqwg 21st Cmtd. Tank Coy Lt. S. 2020
Supt Bcc A. I. F. Abroad

February 19.

Dearest Joan, We are out on our four day manoeuvre. This is our second day. All this afternoon we have been in this small, olive, planted valley below the village from which the villagers have flocked down to collect our empty bully beef tins, our uneaten bred & to sell to us oranges & eggs. Its a wonderfully hot day. [ But to tell you more about Andrew. We reached Haifa at about 11.30 a.m on Sunday. I went straight to the hospital while Chris & Laughlin explored the town. Andrew, I think, was pleased to see me. As I told you in my note he looked thinner than when I last saw him but definitely seemed brighter & more his normal self. In fact emotionally I would say he was completely himself now. Before he gave me the impression of still & suffering from shock to a certain extent. About his being thin, he says he thinks its inevitable after all I suppose that is true. He eats well I think & I suggested that he drink a little beer to help build himself up. He agreed that it would probably do him good, actually beer is a ration in the hospital, but said he didn't like the taste of it. However I think he will try to drink a little each day. I think from what I could father Andrew will be, if everything goes right, on crutches in six weeks or so. Maybe a bit longer. He himself thinks it will be about six months before he will be able to walk upon

his own legs. We spent our time talking together very happily & easily. Andrew, I gather, has been thinking a lot & is, as a whole, rather depressed about Australians. He says as a [redacted] we are undisciplined & over boastful. & that when the war is over things must be tightened up in our country otherwise we will never get anywhere. I'm not quite sure just what he meant by it all but didn't press the subject. [ So far Andrew has had no mail since being wounded that is why I wired his addresses. Apparently all his letters have gone on to his unit & these take a long time to return. Now you understand why I read him parts of your letter. The addresses, just in case the wire went astray, is Maj Arthur, esc Italian Hospital, Haifa. [ I think, by the way, Andrew is almost sure to be sent home, but he doesn't want anything said to Jenner yet in case she is disappointed. He has still the same nice room & the food & service is good. Time of course hangs heavily on his hands. He has only about two regular visitors apparently Gen. Blamey's son & another Australian, an official in the railway at Haifa. [ Is this letter very illegible. Its being written on the driving seat of a Ford utility & I'm leaning on the edge of the seat with my feet on the ground.

We left Kenya at about five getting home a few hours later. Early on Monday morning we left on these manoeuvres. Your last letter which I got on Sunday night was a beauty wonderfully long, & with some nice photographs too. When, by the way, is a portrait of Smith to be expected. Is it that you are waiting for her to gain the beauty of maturity? Imperfectly happy about the name Dearest One. As you say names must come. You just cannot think them up. The little pictures you give me of her sometimes please me very much. [Soon Dearest One, we are going to move out onto our posts for the night so I will have to end this letter & write more if I got time later. I doubt if I will though. [I will answer things in your last letter in my next which I will be able to write, I hope, in camp. I'm glad my letters are arriving well. It comforts me a lot to think of you getting them. As always, Dearest One, all my love & thoughts. A longer letter next time Kenneth. [Friday night. I'm back in camp Dearest One after five days. You haven't much time as this must go in tonight so that it may catch the mail. The Bivouac manoeuvres were almight only we had little tools & I got pretty fed up with an inactivity that contrasted with the hard work and injuries. Still I suppose it doesn't matter. It was good to have the first real wash for five days & to change ones clothes as you can

imagine. I won't tell you about it all now but will wait until the next mail.

The inward mail hasn't come in yet but am hoping it will come tonight. I feel the need of an letter from you badly at the moment. I thought of you a lot laying out in the sun waiting for the attacking troops to appear.

Dearest I must end & put this in. I'm sorry its not a long letter as usual but it hasn't been easy this week. You have all my love Sweetest & love & all my thoughts. I'd give anything to be with you.

Kenneth.

D.H.H. White


BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION
March 13
AUSTRALIA
9d
PLATYPUS
POSTAGE
W. 2.
PASSED BY CENSOR
No. 3090



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
AWM2019.22.43

RED SHIELD HUTS - HOSTELS FOR AUSTRALIAN TROOPS.

