



Christmas Greetings



2/7th INF. BATTALION
A. I. F.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
AWM2020.22.303

To My Best Friend,

A little souvenier from a very grateful friend, one who is grateful for all your kindness and attention that you have given to my wife and I. until we meet I wish you all the best for the coming future.

From.

Meggsie.

VX5554

Lieut McDonald. A.J.

"A" Coy 2/7 BN. 6 DIV AIF.



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When you see Marge Branchflower will you ask her to do me a favor. Enquire for a Pte Jack Evans and R.S.H. Walker at the Heidleberg Hospital. If they are there give them my best regards and tell them that I will you please also that we all of the 2/7 Bn send their best regards.

Love Meggsie

Wishing You All
Happiness and the
Seasons' Greetings
from Meggsie

1941-42

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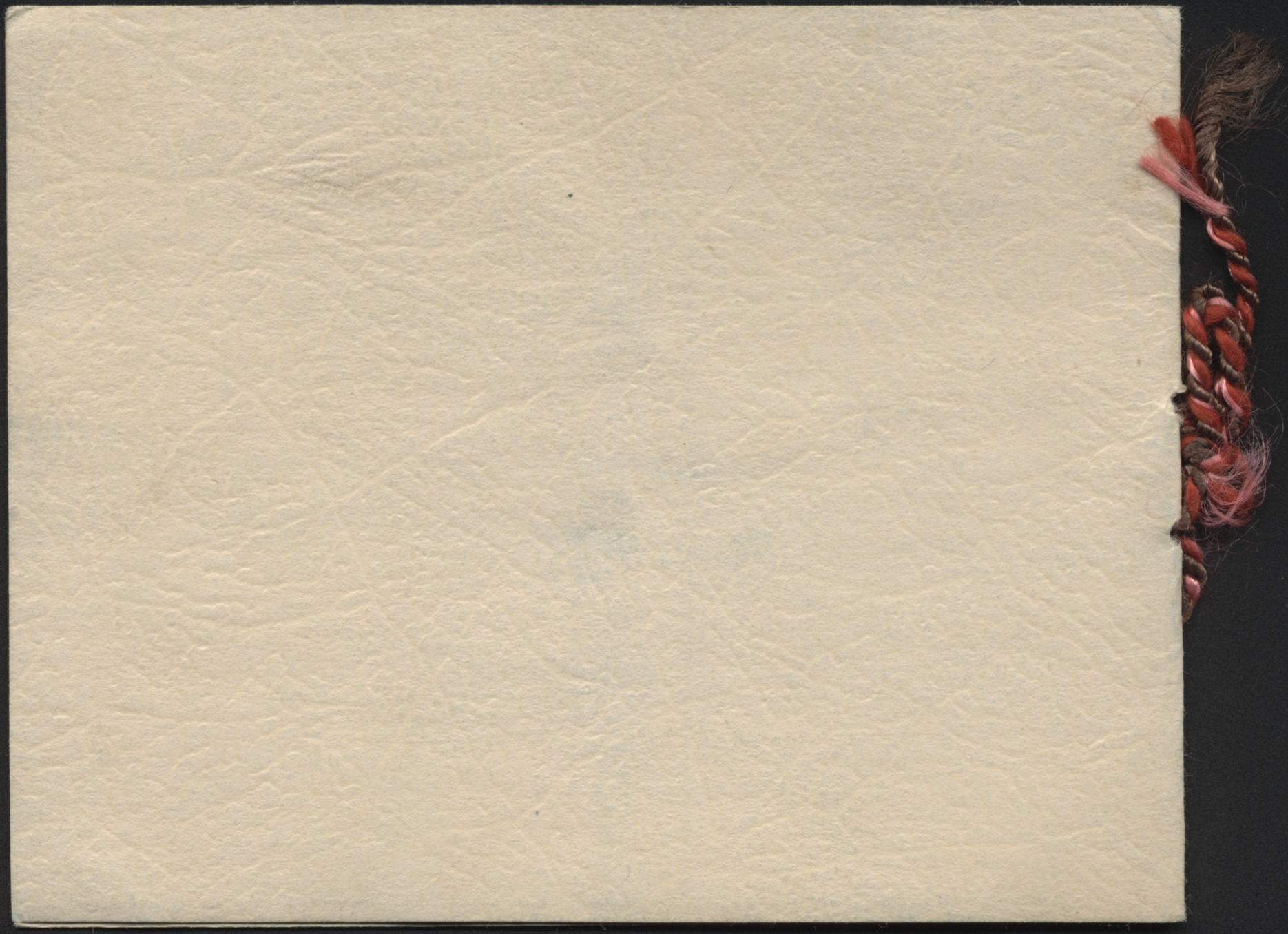

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Mr & Mrs H. Anderson

C/o Mrs B.W. Yeomans

Canterbury Rd

Box Hill

Victoria

Please forward

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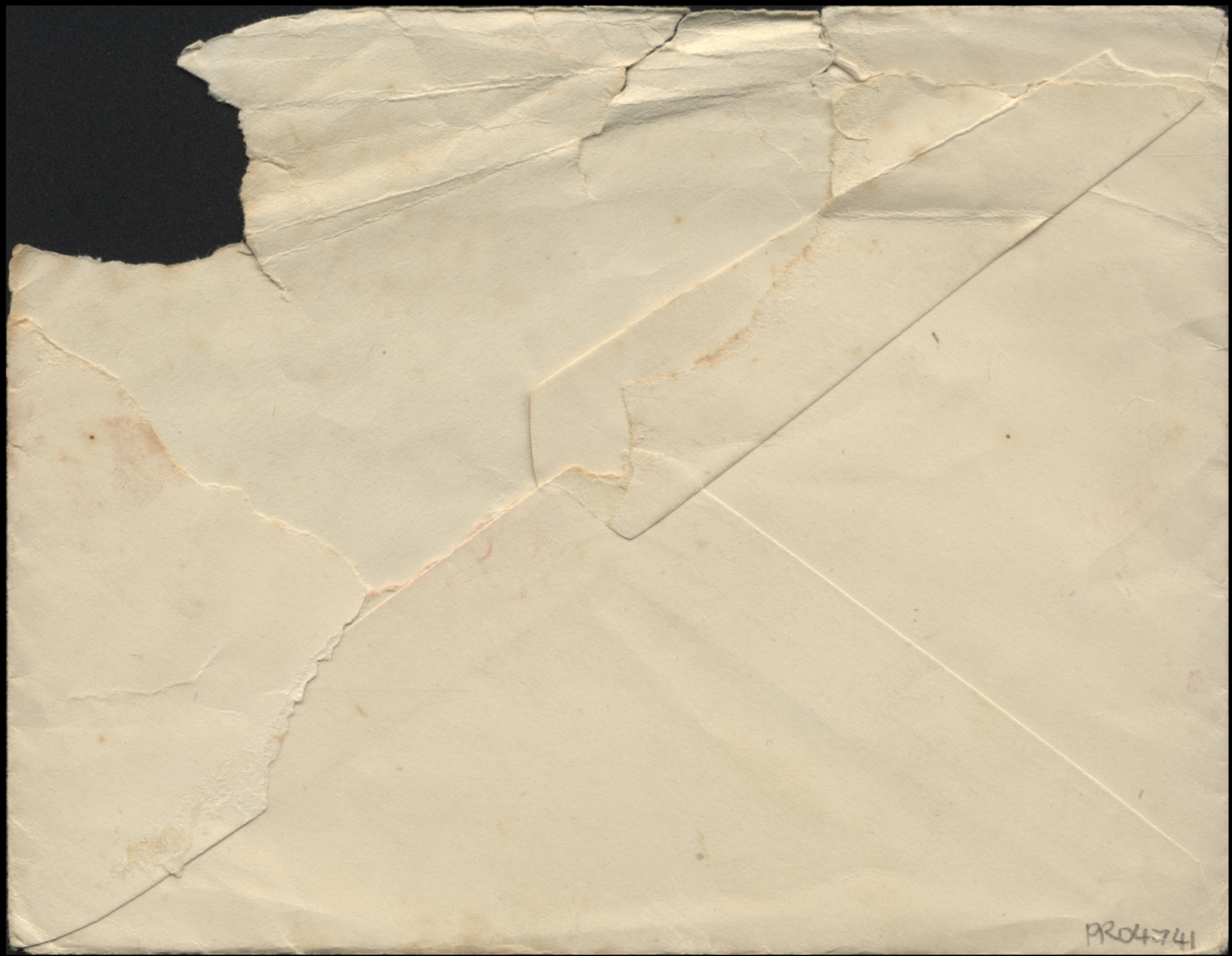

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VX5554 McDonald (Sgt)
A COY 2/7 BTN AIF
Egypt 29-9-40

My Dear Mr Anderson,

Very pleased indeed am I to have heard from you and know that everything is O K. As you can see now we are in Egypt which places us all nearer to the task confronting us. I cannot say much as there is not much to write about but I will endeavour to try. All we can see out here is sand & sand but I would prefer and I like it better this than Palestine. Palestine is a very interesting place but filthy of vermon and disease. Egypt has its dirty spots but at least it is clean The Nile river is as long as it is history runs but as for swimming in it it is very contagious for ~~Eastworm~~ hookworm disease which is incurable to person effected. I have been into Cairo but I dont think much of it. It is a nice city but has no comparison on good old Melbourne. A chap doesn't realize the value of a great country and town until he comes over here and sees the individual at their own way of living and habits. In Palestine the Arab is a filthy, crafty, cunning and a sneak and is a one who doesn't care the measures he takes to steal something over here the Egyptian someways like the arab is more friendlier and more cleaner although some of their hovels are dirty. You get some of the lower class wherever you are though. It is strange to see the women washing in these runs from the Nile. They not only use this filthy water for washing but drinking, swimming, for cattle everything imagineable. Talk about drinking your own bath water. As you travel along the roads you see the people all doing this which is strange. We pass a two wheeled flat top cart crowded with gypsi kids and parents and drawn by a poor donkey who recieves no mercy for the load he so has to carry. I bet there is at least 40 crowded on to these carts and you should hear them yell out when we pass. They greet us alright but the noise is unbearable It is a very picturesque drive alongside the Nile. We see barges as they sail along, natives fishing as they draw nets through the filthy water and across the water we can see palm trees. I have seen similar in tropical pictures.

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Well as to Cairo it is a flash city but the trades people try too take you down Whatever price is asked if you say a a third of the price you would be about right. I learnt a lesson in the Bebe Cabaret when I was in then. I went with a Corporal never again. Talk about cooks. We are under pretty good conditions here with showers still but we have to adapt ourselves to desert hardships this will be a long war of hardships I think. What is a bother to us is the blooming flies. There is not so much sand fly fever kicking around here either. Fancy Dan Ellis joining the R.H.A.F. well good luck to him but still I think I would rather risk a bayonet or bullet to be on the good old earth. What I dread most is gas but I am not worried. What comes comes and the better wins I believe that Bobby mills is in the air force too. Have you seen the wife lately keep in touch with her as I want you all to be the sincerest of friends. I could kick myself to ever have listened to such a cock & bull story as that rubbish was although I knew in my heart it couldn't be true anyway I can smile I know she is true thanks a lot to you. I bet that the Nephew (hullo Auntie) is a bonyer I sincerly hopes he keeps until I come back then maybe he can play with Kenneth James McDonald that will be the first boys name if it be a girl Edith Ann McDonald. Wouldn't I be a proud young hussey then. I hope I can pull through to ~~com~~ fulfill our intentions. I am very sorry to hear of Edna's very sad plight and I hope sincerly everything is O.K. now. I am enclosing a note to her. I bet you make a good nurse. How would you go rolling me over now take some doing I reckon better practise on the old harry. How is he anyway you never said. I suppose he still has his big pod Good luck to him being promoted I am happy to know it. You know Mr Anderson he doesn't know it but I do idol him and you too. Keep going with the first aid and the best but I hope you never have to use it. Bert conveys his love and regards to you and old harry and hope you are well. I will close now hoping this finds you as well as it leaves me Auf Re Voir

Jam as always

+++ your much appreciated & sincere friend

Meggsie -

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How is Paddy going

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VX5554 A McDonald (Sgt)
"A" Coy 2/7 Bn AIF
Abroad 20-11-40

Dear Mr Anderson,

I have great pleasure in replying to your ever welcomed letter which I have just recieved. It was brimfull of good news and a thrill went right through me when I read those few much appreciated lines from the Old Homy. They were not many but they were very much enjoyed. I will not be able to write much as this is on top of the other oh well there about's - Well to start with I am keeping exchal well and living up to the training which by the way is hardening up again. We are doing plenty of night manoeuvres and there is another tonight but as I am on duty as a Picquet sergeant I will miss it The training is quite interesting too. We go out at darkness and have to reach our objective before the moon rises. It is all done in stages. We wear sand shoes which is for quietness and carry out the imaginery attack with fixed bayonets. It is quite realistic to see dark forms all in line as they advance steadily and stealthy upon their object. I rather like it and often as we go along I visualize it being dinkum. It would be great if I wasn't on the receiving end still I will forget the horrid part of it. I recieved a beautiful snap from the wife. It is a corker and every time I look at it it makes me long to be with her Now I am only hinting but I would like to be able to do the same with you and the old homy. I have two of you but still I may be greedy & do want more. I am rather sorry to have heard of Mrs Foster's flight. It is rather sad I can remember her quite well last time she was sick. I used to get a few things for her and would try my hardest to get a liver for her but now we are separated by miles of sea and I cannot help in any way Still if you see her convey my love to her and wish her a quick, safe and a complete recovery. I bet Ron old

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pop is worrying. Tell her I have wrote to Ned but by Boat and tell the old Hairy that I have finished boxing for ever unless I am trained by him I never will fight of course if a bloke crowned me it would be totally different for the moment I tasted I had bad luck in the cup I backed Maikai too but he just got pipped on the post you certainly were right thinking of an outsider to win the cup you know the Andersons are practically always right. Well to me they always are. Those Junction Stores you mentioned were on the job of being completed when I left. I think one was finished I suppose it looks quite well. There is no doubt about you a success at every darn thing. Good work taking £16 and if I had of been there it would have been larger still perhaps £16-0 3½. These air raid practice alarms are very handy but I pray to God that none ever really happens in Victoria. That is why I left my dear wife and friends to keep it away. I have seen enough now. you do not realize the destruction that one bomb does. It is incredible and believe me anywhere within three hundred yards you are lucky if you are not sailing on a rainbow. The shrapnel is is big lumps and talk about sharp still I wont talk about that to you How is Bosc Hill and all the old folks I know remember me to them all Mrs ~~Hewitt~~ Burchell and the old daisy with the two dear mothers there. Your mother and Allan Stuart bless them. I am pleased he is putting on weight. I would love to see him but I am afraid it will be a long time providing alls well. Well you cannot beat practise at anything you learn still I would have liked to been in that elderly ladies place. It would be great to have a cup of your tea. It stands out on its own after the stuff that I have tasted. I reckon my bath water would taste better not at present though it is rather dirty. Mentioning water I will describe a Saturday or Sunday to you around camp. you see our water what there is is brought around by a truck once a day and every week end

you see lovely brown bodies with white bottoms in a dish trying to have a bath. It is rather humorous still it is a way we have in the army. Things may even be worse one day. Am I looking forward to this parcel from you and company. I sure will be happy to receive it especially your cake and as for fruit salad well there is no mentioning what I will do to it. The wife often sends me biscuits and I get them safely. I have tasted cakes sent over and they arrive good and fresh but taste better. Any you send to me Mrs Anderson dont forget ½lb block of Cadburys or Hoadly chocolate I had one send to me and it was great beautiful quite different to the sort of chocolate over here. I have wrote to A. Mc Pke Mrs Anderson. We have had a letter from each other. With regards to Bert he has transferred from our battalion last August and now as we are well separated I seldom see him. He was looking rather well last time we met. He is a lance-corporal too. Well Mrs Anderson there is nothing else to do so I am afraid I will draw to a close. I dont like to ask for anything but anything from you is always welcomed. Dont forget where the wife lives. Hoping I hear from you soon I will close wishing you and the old boy the Seasons Greetings

As always Your Sincere Friend

Meggsie XXXX

Tell the old boy to drop another line

PS Remember to Mrs Hargraves of Elysdale Street 19 I think

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BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION
PASSED BY CENSOR
No. 1939
Mrs H. Anderson
22 Clysdale St
Box Hill
E11
Victoria
Australia
ARMY POST
10 MILLS
EGYPT
2ND DEC
M 2



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VX5554 Lt McDonald A.J
A coy 2/7 BN AIF
Abroad 7-1-41

My Dear Mr Anderson.