"My strength is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure"

February 22

Cpl Koan Bibra
VX29109
21st Anti-Tank Coy
A.I.O. 1st Inft Bde
A.I.F. Abroad.

Dearest Joan, Again I'm in a hurry. Today, Saturday, I thought I would have two days in which to write to you but after lunch today we were told we had to go out again for two days on the range. And so my Dearest One I've only a few minutes in which to write to you last night after I had posted off the short letter written out on manoeuvres I received your last one. There were two lovely photographs one of you & Kel very good & another beautifully posed of P.W.T. & Smith. The little girl is, I think very, very good. She seems beautifully built. How is the head not too heavy is it? The front legs look by the way as if a little calcium would not be amiss. I think she looks a better looking pup than Kel did at the same age. The photograph doesn't show her black eye patch. I wonder what color she & Kel will produce. No good to think her eyes are so black. Altogether I'm very pleased with her. The little cat looks nice too. I liked the photograph of you very much where was it taken. I'd like you to put captions on the back of all records in future. As you can imagine I'm getting quite a little collection now. Every now again I take them out & go through them. How good about the vues. We are really lucky where Walker, I'm glad you



RED SHIELD HUTS - HOSTELS FOR AUSTRALIAN TROOPS.

"My strength is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure"

2

are becoming much good friends. At any minute the whistle should blow but maybe they are late. I think its probably a good idea to sell a few sheep, especially as Don says you will make a profit on them, & also its much better to be understocked than over.

I hope Dearest one that when I return on Monday I'll be able to write a proper letter & catch the mail then. I'm annoyed I didn't write this morning when I had plenty of time. I spent the morning sunbaking & reading thinking I would have all tonight & tomorrow free.

Dearest are you really in very good health. Sometimes I'm a bit nervous about you. Is your cold quite better. Its most important that you take great care of anything like that. The next photograph you send have it taken so I can have just a head. And now Sweetest one the whistle is just about to go. The range is some miles away. We will sleep there two nights & return here on Monday morning. You have all my love & thoughts. I'm sorry if this letter is hard to read but its written very quickly in the rest on my tree. Love once more Sweet

Kenneth.

D.A.H. White



BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION

AUSTRALIA
9d POSTAGE
PLATYPUS

March 13.

Mrs Kenneth von Bibra
Rowallan
Starhaway
Victoria

Australia

PASSED BY CENSOR
No. 3197

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43

Cpl Koon Bilra No 29 Wg 21st Anti Tank Coy
Lt. 2. 21st Inft. Bde. A. I. F. Abroad
February 23

Dearest Joan, It is Sunday night & I'm back in camp, one night before I expected. As I told you in the first note, written in haste yesterday afternoon when I heard at short notice we were to go to the range, I did not expect to get back until tomorrow morning when the mail would have closed. The trip to the range was really very pleasant. We got there at about five yesterday afternoon & showed our gear away in the tents where we were to sleep. After tea nearly everyone in the camp, a couple of hundred men easily, walked off into a nearby town, a couple of miles away. I went with Sie & another young man, Landon Stand, maybe you remember him. It was a lovely evening & walking & very now again, as we passed an orange grove, we smelt the flowers on the trees fresh & strong, exciting. In the town, it was only small, we wandered about for a while & then had a couple of drinks in a dance place, very dull but interesting in face of the Australians & after that we went further on to find a café run by American Jews, where we had a steak & I ate some lettuce & tomato which I enjoyed a lot. We dropped into one more dance place, looked long enough to get a picture of the shambles

the boys were making them, rather depressed by it all, walked home. On the way we met Joe our cook, the most honest of men & listening this naive talk & smelling again the orange flower, felt better & went to bed at about midnight feeling happy. We were on the ground & it was the hardest ground Joe struck for a while. Vic was in a mood to talk & so we did for a while & then tried to sleep but for some reason I didn't have much success. Still I got some although I heard most of the drunks come home jigging, being fraternal about getting each other into bed. At six the bugle blew. By a bit after seven we were in our trucks & on the way to the range. All the morning we slot. We used our rifles. I did better than I'd been done in Australia & mildly enjoyed the sensation of getting onto the target. I did best at shooting a cardboard square that came up for a few seconds only. It was called snap shooting. I quite surprised myself. By one o'clock it was all over. I didn't eat any lunch. I felt rather full after eating two teas the night before. We got back here at about 4.30. I had a shower then tea, stew a good one & scones & bread & butter. Then I went to the first session of the