Here I am still alive with another year gone and the new year starting off full of excitement. Before I go any further I want to thank you for your ever welcomed letter which was very enjoyable and appreciated believe me because we had just finished reaching one goal when your letter arrived. It was a blessing also those few words the old Harry wrote. It was like old times another victory to us and a word from you both. Now you know officially that we have been into action well it certainly was and never will I forget it more so I never will tell anything about it. I have been wanting this for a long time now and now I know just what it is and who ever came back for a second dose well there is something wrong but the task we had we were ~~told was another Gallipoli and we~~ failed through against ~~odds~~ of 40 to 1. Still Mr Anderson I can still smile and always will. Tell the wife not to worry as I am O K. Do you remember Alan Anderson from Box Hill well he did his job poor chap and has gone ahead. I will not forget my first initiation into action. It was night time and we had moved up to relieve some others. As we were awaiting orders a shell came over and did I likewise every one else hit the ground in a hurry. We recieved many more but you get used to it all just like receiving lefts on my old nose. But that night well everyone know it only too well. This earth is a mother to us all when those things start flying around. Although we have (the AIF) captured Bardia I havent been into the town ship yet. At the present moment we are resting for two days this our last and then on we go to meet more of these low and squibby dagoes. They are a pack of squibs everyone. They will let you have everything when your away from them but as soon as you get near them up goes their hands. Whew talk about a man being human he isn't he couldn't be. Now to get on with my story. I had a very interesting trip right up to

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here the trip covering a big stretch and all along we would see ruins of the battle and the various things captured. Sidi Barrani what is left is a little sea side resort I forgot to mention Mersa ~~Matruh~~ Matruh first but it is something similar only more picturesque. We slept under the stars at Bug Bug (bug bug) and pushed on next day when we passed through Solem a place with a beautiful harbour at the bottom of the escarpment. We stopped at Fort Capuzzo what remains then pushed on again to our first initiation. Our skipper Capt Savige is a man in a million with a heart the same as pencil and will always have support me for one. Now I would like to thank you for giving the wife such a wonderful evening that time. She told me and while Dee is happy so will I. I cannot write much and I have to cuet a lot of people short of letters but if you see any tell them how I am. I am writing 2 letters all I have time too one to my wife Dee and the ther to my best friends who are reading this and saying Meggo has changed. I have too Mr Anderson but I will be back when everything is finished good and proper. It is a funny world alright. I have always said I will be a man when I turn 21 but I am turning now. I am one now even though I am saying it and am proud to be alongside the men in the AIF. It is good news too I never lost one man in my platoon thank God. I am sorry to have heard about the old car but I hope it is soon fixed Remember me to Mr Robb and son also your Mother and Mr Burchell. Tell Ruby Bale I cannot write but will at my next opportunity. I havent forgot your present it will come when I can get leave. I sincerly hope that your xmas and New year was full of happiness under the present situation. Tell the Old Harry to look after himself also you and to keep his good work up in cheering Dee up. She likes him but I idol him and you both. Dont think I am strange but life is sweet. Look after yourself also keep Dee's spirits up and dont forget my love to any one I know. Cheerio and all the best for 1941 and I pray that for xmas I can have it at your place as you both at mine

Cheerio keep the chin up and All the very best Au Re Voir Love

your True friend
Meggee

Note Italian envelope I have a few souvenirs including field glasses

++++++



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VX5554 Sgt McDonald
'A' COY 2/7 BN A.I.F.
Abroad 8-3-41.

Dear Mr Anderson,

Once more I turn up like a bad penny but still smiling for in my heart very deep I know that every letter brings us nearer to our happy meeting which I hope is very soon. I have had my experience, and believe me I never ever dreamt it to be the horror it was still I went forward with the rest like a lunatic and trusted to God. That is all you can do but it is a great experience to look back too some cannot but I hope I always can. I would hate to leave the boys now and everyone is of the same opinion to get it finished and get home so before long we may be testing ourselves out against a much stronger and tougher opponent than the ding but even the mightiest fall which will be the case. I reckon what we have succeeded in doing is like boxing gradually working up from the preliminaries. I feel quite confident in coming home for there has been too many bullets missed me that were meant for me. There could not be many more. We are going to go back to a rest camp very soon but by the look of things and the movements of others we will not have too long. I think that very ~~spot~~ soon we will all be a greece spot for the weather is getting extremely hot. It is one thing for us we see a lot of territory which makes our task a lot happier. I know you will understand my meaning. I had a good job the other day. I went down to Alexandria to supervise the loading of stores so it was a good break for me. The journey covered the same territory which we had fought so hard for. From Alexandria we passed the following towns so

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wheres the Atlas, Sidi Nessa, Merca Mutuch, Sidi Barrani, Bug Bug, Solum, Fort Capuzzo, Bardia, Tobruch, Derna, G. Berta, Barce and Bengasi and G Hemmines. It is all desert to Tobruch also from Bengasi. We are now out in the desert where ever you move you see the skeleton of some poor animal which has fallen in its tracks in its vain search of water. Water out here is scarce and it is very salty. Right from Sidi Barrani it is the same except one place G Berta where the water is beautiful. There is no news to talk of only war and I dont want speak of it any more than you wish to hear of it. We have been having a bit of trouble from Jerry areoplanes but as long as we stay in our trenches we are fairly safe. I am very pleased to know that you did so well in your exciams there is no doubt about the Anderson's name always on top but remember the time I let your name down badly. I weigh 11st 6lb now so I dont think I will fight 8st 12lb again. you do not know the thrill I get from those few good confident lines the old Harry puts in. I was worried for a while as I had not heard from you for a good while. your letters are looked forward too next to Dee's. I am pleased to know Dee is happy as long as Dee is so am I. On the 7th of next month it will be our 1st anniversary of our wedding. To think next month I turn a man (21) I wonder where I will be by then. I think you will find me the same Neggar but I will have an old head. Give my love to the Dairy also Allan Robb. I would love to see him as I adore nippers also not forgetting Mr Burchell. And how is the old Harry. Tell him I certainly will try and always get in first. I am afraid this letter doesn't hold much news but it sincerely holds a lot of sentiment and effection besides gratitud

P.T.O.

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which words cannot describe. I have been copping it from the sun but I will get used to it in time. I have no news to speak of. One of my chaps in my platoon was recommended for Bravery at Bardia. His name was Dal Birrell a good solid chap. I had my name mentioned in despatches if you know what that means. Fancy letting Miss Padgham beat you something is wrong Mrs Anderson. I know her only too well. She is very fussy am I right And it was your home Nursing certificate you succeeded in well that is good you will come in handy when I get back to nurse my nippers. yes I reckon I will a daddy alright Now I want this from you I am demanding a snap of you in your uniform. Dont forget Mrs Anderson and believe me I will cherish it. I am terribly afraid that your parcel for me has gone down below for I haven't received it yet. you know it makes ones blood boil to think of you people with wonderful hearts just throwing money away and to think one man ~~(will be)~~ is the cause of it all. By jove he will suffer for it it is not a threat but a promise from everyone of the A.I.F. Well I am forced to close so heres to you and old Harry all the best wishes impossible. Look after Dee and yourself for sooners or later we will meet again till then I will just wait anxiously and patiently for the familar writing I know so well. Good luck and Au Re Voir. Lots of love.

Yours Sincere Friend

Bert is in Hospital with dysentry Meggsie + + + + + + +
but I will attach his love for he often speaks of you.

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Mrs. Anderson
22 Clydesdale St
Box Hill
E11



Victoria
Australia

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VX5554 Lieut McDonald. A.J
A Coy 2/7 Bn AIF.

Dear Miss Padgham,

No doubt this letter is a suprise to you From letters I have recieved from my very best friend Mr Anderson it seems as though you are interested in Palestine so I will try and endeavour to give you a description of my doings over here. It is only 21 months since I joined the AIF, mainly for the spirit of adventure, with ambitions of trying to climb the ladder of success. On the 15th April at 12.40 our ship pulled out from Port Melbourne, it was then that I realized I was going away leaving my loved ones behind, wondering whether we would meet again. I was a sgt then and I lived like a king on the trip over. The only rough bit we had was in the Bight. While a lot of chaps were suffering sea sickness I was enjoying it immensely. The 21st April we arrived at Fremantle where we had 12 hours leave so I went up to visit Perth. We were all overwhelmed by the generousity of the civilians, who extended to us a cordial welcome. May 2 saw us entering Colombo. Here we stayed 2 days during which time I visited the native dwellings, their markets, etc. Most interesting was their worshipping temples. It was 19th May when we arrived at the port of disembarking. After a meal we entrained into cattle trucks waiting nearly, so by 1 AM we were proceeding on our way to a destination unknown. It was the roughest ride I have yet experienced, and even now we still think it had square wheels. We were greeted with the dismall site of sand at dawn, it was then we began to wonder what was in store for us. We arrived at a town called Gazi where we were besieged by arabs selling oranges. 6 for one cigarette

was the cheap price offered. After Gazi the country changed which gladdened our hearts a little. Not long afterwards we arrived at our destination. We were all anxious to see our new surroundings, but we did not enjoy the heat. We were greeted by a Khamseen blowing from the desert so we made quick steps to the little shade that the white tents afforded. Two days later we were dressed in shorts and shirts our heavy uniform being discarded. This land we learnt was the Promised land, the land of Milk and Honey but unfortuneatly for us the Milk we saw was condensed, the honey was a special brand named Golden Syrup if we were lucky. For months we trained under a scorching sun, day after day, but we knew in our hearts it was for a good cause. I took the opportunity of visiting Jerusalem. This was a very interesting town, being popular through its historical importance, but the town itself is in a sad condition of ruin and poverty. Tele-aviv is a nice sea side resort but a dear place to visit. Still you have to pay for experience. Jaffa on the outskerts of Tele-aviv is an old arab shabby town. Its surrounding district is world reknown for its marvellous oranges. Rishon a pretty little spot is also noted for oranges. Ekelon is interesting as the ruins of the Crusaders time still stand. Gazi I deem as the filthiest town I have ever seen. It was Friday 13 Sept that we left Palestine and we were all a suntanned, carefree, happy go lucky crowd that night we left the Promised land. We arrived in Egypt after crossing the Suez Canal early morn. We were surprised at the great vaste stretch of desert that we were passing. The desert

seemed to end abruptley, and to our 3 amayement we came upon such green fertiled pastures. That was a good sight. For miles this valley extended. We later learnt this to be the Nile valley, its richness due to the gigantic iragation scheme they have run from the Nile river. We camped near Cairo so I had the opportunity of visiting this Queen city of Egypt, but unfortuneately I dont intend to give praises for it was not worth it. Cairo is dull during the day but the night sees plenty of life. I visited everything imagineable, mainly out of curiousity but it was all an education for me. Now the money. In Palestine the money runs in Mills and Peastors. 10 mills 1 Peastor 100 Peastors 1 Pound. It takes 25/- of our money to equal a Palestinian pound so we lose 5/- in the pound. In Egypt we lose 5/8 in the pound which means 26/8 to an Egyptian pound. Theia money runs in peastors, 100 peastors to a pound. On the 28 October we left this camp and everyone was excited for we were moving further afield. We arrived at our destination, not far from Alexandria. Training became intense, leave scarce but we did it for we were eager to learn. I saw Alex a few times and it is the pick of towns over here. Did I have some good fun in Alex I'll say so. Because of a move afoot we had xmas dinner on the 19th Dec, so next day we were on the way again. We stayed at a rest camp for a while at a place called Sidi Nessa near Merca Matuh. Early Boxing day morning we had our first rum issue then proceeded on our way, the first town we passed was Merca Matuh which had been a target for those high altitude flyers the dagoes. We all eyed the damage that had been done as we passed through. Then we come upon the battlefields where the dagoes had been driven back. I dont think we missed a thing, we were that excited and curious to see foreign weapons.

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We were expecting to see a big town as we neared Sidi Barrani, but instead we could see crumpled walls which was proof that there was a town until the navy got to work. In Sidi Barrani there is a monument the dingo had erected to commemorate their capture of Barrani but it never lasted very long. That night we stayed near Fort Capuzzo which was also a crumpled wall. Next evening 28 Dec we moved up during the darkness to the outskirts of Bardia. It was here we had our first initiation of shell fire, and I will never forget it. I could see this red glowing object making a whistling noise coming straight at me, believe me I did not need any telling for I just fell flat to hug Mother earth very tightly. I was then deafened by an explosion 50 yds away then heard little whistles as shrapnel flew about. ~~this~~ was followed by another. I was frightened at first but you soon get use to it We had a week of this bombing, during which time we were subjected to heavy bombing. Jan 3 our attack started during which time I thought a lot of home and what I was here for. you are not afraid when you are in action, you are expecting something to happen that all. I dont want to bring the war to you as it is enough for one to go through without moaning about it. I realize now why return men never speak of War. Bardia was not a big place, but was an important port. I will never forget the Battle for the cookhouse where we captured only 90 of us 3000 dingo, 76 Guns and numerous machine guns not forgetting the cook house where there was a copper of pea soup cooking that we heartily ate. Bardia fell to the AIF in 3 days. On the 9th Jan we moved up to Gazelle camp. We named it Gazelle due to the fact of the number of den we shot. On the 15th Jan we marched 15 mile to the outskirts

of Tobuk. This was the hardest march I have done as it was against a strong blinding dust storm. We were under shell fire for six days then on the 21st Jan we attacked once again we were successful, only taking us two days. We were guarding the prisoners (±20000) for five days then we moved onto Bir El Gazelle where we were to rest for 3 days. Owing to the dagoes getting hostile at Derna our rest was cut short so on the 30th Jan we moved up to Matrouba. Next day 31 Jan we learnt that the ding had evacuated and we were to chase him. In three days sleeping included we marched 70 miles in 76 hours which we all claimed as good going From Derna we were picked up in cars and taken to Barce where we stayed a fortnight resting in billets (ahem). From Barce Feb 17 I came back to Alex for stores so I spent 3 nights in Alex on the strength of it for I had a bit of money in the pay book. Mentioning Pay Book reminds me of the big swindle in Libya. You see the Libyan money was of no use at all. The wogs (arabs) were robbing the poor Italian settlers out of house and home. They would sell food stuffs to us, which we paid them in their money. They did not know it was of no use so we got the better end of the bargain. I rejoined my unit up at Merca Brega 240 miles from Bengasi, right in the desert on the road to Tripoli. We were holding a defence line. It was here that we first experienced dive bombers. There was many a skelton to be seen of some unfortunate animal that has died where it fell whilst in a vain search for water. March 9 we left the desert back for a rest. It took us 3 days to reach Tobuk, here we stayed a week until the 19th March then we moved on again. Coming to Sollum we were able to see a pretty view, that was looking down on Sollum from the escarpement. The escarpement is a huge cliff extending from