movies & saw my mem Hollywood. Then I came over here. Wobe I also but. I had just reached the end of the last page when Vic appeared at the door "Come out" he said. "But I don't want one" I said. He'd already asked me where a bed & I'd refused. He said "Its important please come" So I've just been out, drunk some of his bottle & made my escape. [ Its funny about sleeping on the ground. On Friday night when I came home from the manoeuvres & five nights spent sleeping on the ground, I thought it'll be fine sleeping on a bed again. But do you know I couldn't sleep on the bed & was till I were on the ground again. I've read of people being unable to sleep on a bed but always felt it was a story. Actually one young man in our platoon got off his bed during the night & did sleep on the ground. But last night the ground was really too hard & now I'm wondering how I will go on a bed again tonight. I'm how I think I will sleep tonight though. [ This afternoon I received a letter from Mother but not one from you. I'm hoping it will turn up tomorrow but maybe you missed a mail. Its easily done. [ Dearest & one this letter seems strange but tonight in fact all day.

We felt rather disorientated. There are several reasons, being away for so long, odd little things that happened; for a while on the manoeuvres. I felt very low but not now thanks Chris is leaving. I haven't any details but on Saturday morning Gen. Blamey sent for him & I heard tonight. Chris himself is gone on leave, that Chris is to edit the A.I.F. News & be given the rank of captain. I dont know any particulars. These I will tell you in my next letter but it appears Blamey more or less ordered him to take the job. Actually its a good thing that Chris has taken the job for a variety of reasons, but naturally I'm going to miss him terrifically. I'll tell you more about all this in my next letter. [Ive got a lot of things I want to tell you about but in this letter there doesn't seem space or time. [I've just realised by the time you receive this you will be in your seaside house. What are you doing for a bathing suit. I hope you are getting a nice exciting one. I still think you look best in black because you've got such a lovely white skin. [Vic has just come in & said good-night. This pretty tired. You know

his not a young man any longer & really hard work takes it out of him. But like everything else his super optomistic about his own health. At the moment, by the way, we have re-established all our old warm relationship. He's a strange fellow. It looks now as if it will be quite a while before we move so cease all worry Precious one. I'm hoping to get over to see Andrew again soon. Maybe I'll get a night's leave if I'm lucky. I do hope you received my telegram. As you say I think Curtis must likely made a good story of his letter to you. I still miss to of it sounded pretty right. Dearest one I must end. I'll have to write a few lines to the old lady tonight, just a page. I miss you a tenifie lot at the moment & would give anything to be with you but never the less feel a sort of patience that gives me confidence. The other day, emptying the dust bin I couldn't help seeing a letter to one of les boys, - there were four or five whole lines of nothing but crosses. Bees are there never the less thought & aren't they I wee tes & One. You have all my love & thoughts.

Kenneth. H. W. Friend

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION

(2)

March 13




On Active Service.

H.W. Friend

Mrs Kenneth von Bibra

Rowallan

Harkaway

Victoria

Australia

PASSED BY CENSOR
No. 3107

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43

Dearest Joan, It is Monday afternoon very hot. Today I am orderly corporal & so am more or less free. Beside me I have your last two letters to which I haven't been able to reply much in my last short letters. I'll read them now. Its good about the old apple tree bearing for us. I'm very grateful to it & such big apples. I hope you've had its wound attended to. The wine I spoke of is a red wine called Rislon after the place in which it is made. The vineyards were begun many years ago as one of the first settlements for Jews by one of the Rothschilds. It's a little like chianti but unfortunately I've found it upsets my stomach in no uncertain way. Why, I cannot imagine. The difference between our two times is about seven hours. How good the vegetable garden must be looking. How you say almost casually I picked such & such which is very wonderful when one thinks of the thin little lines of green that began it all below the stable. Not so very long ago was it. Thanks for the spelling corrections. They were bad mistakes. What you say about writing is quite right. I must always be careful not to break into long sentences etc. The tree you say Wally is moving I cannot recall. Is it between the bush & the home paddocks? I like the idea of the stay white. I like two-pence for the shells. Do you remember F. Ward advised against it on the grounds that it would be

bring up their architectural deficiencies. Actually I dont think they are ugly sheds. I think they would look fine pink & I feel too, we owe it to ourselves to capture the right pink if you know what I mean. You've never told me if you returned Mrs Milne's call. If you haven't I suppose Milne didn't want to see you. Still that shouldn't worry you. We would have preferred never to know him wouldn't we. How many times didn't we have to make detours just because of him. Objectionable man. [ Smith's pedigree although possessed of individuality & unusualness has not, I feel the charm of T.T's. Still that would be very difficult. How is Walter getting along with the little lady. Making any progress. Does he really like her or is it merely a manoeuvre. [ I didn't tell you much about the bivouacs did I. There wasn't much to tell really. Now I remember of it, the sun shining on the golden straw in the mud walls of the Arab huts, getting up before daylight & climbing to a hill top to wait for attacking troops & there smelling as I've never smelt before a morning breeze heavy with the smell of the wild sage. Then there was the purple, almost black lily I found growing in some rocks one afternoon. The petal of the flower was a dark purple but the straight & thin tapering at the base where it

entered the thin green heart that was protected by fine black hair, was black & shining as ebony. I wasn't very happy for the four days though. The people I was with tried my patience they swore continually, foolishly never talked but shouted. With the Arabs mostly the children they were very strange. At one time they would encourage them to come around & then later they would hunt them off their own ground as if they were so many animals. Actually of course les boys dont consider the Dogs as they call them human. Its strange & gets you down a bit at times. Any way I was very glad to get home. Chris was the same way. You see in camp you can get off on your own a bit but out on the manoeuvres you are with them all the time. Still now, looking back on it, it doesn't seem as bad as I felt it to be then. Chris is still away in Jerusalem fascing up about the newspaper. He comes back on Wednesday. I think he wants me & Nic to join him but Dearest one do you mind if I dont. I'd hate it. Here in the army proper you can think what you like but if I joined the paper think of all the things I'd have to write. It would be unbearable. And you'd be stuck there until the bitter end of the war. You would be out of contact with the men you'd get nothing out of it all. Will you mind very much if I dont go?

Chris, I understand, has more or less been ordered into the job. I dont think they will do that to me. But I'll tell you more of this when Chris returns. Henry's letter which I mentioned last night was funny. Just like you'd expect it. As you say I'm afraid he does sit a lot over his desk head in hand. I wonder why he bothers. Dearest one I must stop for the minute. I'll write more tonight. A couple of hours ago just before I was to put on the guard something very nice & unexpected happened, your letter came. I've read it once now I'm in the writing room I'm going through it again. First about Cresco. I cannot what remember we put on the first time but we did it through Mr Lamb & I seem to remember that we got some discount or something. Maybe Gardner was the agent. Anyway I think it would be better to do it through Lambkin. I know thust him like wheep our contact with him. Unfortunately I've lost the pink color slip somewhere. I put it in my pocket & now cannot find it but from the glance I had of it I think its fine. About a shrub for the dog yard. You will want a quick grower. Now about boobyallia (they cannot be right). The cuttings you enclosed interested me very much. The O. Duck was a beauty. & I love the photograph of T.T. & Toughy. So you hadn't told me about Cynthia leaving in February. Is she where her baby here