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Sollum running along the coast through Libya. We stopped at Mersa Matruh for a week then came down to a camp near Alexandria called Amiriya. Here we stayed a week, having one day leave before being bundled off to Greece. This was April 10 and we crossed the pond safely arriving at Paragon Bay on April 13. The Greeks gave us a wonderful welcome, they were all lined along the streets giving us the thumbs up sign which means "to live". We were driven through Athens and around so as to see a bit of the town. Athens was impressive but we never had the chance of being loose in there. We saw the ancient grecian ruins such as the Pantheons, Acropolious etc. The noticeable was the numerous storks over here. There would be a lot of girls fainting if they saw so many back home. That night we stopped at a pretty spot called Daphnia Park then next morning we were in the train (trucks) bound for the front and action once again. Our journey lasted 36 hours and we saw some marvellous panoramic views especially as we were travelling over the rockies. It was beautiful to see and so consistent too. Our journey ended at Larissa then fun started. After that my platoon commander was hurt for the second time (Bardia the other) so I took charge again. April 24th we received orders to evacuate so next day I celebrated my 21st birthday. What a time too. We moved right down to the Southern part of Greece called Kalamai, moving only at night. We left early morn on the 27th April and after continuous air attacks our ship was sunk, with the results we were landed in Crete. This was a haven of rest but as soon as the Blitz started May 19 everything was turned into confusion. The fighting was fierce neither side giving any mercy. We proved to ourselves that we are better fighters than the hun for every time we

made a bayonet charge he would withdraw, but our charges are of no use against his stuka dive bombers, which are darn good. We had to fight the rear guard action taking 5 days, during which time we marched 80 mile, to eat we had ½ tin bully and we were lucky to get that. After holding Jerry all the way we received a big set back for only 13 of the battalion were evacuated when the navy left. We learnt then that the remainder would be P.O.W's as the navy would not be back. I was amongst them too but I was determined somehow or other to escape. Anything was better than falling into Jerries hands. There is a lot to tell but I will skip minor points. With 139 others I did escape in a barge and we had a lot of luck to make it. Perhaps I asked to come said it was suicide to leave in the daytime. It took us 9 days to reach land but it was worth it even though things were tough. We lived upon ½ biscuit covered with bully twice daily, our water was ¼ pint between two, a 24 hour ration. I owed my condition to the continuous swimming I did which proved refreshing. We lost 2 lives one a Jew committed suicide, the other an Englishmen died of exposure, these we buried at sea. I dont wish to speak of some of the gruelling hardships. Just because I could not take it I had to go into hospital for four days, then I was drafted back to Palestine where I am now so I am back where I started from. If you have a map you can follow my travels that is if it is understandable. We were looked upon as heroes, there being 12 of our Battalion. We were sent down the beach for 5 days recuperating then we were sent to a Jewish Settlement near Haifia situated in the valley of Israel which was 6 years ago a dreaded malaria belt but now today it is a rich fertile valley, full praise to these band of workers who have done a job almost unbelievable. I took the

opportunity of visiting Haifa which was very impressive. Overlooking Haifa is Mt Carmel and from its summit a perfect view is obtained. I dont know whether you can read my writing or not. The other day I recieved my commission which makes me proud as I won it in the field It was my ambition to win my promotion this way and I succeeded now my ambition is to go into action and prove I am worthy of the rank I now possess. I always look forward to Mrs Anderson letters for they are to me like a Mother & father. I am devoted to them both for I have no greater friends than them. I sincerely hope that I can get back home to my wife and friends and forget all these past incidents so that I will be able to hold with them a happiness that can or will never be excelled. In closing I must admit my grammar and writing are not the best but I am learning every day. Goodluck to all at home and may this war end very soon. I think the day of reunion is not far distant. A day of happiness that will be shrined in every decent Australians heart. Au Re Voir

your Friend
Meggie.

P.S. Just in case you do not remember me I was once the butcher boy at your place. How is Pat going.

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VX5554 Sgt McDonald. A-J
A Coy 2/7 Bn A.I.F
Abroad 5 July 41

My Dear Mrs Anderson,

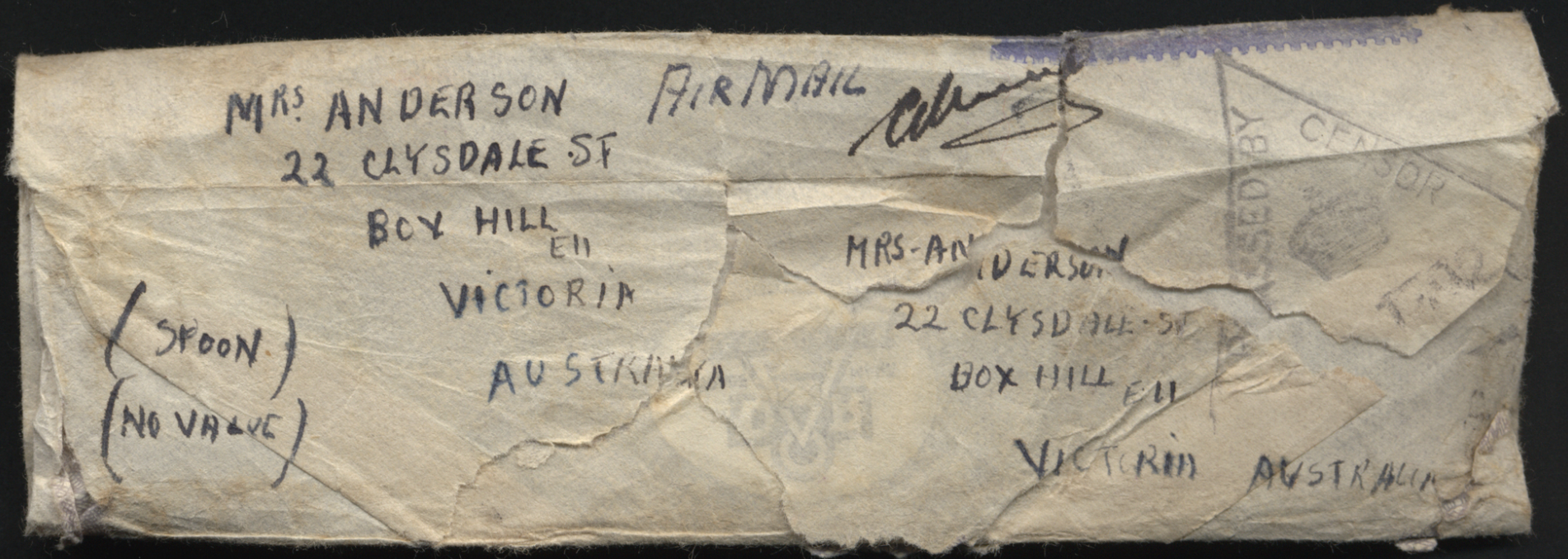
I have been holding off my writing for a while hoping I could tell you that my commission had come through but I am afraid at the present moment I cannot say so. you know my best friend it will seem very strange to me with another rise for I am that easy, free will happy go lucky style that is not bearingly for an officer but if I do get it I know I have earnt it and I will say this that it will not alter me any as you know me as a man I am safe to say man now for I am 21 now. I am not worrying if it doesnt come through for sgt major will do me nice. I do know that I am a restless devil for here I am again wanting to get into it again for this mucking around gets on your nerve too much. you certainly took a good snap and I pride them very much. Now to tell you what has happened lately. After coming from the beach where I spent an enjoyable time I was informed we would be going to a Jewish settlement for four days leave. This did not seem too inviting for I have disliked Jews since I have arrived over here but it proved to me later that they were wonderful people. I cannot express in words my apprec iation for the excellent hospitality they accorded to us. The people are situated on a farm 15 mile from Haifia in the valley of Israel and five years ago this fertile valley was just one big swamp. Not only did they suffer in silence the attacks from hostile arabs they also suffered

from the pangs of disease from this swamp which was a malaria belt. The work they did in such a short space of time is almost unbelievable. It is a marvellous camp, compact and modern. We felt very much at home there for there was rabbits there which they bred and to please us they gave us rabbit for dinner. We learnt their dances, songs etc and we vis versa. They were a marvellous crowd and I only hope I can see them again. The nippers there were beautiful and I spent a good deal of time with them. Getting my hand in already. I also visited Haifia and was very much impressed by its modernness and beauty. Over looking Haifia is Mt Carmel and from this you see a very pretty view. I had better start using big words (That will be the day.). Well Mr Anderson give my regards to the old Harry who I hope is well. How is Dee I haven't heard since a week but it was old mail. The letter was dated June 2 but there is some delay some where but should come good soon. Keep her spirits up for I am certain I will come back after my past experiences. I can safely send Berts regards but I dont like saying it he was left on Crete. I am writing this letter with a pen that Bert gave me as a present for xmas 1939. Give my love to the family at the ~~family~~ dairy also young Alan ~~Hewitt~~ Robb. I have learnt one thing Mr Anderson and that is not two since Crete and that is I will never go shooting rabbits for I know just how a rabbit feels. I have had plenty now in fact I am suffering from indigestion but still there is vengeance and I hope to see all the boys that were left on Crete once again. I hope you recieved the spoon I sent. There is not a 100 of us old originals left now so all we can do is just to carry on. Well Mr Anderson once again I draw to a close for I have to write to Ned Keep the old chin up and look after yourself for our day of rejoicing is coming near. Every bitter day means nearer to our happiness. Goodluck & Cheerio from your true friend

P.S. I see where Carter is doing well in the profs Maybe I was lucky to win the beginners tournament after all

Patterson

Meyers



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AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
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VX5554 Lieut McDonald. D.J
A Coy 2/7 Bn A.I.F
Abroad 29 July 41

Dear Mr Anderson,

your very welcomed, most appreciated letter has come to hand only last night so here I am replying immediately to show my appreciation. It certainly was a wonderful letter one worthy of praise, comprising of a lot of sentiment which one feels proud to know he has such wonderful friends as you are to me back home. As you can see by my address I have recieved my commission so I feel rather proud of myself but it is very strange believe me. I always stated I would earn my promotion in the field and here I am recieved what I have been aiming to do. I dont have to go to an Officers training school as it was earnt in the field. How I earnt I dont know but it seems as though the army authorities are quite satisfied with me. I am very pleased indeed mainly for Dee's sake, because I know just how happy she will be. It will be good (Dee) censoring my own letters from now on. Hope you recieved my cable o.k. I recieved Mr Robb letter so will reply, as for Padgham I will write a big letter trying to discribe everything over here, when I get time but I have a lot of corresponding to do. There is only one thing I wish to do now and that is go into action again just to prove I am worthy of the commision I hold. I have no fear of that still it just my funny way. I thought that a lot of the boys would take it as an old school tie business but instead of that it has proved a popular promotion and I am pleased too. My other mate Travor Holland also received his. News is very scarce Mr Anderson but you know just how my feelings are towards

Harry and you. Regarding Joe Branchflower I saw him in Crete under funny circumstances. I never ever dreamt of seeing him where we were and ~~he was~~ here he was as large as life. This popular girl quest seems a rather good idea and I sincerely trust that Marge does win. Dee thinks the same of Marge and she does of Dee. Here comes Vince Patterson one of our Officers who knows Dee very well. I realize now just how my life was ruined when I was a kid. I certainly miss my education for it means quite a lot to a chap especially mixing with men as I have too now. Our company commander Capt Bamford is going to coach me along and do all he can to help me. When I was a Cadet at Ringwood I use to carry his books for him. We had a good chat in confidence the other night and he gave me some good fatherly advice. I can do the job ok and I know the work but the trouble is I feel self conscious. I am happy to know Dee is looking so well also very pleased with you for the excellent way in which you keep Dee's spirits up. From all accounts our Colonel in Crete is still with the boys. He refused to leave them. We just had 2 more chaps back who made good their escape in an 18 foot sailing yacht. They came across in 90 hrs. I was talking to him yesterday and he told me that our barge was only about 1½ mile out when the Jerries took them prisoners. He could see our barge quite plain and thought we would be certain to cop something so once again we were damn lucky. I am looking forward to getting back home for I know my future will just be one long happiness ~~future~~.. you can look forward to a snap from me as soon as I can get the opportunity of having one taken. I was a sgt exactly 18 months. Here is my army record. I joined as a Private on 4 Nov 39. I was made Corporal on 4 Jan (that is full corporal), made sgt 20 January 40, made Lieut 21 July 41. Give my regards to the old harry and I hope all is well with you. Look after yourself and remember you have a friend who appreciates your letters greatly. Your real Friend

d McDonald

+ + + + + + Megyzie



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AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

Ps It is great censoring my own letters.



V+5554 Lieut McDonald. A.J
A Coy 2/7 Bn AIF
ABROAD 20 AUG 41

Dear Mrs Anderson,

your ever welcomed letter has been received once again bringing with it joy and happiness and as usual plenty of good news. News as usual is very scarce but what there is of it is not too good yet one having to write about it. I am refering to a school which I am now attending. It is a months school for the likings of men such as I who recieved promotion in the field. I am happy to say there is only three weeks more which is three weeks too long. It is an interesting school but very intense. We are on parade from 630 until 4.30 and every second night we have a night excercise, the sooner we are into action again the better, still I should moan after seeing the excellent work the Russians are doing. What is annoying is that we have instructors who have not seen action yet only been over here not two months yet. Still they are good scouts and will learn one day. There is 80 of us here and seeing it is the fust school we are pioneers of it. We are out in the never never where the water is chronic. To have it fit for drinking Chloine is used so you can imagine that taste maybe I am getting an old fuss pot. I do know that I never had a good education especially when I get into conversation, but thanks to a mate of ~~Dee~~ mine Lieut Holland he is helping me when ever I am wrong. He has taught me a lot of manners at eating which has to be used, still for all the ways I have to learn it will not alter me any for I seem to be one who does not want to grow up. There is a sketch Trav drew of a cow eating grapes. I have certainly aged since I joined the army as you can see by the enclosed snap. I am very happy to know that Dee and you are so staunch a friends, for we are such. I have sent to you a pillow cover or cushion cover so I hope it reaches you well

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Little Jim is the nickname he has for me. Trav again .....





That day I recieved the bad news I was really cut up but I knew in my own heart it was not true but we will forget that as it was the past Now last Saturday week I went into Tel-aviv and had a quiet but enjoyable time finishing up at a Jewish supper and dance party at a place called Ramit Gan. It was a garden party so the setting was rather nice. Last Sunday we did have the day off so I went into Gayi and saw a mate of mine in hospital who was wounded in Crete. Last night we did another night excercise which was a fighting patrol excercise and I was in charge. We did a good job finishing up getting stuck right into another patrol. Gosh it was a Stunn. We crept up on them and flew into them. Harry Thomas butted one chap and had him walking around in circles. I was swinging the rifle around connecting in places. I cannot express how funny it really was Tonight seeing there is no excercise I will go to the pictures. According to the papers today Russia has once again beat Jerry to another move, they are certainly turning up trump cards. Butch Lindsey is a Staff sgt now. I have not seen him yet but will try to locate him. I think he is up at Tobruk. I am glad to know that you have taken Dee into your confidence for she is a girl in a million with a heart of gold. Give my love to all at the dairy also to Marge and Mrs Berchell. I have written a vivid descriptive letter to Miss Padgham so I hope she recieves it. There is no need for an answer. How is the old Harry, thank him for looking after Dee for me but tell him if he is not careful or if he is willing we will have an exchange. I bet he does like. Dee will be 21 in November so I am going to buy for her a very nice set of underwear also a dressing gown but dont tell her. I only wish I could put them on and so would she. Well Mrs Anderson once again I draw to close but it is with the happy knowledge of knowing that every letter is bringing us nearer and nearer, but before long that day of reunion will not be far distant. Look after Dee and all the best. Au Revoir

Your True Friend
Meggeie

+++



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AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2020.22.303

VX5554 Lieut Meggs. A. J
A. Coy 2/7 Bn A I F
ABROAD 17 SEPT 41

My Dear Mrs Anderson,

It is a disappointed man that writes this letter but maybe it is only my selfishness. you see I expected and thought I would receive a letter from you this mail but alas I am unlucky still it wont alter our staunch friendship any it just proves how I long to hear from you. I received my usual ever loving three from Dee, gosh Mrs Anderson she is a marvel, you have no idea what she means to me, it sounds funny me being so young to talk like this but I know my own mind. What do you think I've gone and done. I went and had my appendisc removed, really against myself but it was like this. I was at a months school when I developed these darn pains so I went to the doctor, who bunged me into here for this operation I have just had. I was determined to pass the school so the following Saturday I obtained leave just to go down to sit for the exam, results were I passed so that was my worry over. I was to operated upon on the Monday morning at 6.45 A.M. I was all prepared for it even trussed up in bandages like a mummy. My temperature recorded 102° so the operation never took place. I had contracted sandfly fever, I would and the funny part about it is that I have never had it before and at the critical moment I get it all I say is you can be stiff. Well I was operated upon last Friday so in the afternoon I didn't care what happened. Sunday I could get out of bed and now I walk about, oh yes I do this behind the nurses back. See they would take a blue fit if they only knew I got out. Instead of having the ~~pain~~ I sneak out to the latrine

pan

and I was lucky this morning. I just got into bed when the Colonel came in still I must take it careful. I have been having a few visitors, the boys have been good in that respect and yesterday my C.O. came down to see me and give me the news. Quite likely I will go convalescing after this, either to the convalescent house boat on the Nile river at Cairo Egypt or to the home in Palestine here. Usually they send us officers (ahem sounds good) to Cairo. I hope so for I feel that is just what I need a darn good rest and I may as well have it while there is a lull on then I can come back, ready for anything once again only this next time I suppose I will cop something I must according to the law averages. My luck may still hold good I hope so at anyrate still it doesn't frighten me any with that thought for it is my ambition to be in action as an Officer now and I will. Who do you think I met in hospital here no other than Mr Jack Laurie (plumber) Landale St. Jack Levien from Mayo. asked me to look him up so it was a strange coincidence I thought to meet him here. I was lying on my bed when this chap came in and he was put in the bed opposite me. I took no notice keeping to myself as I do when I heard him talking of Libya & Greece of how he just escaped bombs here and there and a lot more stories. Someone asked him what unit he belonged too and he said 6 DIV Headquarters. Well I pricked my ears up and asked him did he know this Laurie I was to look up and it was him. All I can say is that I think I will keep to myself for I dont care for him. usually DIV Hd QRS are way back to blazes so that sickened me. I have met a rather decent chap in here who hails from New South Wales. The spirit in this hospital is wonderful and there are some sights. The war is well over for some of these unfortunates but happy devils.

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I have just had a beautiful tea comprising of Curried rice, Apricot & custard. As I was having tea sister came in and now the cats out the bag for she knows I have been out. I had the pad lying on the bed not thinking you see when the sister came in. We had a yarn then she spotted that which is on the top of page 2 gee she went crook and I couldnt contradict it. Well as news goes there is none. I received a nice letter from Ruby Bale. When I get out of here I may buy you something in the form of a brooch or bracelet just as a gift of appreciation towards you. How is the old Harry nowadays. What about that addition are there any signs yet that there may be a little Ando to greet me when I get back. See it would be swell. How are all at the dairy keeping, plenty of work as usual. Dee tells me how good you are in driving her home. I appreciate that Mr Anderson very much. Dee has certainly became attached to you. It is a wonder that that tough old face of Harry's doesnt frighten her. I bet he bit that time. Give my best regards to the old Harry and love to all at the dairy also Mr Berchel. How is Mr Hargreaves just up from your place, remember me to her. Well once again I suffer brain fag but I close knowing that this letter brings nearer to us our day of reunion until then we will smile and Carry On. Au Revoir

Ever your Friend
Meggie + + + +

Give my regards to any you meet that I know.

How is Peter and Paddy bulking nowadays.

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AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2020.22.303

POST-CARD
EGYPT

With all good wishes
for a Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year.

ANGLO-AMERICAN NILE & TOURIST Co.
(Egypt)
CAIRO

This is the house boat at which I was staying when I was convalescing.

From Meggsie

Australian Officers
Convalescent Hostel

PR04741

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2020.22.303

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION



Mrs. H. Anderson
22 Clysdale St
Box Hill E11
Victoria
Australia

PASSED BY CENSOR
No. 3289

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AWM2020.22.303



PR84241

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VX5554 Lieut McDonald. A.S
A. CoY 2/7 BN AIF 6 DIV
Abroad 10 Oct 41

Dear Mr Anderson,

This letter leaves me enjoying life at the House boat in Cairo situated in a picturesque setting on the Nile river. Now that I am here I have to wait for my mail, but I should be back next week so I will receive my mail then. I have not had a letter from you for weeks now and believe me I am in the blue. I have paired up with a chap from South Australia. He is a decent type, a non smoker or drinker so we are similair. We have been here a week or more now, so I will try to give you a commenty on the doings of us and places we have seen. It was a great feeling to see a tram again, see some shops and what we call as civilization. A familiar sight is the Gharries and taxis all crowded with troops. The trams over here are in a state of ruin and the cars well they never receive maintainence. Our first sight seeing expedition was a trip down the river to see the Delta Barrage, a distance of 17 miles. Owing to one engine failing we had to be towed down. We passed several flax mills along the journey. A smell came to our nostils just like bone manure, in fact it brought back memories of Footscray. This Delta Barrage is for the purpose of irrigating the famous Nile valley. It was originated 50 years ago but the first dam made is not used now, the one used being made 6 years ago by King Farouk of Egypt. This huge wall stretches across the canal, appx 600 yds. In this wall are 165 sluices, so that when opened it allows 7 million gallons of water in 1 second to pass through, thus flooding the valley and small canals. That is why they can obtain 5 crops a year here. Upstream where there is the smaller plantations they irrigate by

another method only it is very slow. They have a cylindrical shaped gadget which has a portion cut away from the side, that is to allow water in. It is placed in the river and a man turns a handle, which turns the spiral blades inside, which brings the water up, then it runs into various drains onto the required blocks. Another way they have is drawing from a well. They have oxen, or donkey, walking around and around, attached to the animal is a beam. The donkey or ox pulling turns a wheel, which turns a chain of buckets around. As the water buckets turn over at the top the water runs out into a square, through a drain and so on. The Nile river is 3333 miles long commencing from the Nile river (White). At this barrage it branches, one running into the Mediterranean at Alexandria, the other into the Suez Canal at Port Said. Coming upstream proved too much for the other vessel, results were engine trouble developed. This happened continuously, everytime it stopped we ran backwards,. finally we ran aground on a mud bank, nice affairs 2 boats stuck on the mud, not one any good. Another good samaratian came to our rescue, but the rope which was thrown out fell short, and got tangled in the propellor, while a wog was trying to undo the tangle it ran aground also. Three on a mud bank. We finally got away with the aid of 2 yachts leaving three boats trying to free themselves. We were dropped about two miles from home, but with the aid of tascis we arrived home. We went to the Pyramids and with a guide to show us around we learnt a lot of history. There are 3 main Pyramids of nine in this particular place called King Kafin, Menkara, and Chorofes which is the largest of all in Egypt, comprised of 2,055,000 rocks each one averaging 2½ ton, standing 451 high, covering an area of 13 the size of the M.C.G. It has 252 steps and was built 2725 BC. It took 100,000 men to built it. Each rock was brought in barges

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down river from the Aswan dam 600 miles away. This rock is called Alabaster rock, the lime rocks used were brought from the quarries near the Citadel here in Cairo. Inside are steps which ascend to about 200 feet high. It is beyond all my mental powers and imagination to see how they built these colloxial things, but what a colloxial undertaking. To finish the day we climbed to the top (saves spelling) results were, we were stiffs 2 days afterwards. I did this to place my initials alongside Mr Bush who placed his there on 7/1/19. After an hour searching every rock we found it and now mine is with his. I also placed DEES up there too. The zoological gardens are worth visiting too. The paths are made of all small pebbles, and they are worked with different colours into various patterns. This must have been a tedious job. The most magnificent of things I have seen over here is the Mohameds mosque. We visited 3, The Sultan Hassan Coronation and the Mohemedan Ali or otherwise Citadel. The Sultan Hassan is comprised of solid rock which came from the Aswan dam. It is over 6000 years old. 165 years ago Napoleon fired 14 cannon balls at this immense building but it only made a dint in the walls. There is still to be seen one of the balls that is still stuck in the wall. It is 16 feet thick and is an immense building. Before entering you have to wear a skin boot so as to prevent any person carrying dirt inside. There are 1½ million Mohameds in Cairo alone, and this month is a very busy time of worshipping. It is their Ramadan, they fast from 3 AM to 6 PM; no drink, food or smoke. At 3 and 6 PM a cannon is fired to let them know when to start and finish. This lasts a months it finishes next week. They pray at 3 AM, 9 AM, 12 midday 5 PM and 7 PM, each time for a ¼ hour. you see them in the main streets even, on their knees with a cloth in front bowing to Ala, a nice sight I must say, still it is their custom. We then

entered the Coronation mosque, having placed on cloth boots first. The first thing to impress us was the beautiful green array of persian mats that looked like one vast lawn with flowers here and there. Inside are marvellous carving and paintings. We then went through to where the tombs of some late kings are. Marvellous work all of marble. The pulpit here is a marvellous piece of work, being of Ivory, Ebony and Sandlewood. We then visited the Citadel which was built by a Mohamed Ali. Here again you place on boots and once again the great array of colour from the Persian mats attracts the eyes. Then as we got inside we all stood mouth agape in amazement at the glittering array of pure crystal lamps that were hanging from the ceiling. These were brought from China 600 years ago. I am sorry I cannot describe these so called sights to you, for trying to do so is not doing it justice. Seeing is the only way of believing. I have sent a photo to Da which will give you an idea of the marvellous architecture and workmanship that was required to build such magnificent building. I have seen wonderful churches back home but they do not compare to these. that is honestly speaking. King Farouk present king of Egypt has his tomb already built for when he dies. All that has to be done is to remove a slab and walk into his grave to be. He is lucky to know where he will be buried we dont. Six years ago the dome caved in, so King Farouk had it repaired and a new Pulpit built which cost £63000. The pulpit is of Ivory, Ebony and Sandle wood and has gold leaves painted on the sides. The entrance has a complete 18 carrot gold door. I never mentioned that in the Sultan Hassan Mosque there is the richest door in the whole of Cairo comprising of Gold, Bronze and Silver. A very big door it is guarded by locks, bars and chains now. We went to the Sahara desert and the Emphares. There are 9 Pyramids here too but once you see one you see the lot. We saw the tomb of the Sacred Bull

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which is another great piece of work. There is a huge tunnel excavated under solid rock. This extends for 400 yards. Along this tunnel are various tombs which certain people have been buried. This morning we visited the pyramids again only without a guide. We hired a camel each for an hour and boy is it a rough ride at first, but you get used to the rock after ½ hour or so. We have seen some various good picture shows which I will name "Sea Wolf, Hudsons Bay", Forty Thousand Horsemen, The great American broadcast, Hired Wife Sleepers West and tonight we are going to see the "Black Cat. I never mentioned the Hygiene Museum. It was a real education to see this and I reckon that every one should see it. I never ever thought that disease could be as such. Well Mrs Anderson I think that just about finishes my short description of my doings. I am a poor one at describing things mainly education being poor, but I hope you understand what it means. Dee will be 21 in November and I have ~~bought~~ bought a few parcels for her I mean they are parcels now. How is the old Hary keeping nowadays. Give my love to all at the dairy and young Allan Robb. I am glad that I have had this for it means that I will 100 % for our next stouch which is my ambition. It wont be long now and watch the papers for results. "Hitler has it coming to him hot and strong. I am very thankful to you for the excellent way you are keeping Dee happy. Dee has certainly taken a great liking to you which could not be any other way. until I hear from you I will close so till then Au Re Voir

Your Friend Forever

Meggsie

[illegible]

[illegible]

PR04741

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2020.22.303

~~A McDonald~~



AUST B
No 2

Mrs. Anderson
22 Clysdale St
Box Hill
E11
Victoria
Australia

BY AIRMAIL

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AWM2020.22.303



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2020.22.303

VX 5554 Lieut McDonald. A.
A. Coy. 2/7 BN A.I.F.
Abroad 21 Oct 41

Dear Mrs Anderson,

Once again I have received your ever welcomed letter, but owing to circumstances of late I was unable to reply immediately, but you know how much I appreciate your lovely letters. When I recived it I was in our last place of camp in Palestine after having came back from my convalescing leave in Cairo, now this letter leaves me in Syria, which means that another country will add itself to my long list of memories. I will go back to Palestine. I had a marvellous time in Cairo, in fact I was sorry to leave, yet again I was happy to be back with the boys. I posted a little memento to you before leaving Cairo which I hope has arrived safely to you. It is just a little token of appreciation and love for all your generousity and hospitality that you have given to Dee and I. The trip back from Cairo was as usual monotonous. We left at 3 P.M and arrived at Gazi at 4 A.M. From there I went to Base Depot to report in. As I was anxious to rejoin the old unit before they moved. I rushed into the orderly room there, and used the phone without receiving authority to do so. Thus I recieved a lecture from the Adjutant who was listening to me from the next room. I didn't worry a bit. I then went to the I.T.B. (Infanty Trainging Battalion) where you go and wait

until you are drafted up to your respective units. I was determined to be with the unit, so I go up to them in the afternoon and by and push it hard. A truck came down for me that evening, but I was not allowed to go until the movement order came through which consequently arrived the next day and I was happy for I was once again back with the boys. In our move everything went off without a hitch. We travelled all night by train, arriving at Haifa at 6 AM, where we recived a much welcomed cup of tea. From here we travelled by bus to our destination It was a good trip over very rugged mountainous country. One impressive view was of that looking down upon the Sea of Galilee Syria is a rugged country alright. I hope to be able to see Damascus and Bierut sometime, if I do I will let you know all about it. Remember me to all at the dairy and young Alan Stuart. How is the old Harry going nowadays. By Dee's accounts he certainly cheers her up with his funny remarks. There is not much to say only that I am very well. Dee will be 21 on Nov 22. My wish is to be home for her 22nd. She is certainly a girl in a million and I am a lucky chap. For the present I will say Cheerio so until I hear from you again my best friend all the best to you and Harry

your True Friend

Reggie

x x x x x x



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AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2020.22.303

VX5554
Lieut N^c Donald A.T.
A Co^y 2/7 BN 6 DIV A.I.F.
Abroad 26 Oct 41

Dear N^rs Anderson,

you dont know how delighted I am to be able to say that once again your ever loving letter have arrived. I was not going crook or anything like that N^rs Anderson, it was that I was worried whether anything was wrong, then again I thought it must have been what I put in my letter to you regarding any signs yet. I thought to myself that it was an impudent thing to say to one many years senior than myself and I was really worried for I would hate to do anything that would hurt you and the old Harry. To continue on there is not much to talk about except that I am well and that I have seen Damascus. I am on security duty now and in doing my rounds I am able to see Damascus frequently. I will try and give you a description of Damascus to the best of my ability. It is regarded as one of the oldest cities in the world. It is certainly an old place but the few modern shops that are here seem to modernize it slightly. There is a tram service here but they are crude looking trams compared to ours at home. Ghanies (cabs) are used here just the same as Cairo. Damascus is situated on the slopes of a mountain with the best part of the town in the hollow. Through the town runs a canal but it is just like a wide drain, being only two foot deep if that. Going away from the top town you gradually go uphill again so that you look back upon Damascus. There are no black out regulations here which makes it feels like peace time again