It seems funny to think of her a mother & what of the mari. Any particulars. Will he come out. I wonder if Henry's heart will be softened. I think I told you that I suggested whether that she try establish amicable relations. Poor Cynthia somehow I feel she cannot be very happy otherwise why should she return to Australia which I dont think she really likes very much. And Tammy Thoya. What can one think. Will they really get married. Today, funnily enough I wrote Thoya, in answer to her letter received a couple of months ago. Now I dont know where to address it. I think I'd better send it to you. Dont worry about my foot. Its come good now thasn't troubled me for a long time. There's no fear of a reunion. Dont worry either about Eunyal. It doesnt matter. There's always next year. Yes, I wanted to see Lost Horizon because the girl was like you I saw it first in Melbourne while you were in Melbourne. Vic has just come in & given me a cup of coffee. He put it down on the table & inevitably, of course shilt some of it. You will see traces of it upon the bottom of page four. I fussed & dried it up with my pocket handkerchief but Vic who has been drinking beer would not be worried. Yes Ebb Tide is in Triple Fugue I thought when reading it that it was pretty good but maybe the dreary dial take the edge off it. Its a fine line in those Tout of stories. Here this letter will end. Swubes & One I'll explain in number two. All love Kunth.


BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION


AUSTRALIA
9d
PLATYPUS
POSTAGE

March 13


PASSED BY CENSOR
No. 3197



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43

Continuing Dearest One. I ended letter numbered one because if you send a letter overweight it costs 3/- while if you send it under two separate covers the cost is only 1/6. Why it is difficult to explain. Don't worry about the £50. There's plenty of time Dearest. Poor Al. I wouldn't be surprised if he were anaemic. God I hope he isn't. Poor Dearest with your day in town with Jane. Still you cannot expect children to be grateful or human can you. Yes I knew about Irene's young man arriving home. Your letters by the way are seldom opened by the Cason. I should say about one in every half dozen. Lately, none have been opened, never has anything we've been cut out of your letters. And now Sweetest One. I will end this letter until tomorrow tonight.

BMP.

Dearest. I'm in Haifa. I got leave to come up here yesterday. I left the camp at about 3 p.m. arrived at Tel Aviv about five & came on here in a taxi arriving at about 7.30 p.m. Went straight to see Andrew & then leaving him temporarily found a hotel that sound dinner. Andrew is wonderfully improved even in the fortnight that has elapsed since last seeing him. He looks better & according to the doctor who I saw this morning, is really better. They've had both bandages off his legs & the one they have been a bit worried about has come on wonderfully well. This morning the doctor said Andrew should be back in Australia within six months which means I presume about four more months here & then two months to get home. Its pretty satisfactory isn't it. The doctor added that he would be a while in Australia before he was on his legs again. I'm going back to camp this afternoon & it will be late by the time I arrive there as the mail closes early in the morning I'm writing this now to enclose in my letter. I still haven't seen Chris but will see him in the morning. Yours & sold Dearest one will write more fully for the next mail. But dont worry about Andrew he is definitely mending. He sends his love.

All my love & thoughts sweetest one

Kenneth.

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION

(2)




RMPoulter March 13

Mr Kenneth von Bilra
Rowallan
Stawell away
Victoria

Australia

PASSED BY CENSOR
No. 3197

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43

Cpl Koon Bibra, VX 29109 21st Anti-Tank Coy. H.Q. 21st Inf Bde
A.I.F. Abroad.

February 27.

Dearest Joan, I'm over in the Salvo Cut. Last night I got back from Haifa at about 9 p.m. I left there at Jewish Lad dinner in Tel Aviv & then came on here. After I'd written the note to you yesterday I had lunch, a very good one with strawberries & cream & then went across to Andrew. We talked away happily until a bit after three when I had to leave to go down to the bus. I found that in my three visits to Andrew we got along very well. Talking with him on Tuesday night he told me how once, while cutting wood in the yard he had a surprise from you. Apparently you came up behind him & sank these beautiful little teeth of yours into his back. It seems that he'd annoyed you over something, a little time before. I was rather proud of your effort. I've always been a great admirer of your primitive form of defence. I've always loved you for liking, as tantes & been annoyed & sympathetic over one's threat to take out these beautiful teeth. [ To get back to Andrew's health. I think I've told you almost everything there is to tell in the note. The point is that one leg is better than the other that week, before they took the bandages off for dressing (they only do this once a fortnight & then Andrew is under an anaesthetic) they hadn't felt very happy about the one leg. However, they found it to be much better than they had anticipated & now feel pretty good about everything. To go all in fact that