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just to be able to leave a light showing. It is a wonderful spectacle of a night time to look down upon Damascus from the over looking heights, and see these thousands of lights peering out of the darkness. There is one important building which is well lit up with hundreds of light globes spread over the face of the building. To see it brings back memories of the Centenary celebrations in Melbourne as some buildings were illuminated and decorated similiarly. There is a big population in Damascus with the majority being Moslems. The moslem women folk all wear black veils over their faces. It is surprising the number of beautiful looking girls that there are. Whether it is the veil that makes them look pretty I dont know. It may be, because you take a dressed girl her form looks good but the naked body doesnt, so I take it to be that way too. Of all I have seen none compare up to Dee or any of the Australian girls. I have seen every allie soldier now including the foreign legion who have a great number here. They have a Khaki uniform diffrent from ours and they all wear a white cap with a black peak. The civilians here or any other cities over this side wear a hat what is called a "Fess". It is like a red flower pot with a black tossle on it. They look rather wierd at first but I am used to the sight of them now. The language spoken here is French or Arabic mainly French. I know enough Arabic to let them know what I want. It is just what I have pick up ya Ha bedya. I will say that that to Dee seeing you dont know I will let you find out from Dee. I went to the

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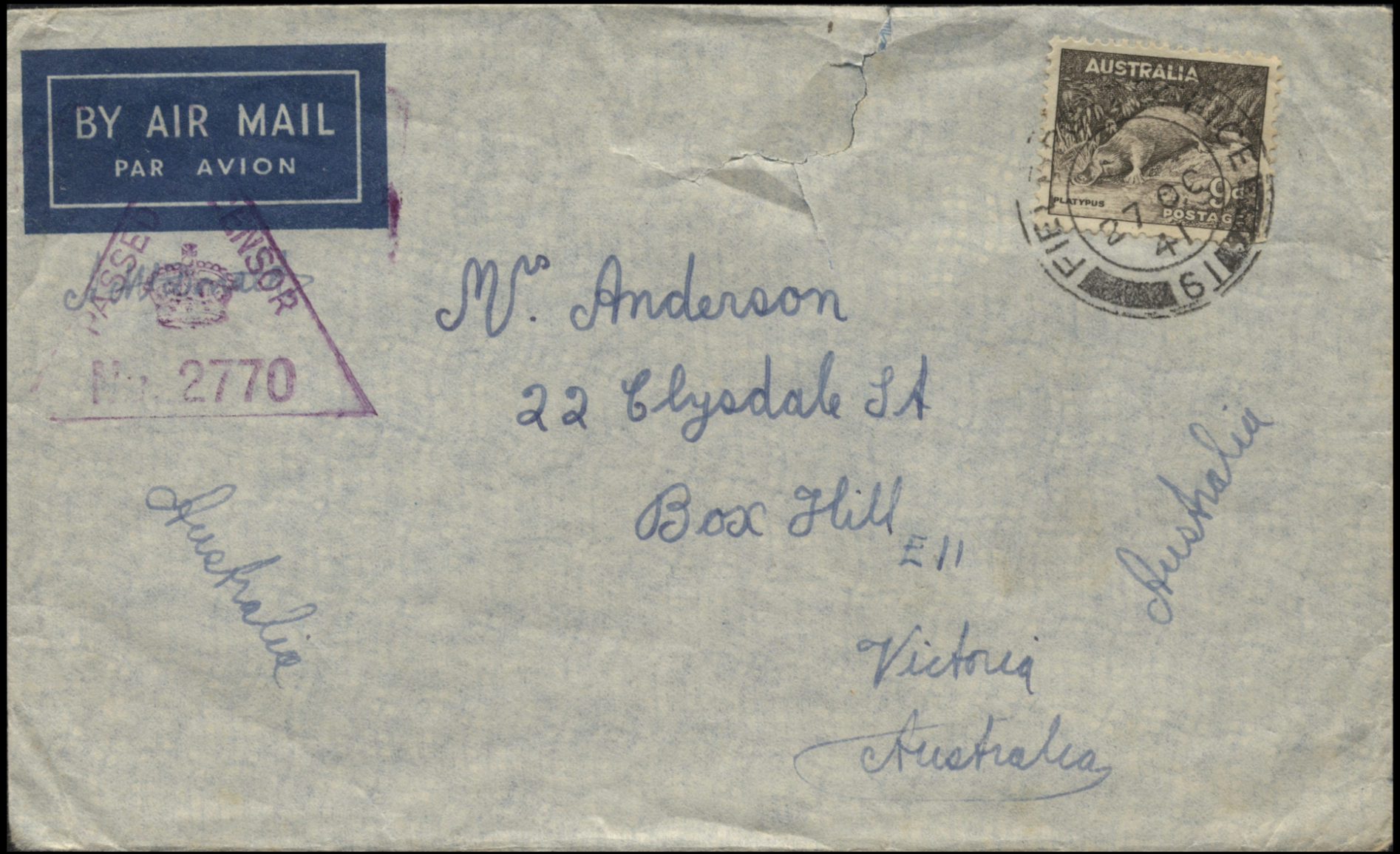
pictures the other night and saw a newsreel of Churchills secret meeting, a Comedy, and the main picture "Pack up your Troubles" starring Jane Withers who has certainly grown up. It was a good show but it was a war picture as if I havent seen enough of war. They only show one picture over here during a session. See Mc Ando you dont know how proud I feel to know that there will be a little Ando to greet me home & feel almost as proud as though I was its father. Still when I get back I will be a father and Dee and I are both hoping for twins, We are not greedy much are we. I will be anxiously awaiting the progress also of your condition for I know how serious it is. It would be funny if it was born the same day as my birthday 25th April that is 6 months off. That Jack Read episode I remember only too well that was the night that I beat Jack Murie. Remember that 6 foot nothing rake that I played "Home sweet home" on his ribs and I finished up breaking his nose. Harry could not get in. I received the trophy for I won the ~~Juniors~~ Beginners Tournament that night I remember it well also the night that Billy Greville cleaned me up. Those days have gone for ever. I bet if it is a boy the old Harry will stand on his head. As soon as he is able to walk Harry will have gloves on him that is if I know him. Just as lucky he has had that one tooth removed for it would frighten the kid. I know it use to frighten me. you dont know how I idolize the old Harry. I will never box again unless Harry trains me but I am afraid that those days have gone forever for I weigh 11 stone now. Wouldn't Harry like to take it out with me now. Dee often mentions Paddy she has taken a liking to him alright. That Fred Hughes is not on the House boat now. He may be on the Sudan House boat but that is

leave boat. I was on the Victoria House Boat only for convalescing Officers. I have bought you a little xmas present which you will recieve in due course. I tried everywhere to get a bracelet with Dear Friend upon it but as I could not I got you something else which you will see. The Bazaar in Damascus here is very interesting. You can buy everything there. It runs for miles and is sort of in blocks with each block selling the same sort of articles. Give my regards to Jack Read. I havent heard from Arthur McPhee for a long time and I wrote to him last. I hope that this little gift I bought is right for you. It is not much but it really a token of appreciation for all your attention that you have given to Dee and your generosity towards me. Once again I thank you for that lovely letter, so until I hear from you again I will say Au Re Voir. As Always

Give my love to the dairy and regards to Harry.

Your Friend Sincerely
Meggsie + + + + +

A McDonald



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AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

VX5554 Lieut McDonald. A. J.
"A" Co. 2/7 BN. AIF.
Abroad 27 Nov 41

My Dear Mr Anderson,

I was exctemely pleased to hear from you again and to know that all is progressing favorably. As you know we are in Syria and is it cold. All woollen garments are greatly appreciated these cold mornings, seeing that it has come to ice being on the water. Luckily I have a good batman who has hot shaving water for me every morning Soon we should see plenty of snow but not in the position we are at present. The other day I went to Beyrouth as officer in charge of leave personnell. The trip up was very interesting from where we are we commenced by climbing over the hills on which we are situated. We journeyed down the other side then up another mountain which was rather steep. This mountain was very barren so we could not obtain any pretty views. Coming over this mountain we came upon a large fertile valley which is called Homs valley. Here and there villages can be seen these being occupied by French and the Syrian Arabs. You can tell the difference between villages because it is just like comparing water to mud with the favor to the French.

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coming over the Lebonan ranges was interesting for you see some marvellous picturesque panoramic views. The road winds and turns and everywhere you look you are looking down upon green valleys with small villages nestling down in at the foot of the ranges; also running parallel to that of the road is a railway line. Here and there along vital points are small tunnels which are to prevent snow drifts. On arrival in Beyrouth I disposed of my men and made tracks around to the Officers club where I had a hair cut, shave and a hot bath which is a luxury to us now. This club is situated overlooking the coast, a rather nice spot. Beyrouth itself is something similar to that of Cairo and I was greatly impressed by it. About 3 oclock I went to the races which made it an enjoyable day. I came out winning a few quid but not much. Up there you back the horses trainer which means that even if the trainer has three horses in the one race, you have three chances. I had my first win that way, I backed one horse but its stable mate won and I got a shock when I was told that I collected just the same. Lady Blamey was a prominent figure up there, strutting around. She looks as though she misses Tom who is back in Australia at the present moment. That bludge there is what our sgt major did, he made a poor attempt to get me and missed. Sport is one of the main items of interest up here now, games played as such football, cricket, volley ball, basket ball, and boxing gloves have also been procured but they do not interest me, not at the present moment anyway. I have had a few games of football but still lack the form I use to have. We played the 2/6 Bn our first match but were beaten. It was an extra good match, full of interest, and enthusiasm. The officers backed us to win with 100 pounds but we lost so we were a bit out of pocket. Sounds rather flash us officers, still I am one of the boys. I have a grand platoon, a crowd of chaps who will do anything I ask of them, and boys I would do anything that would help them any. I have had a game at basket ball and I was surprised at the excellent game it was. By all accounts Dee had a grand birthday and I am happy to know she did. I hope that Dee receives her presents from me safely. I am pleased to know that you received the pendent I sent also that you liked it. I was passing a window in Cairo when it took my eye, and I thought of you and knew you would like it. Well Harry is going

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to start boxing again, no doubt about him. How is he keeping I bet that he will be pushing his chest out very soon. I would love to see him again, even though he is not an oil painting. What do you think I have lost that presentation watch that Mr May gave me and I am real sore about it. I gave it to a chap to take into Damascus to get it fixed and now pick pockets have it. To think I have carried it right through and I lose it this way. It is the sentimental reasons that makes me so sore about it. Give my love to all at the dairy and I trust that they are all well. Young Alan Stuart walking well that is good news. I haven't recieved a letter from Bert yet, so he might not have recieved mine to him. One consolation for him his fighting is finished, still I would prefer a fighting chance than being a POW. Well my sincere friend I am afraid I am about to close, I do so wishing you and Harry the best of the Seasons Greetings and trust that you receive my little present safely. Hoping we meet soon until then cta Re Voir

Your Friend Sincerely

Megpie

+ + +

Pete Donald

PR04741

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2020.22.303

AIR MAIL





Mrs. H. Anderson,

22 Clysdale St

Box Hill

E11

Victoria

Australia

~~A.W. Donald~~



Australia

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AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2020.22.303

VX5554
Lieut McDonald. A.J.
"A" Coy. 2/7 BN AIF
Abroad 17 Dec 41

My Dear Friend Mr Anderson,

your interesting and ever welcomed letter arrived only yesterday so I am replying immediately hoping that it will reach you for the New year for with this is my sincerest wishes that the New year for you is abundant with health, wealth, happiness and above all our meeting. I read with great interest the progress that you are making, and I pray to God that no trouble befalls you and the new addition to be. It certainly has me in, and the day it comes into the world could you as a special favor sent me a cable notifying me as to such. As soon as I can obtain leave into Damascus or Beirut I will get the Nipper something. If I cannot get clothes I will buy silk material and you can make it into something useful. Silk in Damascus is genuine and really beautiful to see so you can look out for something in the future. As usual news is scarce but the weather still stays the same, that is cold as —. Snow can be seen on the mountain tops anywhere you look, as far we have not had any fall where we are situated but we get plenty of frosts with the results that ice is on the water every morning. Every morning and evening without fail Sandy (my batman) has a cup of cocoa for me, so you see I am well looked after. By the way Sandy is a married man, a father of 5 children, 3 girls, 2 boys so he certainly sacrificed a lot to come over here. Now for bad news. Our Brigadier that is Savige is also going back to sunny Australia, so before he went he said goodbye to us all and then he took the salute as we marched by. He gave a marvellous speech, referring back to the early days and of the job the 2/7 have done. Every man who heard that speech should feel proud to be with such a unit as Savige spoke of as such. He wrapped us up to the fullest and said that he was lost in admiration for the 2/7 Bn He ended his speech very abruptly because it could be plainly seen that he was cracking up fast. He is a great man, popular with the boys, anywhere he

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goes. His final words were " I am being sent back to Australia boys, God only knows what for. We old chaps are deeply sorry to lose him. A chap who has just came back from Brieut after 3 days leave told me that the police rounded up 30 girls who were infected by disease. It is all fifth column work, yet chaps fall every day It is surprising how easy they fall. I went to the Hygeine Museum in Cairo as I had told you in previous letter and that certainly was a lesson to stay pure. Soon I will have a shock for you but as to what it is I wont say until I am sure I get it. We have been playing sport every week end and we all look fowward to the week ends coming. There has been a brigade sporting fixture arranged, which we hoping to carry out. I recieved a letter from A.W.Phee whom by all accounts has also had a few exciting moments. As to your parcel it has not arrived yet, but should be soon as every body are recieving theirs now. Mail will be slightly delayed now still war is war and we cannot growl. It seems as though it is time that Australia did wake up that a war is on, especially by the look and sounds of Japan who are gaining ground. We are all anxious to get back but whether we do remains to be seen. If I get what I want you will never know where I will finish up. How is the old harry keeping nowadays, tell him I hope the Nipper doesnt look like him. Are you going to give it one of my names or have you names picked. Give my love to all at the Dairy also Alan Stuart. Well my best friend I know that this misses you for Xmas but I am not too late in wishing you a happy and Bright New year. May our day of meeting be not far distant, until then we will keep our chins up and carry on until victory is ours so until then I will always be forever

your True Friend

Reggie

A.W.Donald

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION



A.I.F. 19 DEC 41 9d
No. 24

Mrs. Anderson
22 Clysdale St
Box Hill
E11
Victoria
Australia

PASSED BY CENSOR
No. 1792

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
AWM2020.22.303



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL







AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2020.22.303

To Harry & Marj

Ever think of writing

I still smoke when I can
get some

Lud

Hearty Greetings and

the Best of Good Wishes for Christmas

and the New Year.

From Lud

Anderson

England

3rd Forestry Coy.,
R.A.E., A.I.F.
ABROAD.

J. G. Gaston

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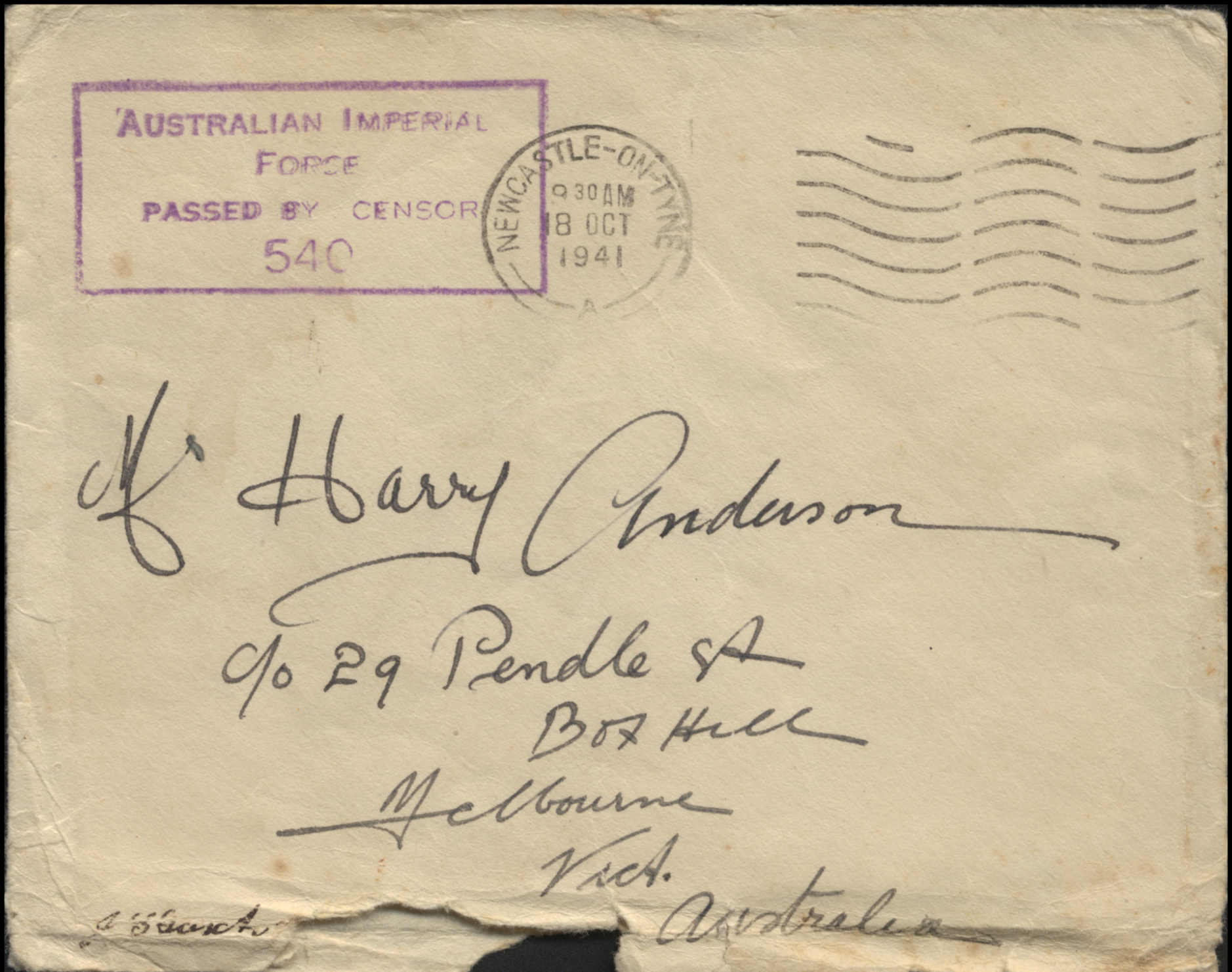
AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE
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Mr Harry Anderson
c/o 29 Pendle St
Box Hill
Melbourne
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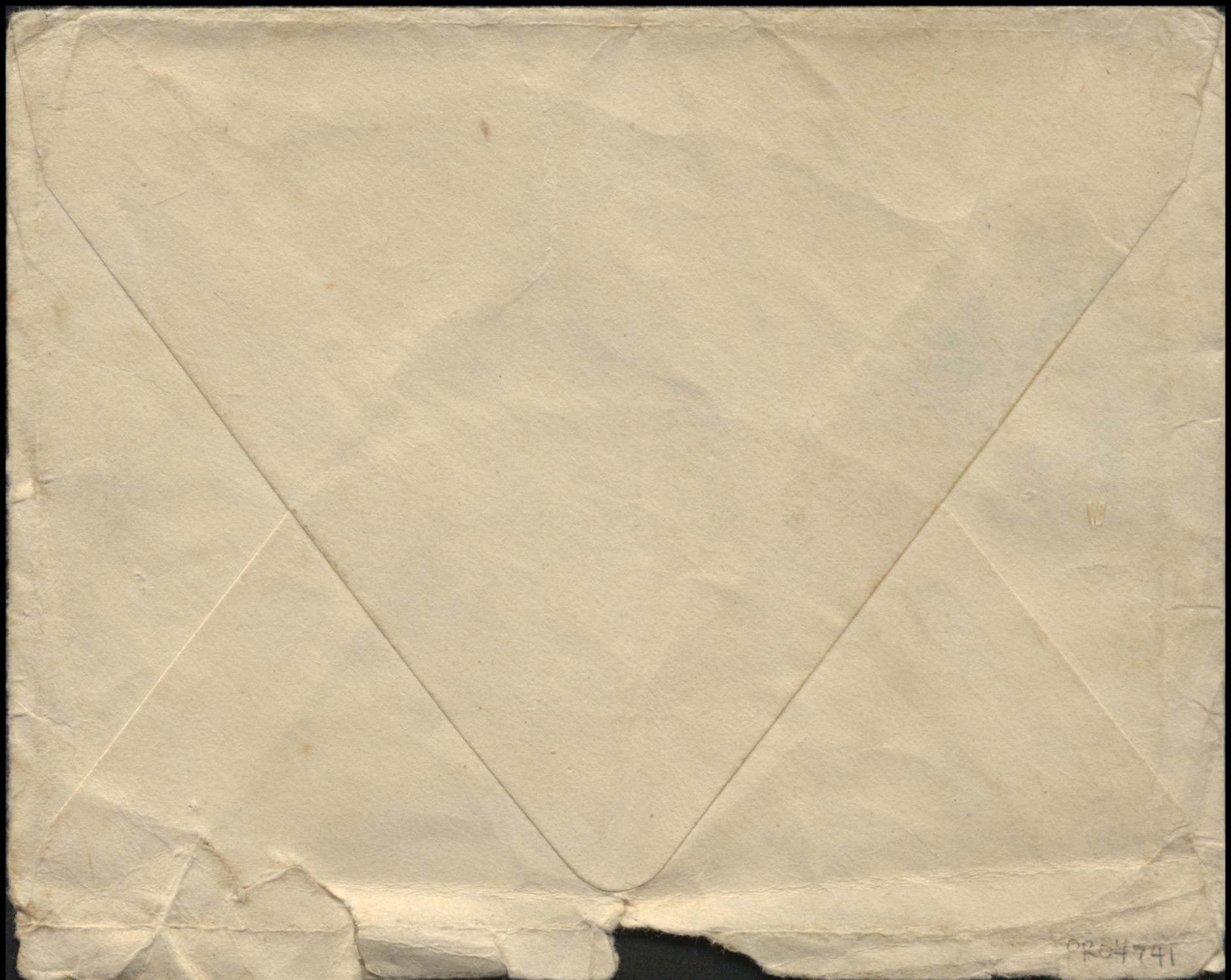
Australia



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VX 5554
Lieut N^c Donald. A.J.
"A" Coy 2/7 Bn 6 Div AIF
Abroad 30 Dec 41

My Dear N^c Anderson,

Once again my thoughts try and write to you without expressing my meaning, that being an impossible task to do. At the very moment I am in a lovely bed, in a nice hotel, in Beirut, writing this to you, but instead of starting from the finish and working back I will start from the beginning, back at camp. Xmas day was a day of celebration and a day it was. In the morning we had a special church parade service, after that our C.O. Colonel Guinn expressed his Seasons greetings to us, then he read out a telegramm he received from Aussie, it read "To the boys of the 2/7 Bn From the Old Mob." Well my heart thrilled with pride to think that they still thought of us. After that he told us that our dinner was provided to us from the 2/7 Womens Auxillary League of which Dee is a member. We gave three rousing cheers for the women and I just could not help myself in shedding a few tears, for immediately I thought of Dee. Maybe I am a simple fellow, but I just cannot help my feelings which are very deep in my heart where Dee and you are concerned. The dinner was a great turn, the officers including me went mess orderlies to the men, I was serving the roast spuds and peas. The dinner consisted of Turkey the above said, Xmas pudding and custard, Xmas cake, walnuts and a bottle of beer each man. Xmas eve I did a wrong thing but for the love of mike dont tell Dee, I bought a crate of beer for my lads, I finally finished up on the head, so next day I declared myself off it. Xmas a day of celebrating is the correct words, but I could not forget the faces

that were with me last xmas, and that are missing now, Good men they were and true white men at that. In the evening the officers had a 7 course dinner, a beautiful meal it was. Next day was boxing day but work carried on, even though some chaps had heavy heads. A year back from the day saw us having our first rum issue before moving up to Bardia, this being at a place called Sidi Nessa. Dec 28 came with it memories that of a year back I recieved the biggest fright in my life, my first initiation of shell fire, will I ever forget it, but I wont relate that again. That day news came that I was to proceed to Beirut as officer in charge of the leave personnell who were going next day. We left Damascus station at 10 AM and did not arrive in Beirut until 8 PM a 10 hours journey but an interesting one though. Owing to heavy snow storms the road was impassable, that being the reason of us travelling by train. After crossing the first ranges we came upon the snow, and really it was surprising at the beauty that the snow offers you. As we crossed the Lebanon Ranges I saw some magnificint panoramic also picturesque views. Here the snow was thickest for it is the height point in Syria, being 22,000 feet in height. It was great to look out, and down to see this white blanket of snow covering the earth, then the lower you look it thins out until you see earth, in the valley below you see a field of greenery, very pretty indeed. The train stopped for refuelling purposes, so I hopped out, and somehow I could not resist myself from having a shot at a wog nearly, results was that all the other wogs wanted to play too and did I cop it before I could back to the train for cover. We passed through several tunnels, one being about a mile in length, these tunnels are in vital spots along the line so as to prevent any snow drifts. We arrived OK then I had to get my men accommondated and the fun began. It cost me 13 pounds not Australian only Syrian

in taxi fares before finally getting them settled down, but today I have gone and made arrangements for the next lot, so that they wont have the trouble that I had. I myself am staying at the Officers club here and it is really a nice place The tucker is excellent, we being waited on by Lebonese waiters who are well dressed wearing a White jacket and black trousers. the sleeping quarters are nice I am lying in bed now. The beds have an oak polished frame, a mattress 10" deep or rather thick, 2 sheets, 2 blankets and a beautiful orange coloured eider-down. it great bed and I have caught up on a lot of lost sleep. I am going out to the pictures tonight so will have a doze after writing this. I am on the second flor, every conveniences possible here, and to save walking up and down the steps, there is a lift which you can operate yourself just by pressing a button. The club is situated in a beautiful spot overlooking the blue Mediterranean, to the right and in the distance you can see the Lebanon Ranges with their tops all covered with a white blanket of snow. The town of Beirut is similiar to that of Cairo. I drew 91 pounds and already it has just about gone and I cannot draw more as my pay book is full up and I handed it in to get another which takes about a fortnight. I go back on the 1st so I will make it do. I have bought a nice little present for the Wiffen which I will be sending by air mail. you cannot trust boat mail now. How are you progressing, I am keenly interested as to the Wifo progress also your health. I bet the old Harry is poking his chest out with pride now, but tell him from me that he is not the only bloke that can do those sort of things, just wait until I get back I will show him how I can fare too, I mean with Dee. It is our wish that we have twins, lets hope I can get back to fulfill our wishes. I bought myself a wristlet watch for Xmas to the value of 40 syrian pounds

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equal 5½ Aussie money. It is a good watch a Chronometer. How is all at the dairy keeping also your mother. Give them all my love and the seasons greeting. What about Peter how is he not forgetting the old Paddy. Any you see that I know remember me to them. How is the old Harry keeping, has he started that Boxing yet or is he going to forget it. You know Mrs Anderson that this is my 3rd Xmas in the AIF, two being over here from you all, my first Xmas I was a Cpl, my second a sergeant, the third a Lieut, who knows what I will be for the fourth, I hope it is a father, but things would have to move quickly wouldn't they. I have not recieved your parcel yet, it maybe there when I get back to camp, I hope so, just to spite Jerry. Sandy my batman was in hospital for a while with flue but is out again now, he is still not the best. Wouldn't it been great news if the Japs hadn't came into it, Libyia is once again ours, and Russia certainly are playing Home sweet home with him. Well my term of writing has run to a finish. My thoughts are always with you but even though they are may I offer to you and Harry as my best friends a Bright and Happy New Year, may it be that during it we meet, if that is not so may it be an uneventful and above all a peaceful one for you both, so until we meet which I hope is soon, we will carry on until Victory is ours for then there will be happy hearts that can look back upon the cruel days of our separation. Keep your chin up and smile, and remember let me know when the Nipper is born. Au Re Voir

Forever Your True Friend

Meggie

[illegible]



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AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

AUSTRALIAN COMFORTS FUND [Victorian Division]

With which is affiliated the R.S.L. War Service Fund

VX 5554 Lieut McDonald A.T.
"A" Coy 2/7 Bn AIF 6 Div
Abroad 21 Jan 42

My Dear Mrs Anderson,

I am writing these few lines inquiring as to your health and progress. I have not heard from you for a long time. but as I dont expect too for a while I am keeping up our correspondence, which I dont want to cease. I last wrote to you when in Beirut where I spent three glorious days leave. Did you recieve the parcel I sent of Nippers clothes. Please excuse my poorness at buying presents, for it is my worst complaint, maybe when I am a daddy myself I will know what to buy, anyway it is not the best. still lets hope it serves a purpose. According to Dee you have recived the bracelet I sent you, that is good and I hope you like it. We have experienced a rather cold winter, it being that cold that we had four continious days of snow fall, everything was completely covered, the tents were all sagged down, and water began dripping through making it very uncomfortable for the occupants concerned inside. Just staying inside was frightfully cold, but to get out in the snow and move around made you as warm as toast. I had a very

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much schoolboy complexion. We had several snow fights and do you have fun. We spent most of the time tobogganing down the steep slopes on which our camp is situated. There being about 4 foot of snow to sport upon. We improvised our own ideas and found that a piece of galvanized iron with 5 men on board did the best job. Unfortunately there was a few casualities, they being in the minority to that of the spills which were frequent. We had a few consisting of broken legs, arms, one back, a fractured skull, besides numerous bunged knees. I have come to the conclusion that snow is far better to see than be in. It has all completely disappeared now, but the air has still a nip in it, which may suggest more snow. Today we passed a herd of goats near our lines led by the wog (Syrian) in front. You hear him speak in Arabic to the sheep and they all follow him, by his chatter I think he knows them all by name. Owing to the air mail regulations being slightly irregularly we are now compelled to write only two pages to lessen the weight, still that does not alter any affections I have in any way. When you can write do so even if it is to say Hullo for it means a lot to me to receive a letter from you. Thank Lenaby (Butch) is now in our unit with the carriers.