as I told you, the surgeon told me that Andrew should be come in six months. That may sound a long time but as you can understand it would be foolish to move him with any injury by travel. The surgeon by the way, is English, from England. Andrew thinks he may have been a Maltese or something when born. It appears that he's highly thought of & he gave me the impression of being good. All surgeons are a bit strange the lad that arrives aid of being detached & yet conscientious the case all the time he was in the ward with us & we talked about outside things. [I think I've persuaded Andrew to drink beer. The doctor said it would be a good thing "but" he said "he doesn't like it" We talked about it & eventually found Andrew "didn't like it" because the only beer in the hospital is Bass. Now the doctor is going to try & get some other kind of English beer & I'm going to try & arrange for some Fishers to be sent up. [I did a little shopping for Andrew. I bought one pair of pyjamas, three or four books & a jar of sweets. He reads a lot as you can imagine. A Penguin lasts him about twenty four hours. I've suggested he join an English library & I think he is going to take my advice. This time Young him in a new room - an even nicer one than last time. From it, he can see not only the bay but the town & some nearby

mountains through which passes the Syrian Lancet. In the mornings he can take a sun bath if he feels so inclined. [I'm afraid he has very few visitors. Blamey's son has now left the wars his chief stand-by. Still I don't think he minds a terrible lot. He is very good friends with all the hospital orderlies who are strange little conscripts, regular Pommeys who say, when they are fed-up – "brownied over." It appears that they are not used woggies, especially majors, being pally & Andrew said when he first began cracking an occasional joke with them they were completely "puzzled" & ill at ease. Now they've got more confidence & obviously all admire & like Andrew a lot. Every now & again they come in to see if Andrew wants anything & sometimes stop for a few minutes to look down upon him the honest, proud guardians of a strange type of human being. Andrew says they are very good fellows. He knows all about them, how one is good at soccer etc. I think they are a comfort to him. The nurses are typical English & neither foreign to us. They are very efficient, all professionals I think, all rather plain & not young. [Today I got a nice letter from you. It was the one in which you told about the Gethe's coming up to see the chains being surprised at your sitting on the front verandah & finally grouping themselves on the front steps I could almost see it.

If, as you say, the brave colonel Ryan goes fishing with Mr Fritzlaugh, the locals should have no cause for real complaint if they only realised that the honest colonel, from what I know of him, would go with the blacksmith (he's so far removed from his exalted orbit) but he would never be seen with the locals. Maybe they realize this. [Fancy old Basil & Jane's Holidays - old Fosc. [Tomorrow I'm going to Jerusalem for a day. The leave was going & as I'd never seen the ancient city thought I'd better take it. I'll tell you about it on Saturday night. [Chris is back & I think it is more or less settled for the relationship of the A.I.F. Cars. He's not at all happy about it & this morning did everything he could to get me to go with him. But I simply couldn't agree. He's pretty disappointed I think but one has got to be selfish about these sorts of things. I'll be able to tell you more about it all in my next letter. Chris leaves tomorrow & is supposed to bring out the next issue of the paper. [Vic also is likely to leave. He's been offered a Staff-sergeants job with Eric Wilson on the press liaison side & I think if he can get his transfer he'll take it. He should anyway. He feels bad, I think, at leaving me. He says he does & this is true I believe. Poor Vic. I think he'll like the new job more than this one

RED SHIELD HUTS - HOSTELS
ON SERVICE with the TROOPS




Date .....

From

No. .....

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.....

.....

5.

*" My strength is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure "*

Dear Mum and Dad, Just a few lines hoping you are well as it leaves me at present. Sorry I haven't written for a few days but I've been pretty busy. Had a few days leave in Sydney and enjoyed myself very much. Saw Bert and Ruth and Ken and Joan and Mum and Dad and Ken and Joan and Mum and Dad and Ken and Joan and Mum and Dad

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION

March 14

H. Friend




2ND SDE H.Q. P.O.
-3 MAR
W.

2ND BDE H.Q. P.O.
-3 MAR

Mrs Kenneth von Bibra
Rowallan
Starkaway
Victoria
Australia

PASSED BY CENSOR
No. 3197

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2019.22.43