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He is not the same as I knew him as. He still talks of this and that all fight talk, but to himself he has deteriated. I could say a lot but I dont like speaking of others. Give my love to all at the Dairy also to the Branchflowers. I recieved a beautiful portrait of Dee in a leather wallet, it is a magnificent thing, the best present I have ever recieved. How is the old Harry going, give him my regards and tell him that I am well. Well my dear friend it is time I go to bed so I say cheerio sincerely hoping that you are having no ill effects. I hear from Dee your progress and believe me I am interested. so my love to you all I close Goodluck and Cheerio

Your Friend Forever

Meggsie + + + + + + +

A.M. Donald

PR04741

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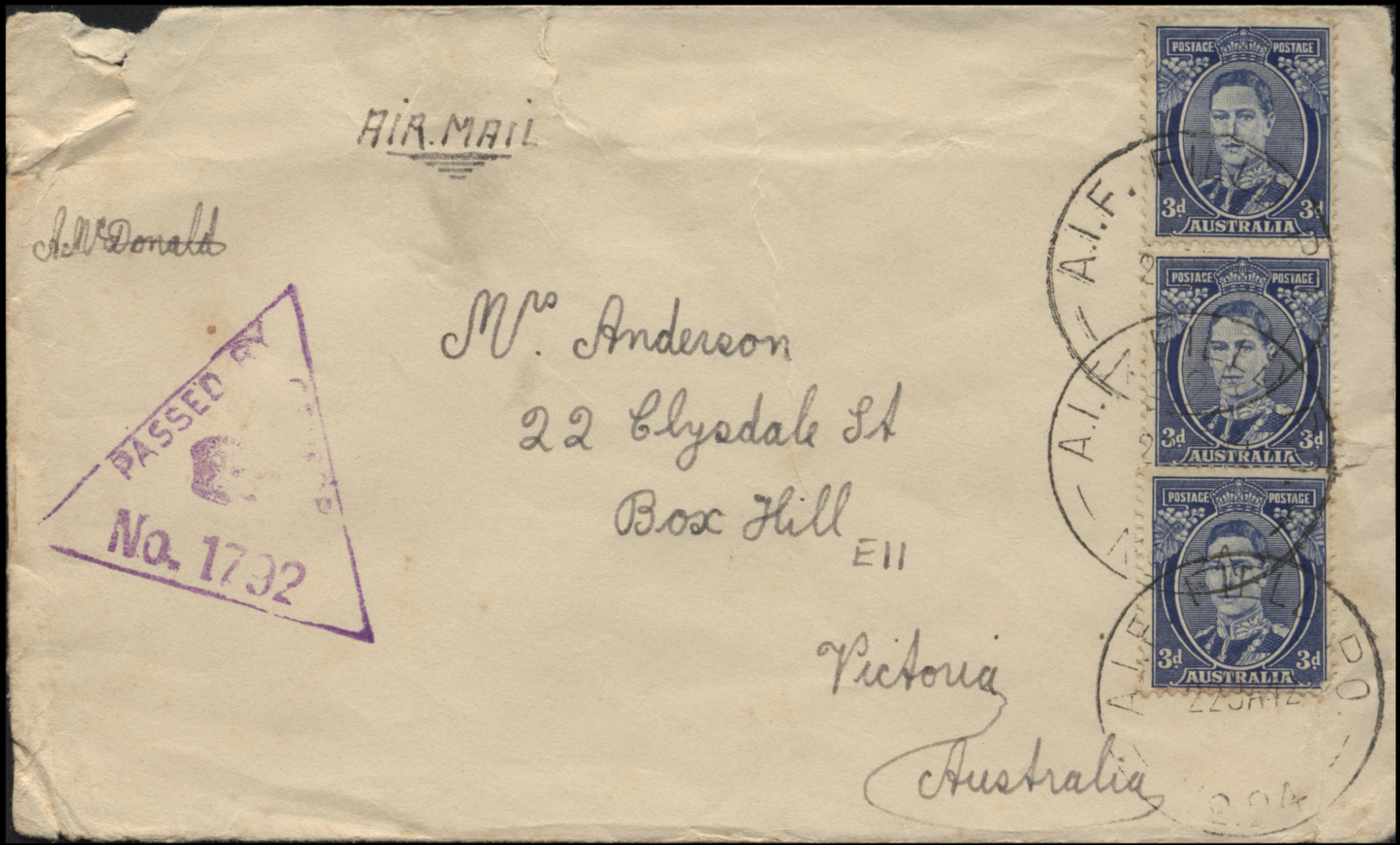

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AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AWM2020.22.303

V X53'54 Lieut McDonald. A.I.F.
A Coy 2/7 aust Inf Bn A I F
Australia 26-12-42

My Dear Mr Anderson, Dawn & Harry,

Xmas has gone and the New year is coming. I wonder what it will bring forth. I cannot say how much I really appreciate that wonderful portrait of you & Dawn which you so kindly sent to me. I recieved it last night, and was I excited, it was a wonderful Xmas present, nothing better could have exceeded it. The photography itself is a wonderful job. you can be well assurred that I will certainly cherish it no matter where I am, it has already been placed in with the latest snap I have of Dee & I, you have one. I carry them about in a water proof wallet, it is neccessary here otherwise it would soon be ruined with perspiration and that is something I dont want ruined. I also want to thank you sincerely for the greatly appreciated parcel which arrived yesterday too, you certainly timed it marvellously. I had a lucky day yesterday besides my recieving these generous things from you I recieved a tin of short head from Edna & mum, how am I, living like a king Mail arrived last night, but I havent heard from Dee in it, so I am certain there is more around, I also think that there will

be one from you for me, I wont wait for it to arrive, because this letter cannot reach you soon enough to thank you for what you have done. Since I last wrote I have been selected to be an instructor at a school which our brigade is holding here. I am not too keffy about it either for I didnt come here to instruct I came over to fight. Often in my spare moments which are usually when I go to bed, I begin to wonder if we will ever see action again, at times my hopes rise, other times they drop and that is how I am now. your lovely portrait has cheered me up immensely. It is three years next month since I went to 9 platoon, and it is my ambition to lead them in again, this time as a Lieut. What sort of Xmas day did you have. I had a good time but I know where I would have enjoyed it better. I went back to the unit for xmas eve and for dinner, it being just like school days, you know breaking up for the celebrations, only we dont have a month. The officers & sgts acted as mess orderlies, do you think the men enjoyed it, I served out the spuds two per man. We were unfortunate in not having turkey, but we had a wonderful meal, roast beef, roast spuds, cabbage & gravy, Xmas pudding and sauce. a grand meal. There were £29 to be given as prizes for the best Xmas ~~pudding~~ pudding, our company were third, the cook receiving £5. Our Colonel came around and gave us a talk etc, the feeling right throughout our unit at present is wonderful

verybody are contented despite the circumstances. It is pretty hot though only being home for such a short time, then rushed away. There are plenty of others who can do what we are, still we are the AIF and we are mighty proud of it. Xmas eve we had a concert supplied by our own local talent. £100 was given in cash prizes, the judges were the audience who voted for the amount paid. It was surprising the talent we have. New year eve we are going to have another one £200 in prizes, the money is from the 1 On ladies aux league of which Dee is a member. Sunday morning as you were Xmas day morning I got up instead of sleeping in and went up to our unit church parade, arriving there with only three minutes to spare. It was an excellent service, by far the best I have ever attended. The Padre officiating was Padre Devoneax from the RAAF, a total stranger to us, but I hope he doesnt remain so. He made the service, he spoke exceptionally well, clear and understandable. We sang two carols, 2 hyms, the psalm read out by our Colonel, the subject the Padre chose was of our "Woman". He did not look at nights, he spoke it out as though it was a poem he knew. He spoke of how Nazism treat their women, how they think that women are only for the masculine sex, to have children, spoke of Nippism (Japanese), how they think that their women are only for the masculine sex to relieve its sexual passion, then

spoke of our Women whom is the centre of our happiness, around which we build marriage, homes and families. I do not know the exact wording he used, but I have (I hope) given you the meaning of his dead. He then said that no matter who it is there is a woman in their life he said it maybe one wearing only three corners clasped with a safety pin, sweetheart, wife, mother etc, but there is a women somewhere. I gazed around and actually saw troops wiping their eyes, I had tears in my own. He held the gaze and sincere attention of everyone present, and to do this speaks highly of him. He finished up by saying that xmas day is a day of sacrilege, but he didnt want us to think of God, but what he wanted was for us to think of our women back home and I was too. It was a marvellous service, it was the topic of all the troops afterwards. This morning the school carried on, but this afternoon we have off, as there Brigade swimming sports on. Has my parcel to you for Harry arrived yet. I read today that I am unable to send tobacco or cigs home, any person caught would be punished, the contents confiscated and donated to the Red Cross, so tell Harry I am sorry I cannot send any to him as much as I would like to. I hope by now you have received the parcel, Harry will be pleased with it I know. Kiss Dawn and Lyn a big kiss for me, Love to all, regards to old Harry. I sincerely hope that this finds you all as well as it leaves me which is 100 % fit

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I sincerely hope that for you, Harry & Dawn it is a Happy New year, for me I hope a Gaffy new year. I dont want to come home until I have seen the girl personnally. How did you go in the Home Nursing exam. Doris did well by all accounts she is a grand girl. Strange about Ruby Bale. I haven't heard from her and I wrote at Greta. One thing certain and that is I am definitely not writing until I hear from her. I am as good as they even if they think they are elite. Have you heard anything of Arthur St Pier or Noel Foster. How is work going with Harry. I intend writing to Edna after this. I have commenced another story called "The auto Biography of my army career." I intend going into everything fully. So far I have written 8 pages and only arrived in Palestine. I hope to hand it personally to Dee about my birthday, if anything occurs it is a keep sake, if not I will be able to add to it. I have your lovely portrait in front of me now, its a corker, sounds Harry is made of good stuff, Dawn is a little beauty. I would love to see her again and what's more I will. Thanking you sincerely again for what you have done. I say Cheerio and God bless you all.

Your True Friend
Meggie

Dawn

Wants Harry straight left.



Mrs H. Anderson
22 Clyedale Rd
Box Hill E11
Victoria
Australia

PASSED BY CENSOR
NO.
630



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VX5554 Lieut N^c Donald. A.J.
'A' Coy. 2/7 Bn A.I.F. 6 Div.
Australia.

Dear N^c Anderson,

now that I am back in Australia again, safe and sound. I feel that I should write a biography of my experiences during my 28 months in the glamorous East. Touching lightly on war itself I will endeavour to speak of our good times training, on leave and places which I have visited. I enlisted in the A.I.F on the 4th Nov 39, just a cheeky brat seeking excitement and adventure with the hopes of seeing new countries. I marched into the Flemington showgrounds to hear a greeting "you'll be sorry", well even to this day I dont think I am, although at times when a chap gets depressed he feels he would like to be out of the army. On the 6th Nov we moved to Puckapunyal where for two weeks we grubbed stumps to clear parade grounds etc for our use. We pioneered Puckapunyal camp which today is a camp equipped with all modern conveniences. As I am writing this my mind is reverted to those days, because we are now camped only a few miles away from this great camp we pioneered. Here we trained our hardest, doing our best to be a good soldier. Then came the exams, 15 corporals were required and I was determined to be a trier. There were 100 at the school, and at the end I by chance was one of the lucky 15. We would gather around a hurricane lamp at night studying our text books so as to pass our knowledge onto those under our charge. A month of this and I became sergeant, the same time announcing my engagement to now my wife. We trained on until we all were a high pitch of fitness, everyone anxious to leave and go abroad. 7th April at St Lukes Church of England South Melbourne I joined hands in Holy Maturnony which is the best judgement I have ever shown. Eight days later I found myself on the boat headed for overseas, a destination unknown, with no idea of what the future had in store for us. It was my first experience travelling on board a ship, never did I realize that there was so great an expanse of water as I saw it.

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We travelled on the Strathaird which was a luxury for us. Living was high, the food excellent and accommondation was perfect. As we pulled out from Port Melbourne I thought of my wife, you and others who were so dear to me. Everybody were keen and excited, but unfortunately many were sorry when we ran into rough weather, plenty were very sick, luckily I proved a sailor. 21st April we berthed at Fremantle. While the ship was re loading we spent 12 hours looking over Perth and having our last look for some considerable time. To some it was. We received a cordial welcome and farewell. We were all overwhelmed by the generousity and hospitality shown to us by the West Aus people. As the boat pulled out of Fremantle on 22nd our last link with our loved ones had been severed. For the following days to come everything was glorious, the sea was like a large piece of glass, the only thing that broke the stillness of the water was our convoy as the ships headed their nose nearer to their destination. On May 2nd we berthed at Columbo, here I learnt of other nationalities habits and their different ways of living. We were besieged by natives, all clad in various types of clothing. We had 48 hours leave here during which time I visited their worshipping temples, shopping centres etc. It was a grand feeling to belong to a white race. On the last day I made the biggest fool of myself I have ever made having become very intoxicated under the influence of alcohol, results I tried to hit a wog, which wasnt there, and I found I had put my fist through a window, cutting my wrist which required ~~two~~ 2 stitches. Crossing the Red Sea was like walking on a ball room floor, everything was quiet. As we neared the equator the weather became much warmer, the swimming pool on board being the most popular place aboard ship. 18th May we arrived at Kantara at midnight, we disembarked to receive a meal of sausages from a nearby cookhouse. At 1 AM we entrained into cattle trucks that were waiting nearby. We piled in feeling weary and tired, as the train moved along all we could see was sand, sand and more sand still.

At dawn we arrived at Saya where we made our first real acquaintance with the arab. We could get beautiful naval oranges very cheap, we were amazed, 6 oranges for a cigarette. From Saya on, the county changed into cultivated pasture, here instead of sand we saw large orange groves, vine yards and acres of crop. At 8.20 PM we detrained alongside a place which we learnt was Biet Jerja. White tents were erected waiting to greet us, and we were pleased to get under these as they provided the only cover from the glaring sun. Two days later we had discarded our heavy dress and were dressed in shirts and shorts. Training began and it was hard. For days we would march across the sandy waste of Palestine trying to better our training, limiting ourselves down to a water bottle (1 quart) of water a day. It was hard but it had to be done. Occasionally leave was granted which enabled us to visit the towns of Palestine which I briefly describe as I name them, Tele-aviv a sea side resort is a pretty town but over run by refugee Jews who robbed us with the large prices they charged. Us not knowing the value of money paid the money unhesitatingly. While we were complacent they robbed us in an expert way. Joffia on the outskirts of Tele-aviv is a filthy place. It is here that the prostitutes earn their living 75% of them passing on VD to some ignorant soldier who fool hardy went to her. Jerusalem a very old fashioned place is very popular owing to its historical importance. Every nationality is represented here and poverty is seen at its worst from the poor habitants who domicile here. I saw the old city but you really need a fortnight to see everything. Haifa is a pretty place, the inhabitants being Jews. Saya is a filthy place, but worthy of note as last war the Australians fought some hard battles there. Friday Sept 13 we entrained at Kedgedale for a new destination, which we knew was nearer to our goal "Action". We crossed the canal at dawn and was soon heading deep into Egypt. We arrived at Helwan only 18 miles from ~~camp~~ Cairo, here we remained for 6 weeks. During the week we trained hard over the real sand which had no protection from the never setting sun. I saw Cairo several times, but was not greatly impressed by it.

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October 28 and another move, everyone anxious as we were nearing our goal. Dawn next morning saw us arriving at our destination, which we learnt as Ikingi Maryut about 28 miles from Alexandria. This place is not far from where the fighting is now taking place. It was here that we trained our hardest, because it meant everything to us. The hard training we did here held us in good stead for the hard tasks we accomplished later on. We were lucky if were slept two nights in camp. Day & night we trudged over the desert, mainly around Burgelarab. Here is a big fortress which was used in the film Beau Geste. We had our first initiation to bombing at Ikingi too. The very high altitude bombers (degree) would come over practically every night and bomb Alexandria. It was a fine spectacle to see this ring of search light (24) piercing the darkness also to see the shells bursting in the air giving the effects of fireworks only it did not have the entertainment atmosphere about it. We were given leave to visit Alexandria which did impress me greatly as the best town over there. Dec 19th was our day to celebrate Xmas. We had a great dinner too, next morning early we were in the train bound for the front. At evening we detained at Sidi Hessa with a terrific sand storm blowing. We marched 4 miles to our site with all our gear up, it was a hard march, the first blister I ever had was from this march. We camped at this rest place for 1 week before finally moving forward. 2 A.M. Boxing day was our revelle, after a stew breakfast and our first army rum issue we embussed and away we went. We passed Mersa Matruh then across the wide open desert spaces which had previous been a battle field. This could easily be seen by the remnants which were scattered everywhere. Sidi Barrani came into view, but all that was left ~~was~~ were crumpled brick walls, not a building was intact. We travelled along up Mussolini victory road and was it rough. At dusk we stopped at Bug Bug where we had the stars as a roof. Next morning we were up early and on the way again. Whilst having lunch at Sollum we had the itoe over dropping a few bombs which did no harm

~~When~~ We then travelled over the escarpment by using Helfaya pass. Looking down on Sollum, from this pass was a wonderful view. That evening we dug in at Fort Capuzzo which was once a strong Italian fortress. Next night Dec 28th we moved up to our positions a distance of 8 miles. It was our arrival here that I first had my shock. A shell landed 50 yards away. I was frightened too I admit and I defy any man not to be otherwise. Since then I have become accustomed to them. For a week we were under heavy shell fire so we were certainly prepared for it. New years Eve was celebrated by myself in charge and 16 men out from the enemies wire on a standing patrol, hoping an enemy patrol would come along, but our luck was out. Jan 3 and our attack was started which after 3 days proved successful and Bardia was ours. I then realised what war really was. For 3 days we rested, everything seemed quiet, too quiet, so on the 9th Jan we moved on again, about 15 miles from Tobruk we rested at a place which we called Sayelle owing to the number of deer that were about. 15 Jan we moved to our positions only 1600 yards from the enemy wire. We marched 15 miles with a blinding sand storm in our face all the way. We arrived during darkness so weren't spotted, but we were next day and they let us know it too. Owing to heavy bombardment we withdrew back the day before our attack. I was suffering badly from dysentry, they even tried to evacuate me to hospital, but I wouldnt have it as I wanted to lead my platoon into it as my platoon Commander was wounded at Bardia. Jan 21 and the attack commenced which also was successful in the capture of Tobruk after 2 days. After this we were rushed up to quell the 22000 prisoners who were getting out of hand. It was here that I saw sights I will never forget. What an eyeful to an innocent chap like I was then - Never have I seen such a dilapitated, sick, sorry, filthier mass of humanity than I did then. For 3 days we stayed there, then we moved on again to an old fort called Sin El Sayelle, here we were going to have 3 days rest before moving to Derna. Rest was not to be because Hitler was getting restless so once again we moved

this time to a place called Mahouba. Next day 30 Jan we received word that Derna had been evacuated and it was our job to chase him. Up here the county was rugged with several large waddies so for three days we chased him, the only prisoner being a Major who gave himself up, and he travelled in the back of a truck while we walked. We came upon hurriedly built forts which they left more hurriedly still by all accounts. We would dig in of a night, just get to sleep, then up we would get and move on again. On the night of 1st Feb we came upon a little village called Geovana Berta, here there was fresh water which we all made rapid good use of. Next day we moved on and marched about 12 miles, here we stayed at a place called Lethouba still no sign of Jerry. This completed 70 miles marching in 76 hours all stops, digging in and sleeping (what there was) included. We were transported here to Barce where we stayed for about a week. Before using the billets every room had to be cleaned thoroughly as the previous occupants had also used the rooms as latrines. As the unit moved from Barce I had to come back and get our band instruments, so it was a grand feeling to travel over the fields which we had captured. I had 3 nights in Alexandria before proceeding back. I was away 10 days from the unit, during which time they had taken up a defensive position near Mersa Brega, real desert. We had a few thrills, dive bombers, patrols etc before orders came for us to move back. We were relieved by a poorly equiped unit, little did they know what was in store. We left on the 9th March and after 3 days travelling we arrived at Tobruk. We bivouaced for one week in a waddi we had captured. We would go swimming practically every day. One day we went into Tobruk and had a hot shower our first hot wash for over two months. It was here that we received word of Jerries counter attack, we thought we would have to go back but no we moved ~~on back~~ until we reached Mersa Matruh, here we stayed another week from the 20th March to 27th March during which time we carried on training. On the morning of the 27th we entrained at Mersa Matruh, arrived at dusk at Amiya only 8 miles from Alexandria. Here we received new clothing, badly needed and went on leave into Alexandria, the photo you have now I had taken then. 9th April we embarked aboard the old

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Cameronia, next day 10th April we sailed for Greece. After three days we arrived at Faragon bay all quiet rather strange too we thought. The people gave us a tremendous welcome, all lined the road sides as we marched by to our transport. We had a drive around Athens for half an hour (the driver making out he was lost) then proceeded to Daphnia park a very pretty spot where we stayed the night. Next morning we marched to the station (10 miles) and entrucked into cattle trucks, bound for the front. We didn't worry over our discomfort as we were going to fight for people who were with us. We travelled for two days, several air raids and alarms included. Luckily was very light but we didn't grumble. We saw some wonderful views especially travelling over the ranges you would look down onto a beautiful green valley below, a panoramic view that beats all I have seen. In greece the people live in small community villages, each village miles apart, and all you see in between is rich green fields of pasture. These villages are situated at the base of a large mountain which seems to stand guardian over their watch. We arrived at Larissa and things were not pleasant, we had to withdraw and two of our lads drove the train back in broad daylight, it was a risky move but it was our only chance, we then took up positions on Domaros pass, which later we withdrew from to Brallos, here was the last stand before our final withdrawal. My Platoon commander was again hurt here, is now a P o W. I will never forget our orders which are as follows:- 6 Division will take over a new role, a embarkation and a landing. We all thought we were going to make a landing behind here but we were wrong. We didn't see our 200 hurricanes either that we were informed had arrived We commenced our withdrawal as to plan, somebody was placed in charge of a truck, which was his responsibility to get its occupants through, even though trouble may arise Before we moved Jerry got onto us with mortars etc, the driver of my vehicle was rather scared, every time he saw a flash he ducked his head, results we crashed into an oncoming vehicle, well things were not the best, but I had to get them out, so I placed the occupants in a drain whilst the driver tipped the car over the steep bank, same time rushing back for another truck, which by a coincidence happened to be an old member of my platoon,

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We arrived at Corinth where we were to meet boats, but none were there so we continued onto Kalamai where we embarked onto destroyers. During darkness of early morning we transshipped onto the Costa Rica, at dawn we were followed by the Stukas which tried time after time to sink us finally at 2.40 PM on 27th April a near miss holed the engine room sinking us in half an hour. 3500 troops were taken off and we were all crowded onto these destroyers. Once again the navy saved us. We lost everything. We were dumped on Crete which proved to be our downfall. We recieved rifles from the back line troops, and bayonets were flown over from Egypt by the flying Sunderlands. For eating utensils we had a tin like a billy improvised by ourselves, cutlery was a piece of bamboo made into a spoon. The Blitz started on the 19th and ended the 31st during which time we went through proper Hell. Our battalion lost practically all its men over 500 men and 30 officers, then came my escape by barge arriving safely in Egypt but feeling not the best, following that I had 4 days in hospital, then joined the unit who were at Hill 69 in Palestine. Then came the good news of my commission which seemed so strange, after that came my operation having had my appendix removed. After that I went to Cairo spending two weeks convalescing during which time I had a marvellous time, visiting several historical relics and world re known features. Oct 19 saw us in Syria where we got to work immediately building defensive positions. Here we worked very hard. We were camped at Adsaya only 5 miles from Damascus. Being able to visit Damascus frequently, I soon learnt all about it. I also visited Beirut which in many ~~asect~~ aspects is similar to that of Cairo. Snow arrived at the New year which proved to us it makes things very uncomfortable. Another move came and the unit came back to Jericho. I remained in Syria handing over the defensive positions to the new arrivals. I rejoined the unit at Hill 95 Palestine where we continued training before moving to Egypt in preparation to our move home as we thought. March 4 we moved but only to Port Tufic near Port Suez. Here we remained a week before embarking aboard the Westernland which brought us

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to Ceylon not home as we thought. On arrival we went to a staging camp at Bouara which is not far from Galle. We learnt much about the natives and their habits and we soon realized that the natives were by far a much more cleaner and trustworthy race than the arab. It seemed very strange at first to see the youngsters running around in the nude but we soon became accustomed to that. On our first arrival in Ceylon the native people would clutch their children and take them inside their little homes, they were afraid of us, but it was a much different atmosphere when we left for there were children, women and men lined along the railway line as we moved away, all with tears in their eyes and shouting out Ayyenawa (Goodbye in Cingalese). We made very good friends with them all and we did do very much in bringing them in closer relationship with the Allies, not only were we useful that way but we prepared Ceylon for any attack that may come. From Camp Bouara we moved to Akuressa on the South Western part of Ceylon, it was here that we did train very hard and made ourselves very hard and fit. From Akuressa we would go down to Weligama Bay and do beach patrol. It was a very pretty camp here. We were camped in a coconut plantation, on one side we had a fresh water river, which we used to swim in every day, and in front of us was the Indian ocean which made very good surfing. We visited Matara also Galle which are two of the main towns in the southern province. We played several football matches at Matara, which to the natives was some thing new. I also saw a native dance which was very crude and weird. We were stationed in Ceylon at a rough period, as it was the monsoonial season. you would be walking along, a beautiful day when all of a sudden there is a heavy downpour of rain which is the heaviest I have ever experienced. It rains for approximately 10 minutes, after which you can see the steam rising from the ground, this causes many fevers, especially Dengue fever which is a mild form of Malaria Several of the troops were laid up with this fever, which certainly knocks them about. I have never seen so many different species and sizes of snakes as I saw here.

The dress worn by the men folk is very much different from ours, instead of wearing suits they wear what is called a sarong, very much similar to a skirt. The people are always washing, one reason is to keep cool. They have very large paddy fields which in other words are rice fields. Tea was a very popular drink here and very cheap too. No matter where you went you would always see a tea shop. For making tea they have the same way right throughout the island. No tea pots like us. They fill a strainer with tea leaves and pour hot water through it. We remained 3 months on Ceylon, then came word of our move, rumours commenced and we thought we were going back to the desert again. July 12 we moved from Wellijana by train, arriving at Columbo docks midday. We were taken out by lighter to our ship which was a beautiful big ship named "Athlone Castle". Everybody were heavily laden with either elephants or tea. July 13 we sailed still not sure of our destination. First day out we were informed that our port of call was Port Melbourne and a cheer went up, after that all was quiet, all wondering the same, "Will we arrive safely". We had an escorted trip over everybody's spirits were high. Wild cheering could be heard as we entered the heads. Aug 3 we anchored out in the bay near Williamstown but it seemed like a dream to us that we were home, it was more like just another move. At 7.20 AM on Aug 4 we came in during a heavy fog. We were greeted by an army band which played several tunes while the disembarkation was taken place. At 2.40 we disembarked and entrained on the pier. Off we went. Everybody became excited as we saw Melbourne itself and we then realised that we were back home. It was very noticeable that the only ones to greet us were the diggers and elderly people. We arrived at Seymour at 8 PM, then were transported to our camp in Nagambie Rd where we are at present stationed. After a meal we bedded down, next day arrangements commenced for leave, by 7th April I was home on 14 days leave. I was very excited and by coincidence it was exactly 28 months to the date from when I was mained until I arrived home. Well I am afraid that this practically finishes everything else, as you know everything else, my anxiety

to see your daughter, the christening etc. Now I am back here ready to move again, where to God only knows but it looks like some island probably New Guinea. My trip overseas was very interesting and to me proved an education, this letter may not be interesting owing to my poor education and ~~grammatical~~) grammartical qualifications but I hope so. I have learnt the value of various currencies and have come to the conclusion that our money is by far the most complicated. I am afraid that I have run to an end (thank god say you) so it is Cheerio until we meet again

Always your Friend

Meggsie ++++

[illegible]

T.G. 42.

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22 CLYDESDALE STREET BOX HILL

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T.G. 65

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This is a poor snap but I took it after I struck work a long exposure. I ran into it I have an ito camera. Note the sandy surface too.

Love Maggie J

267K

PR04741

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Meggsie's Autobiography

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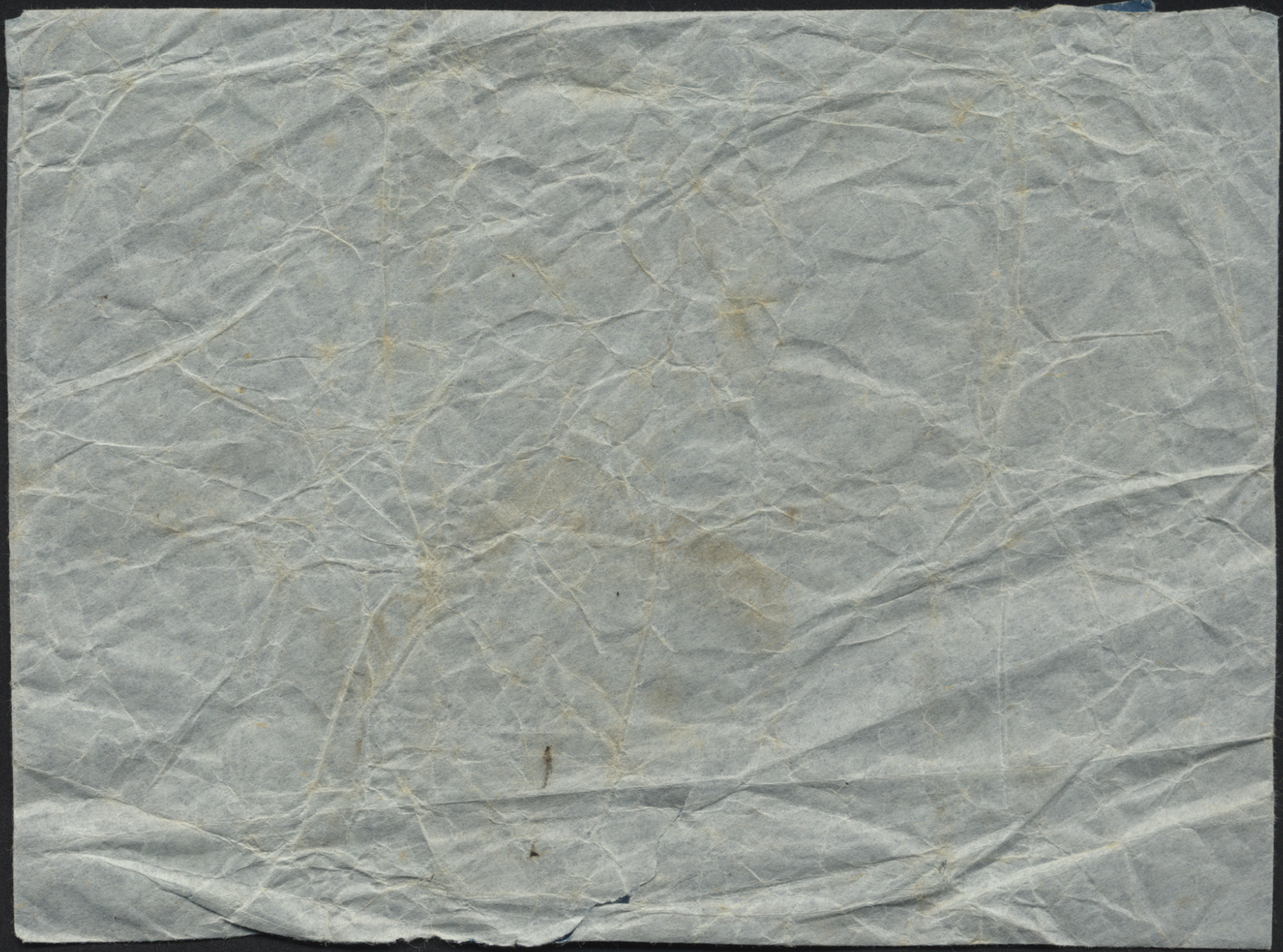

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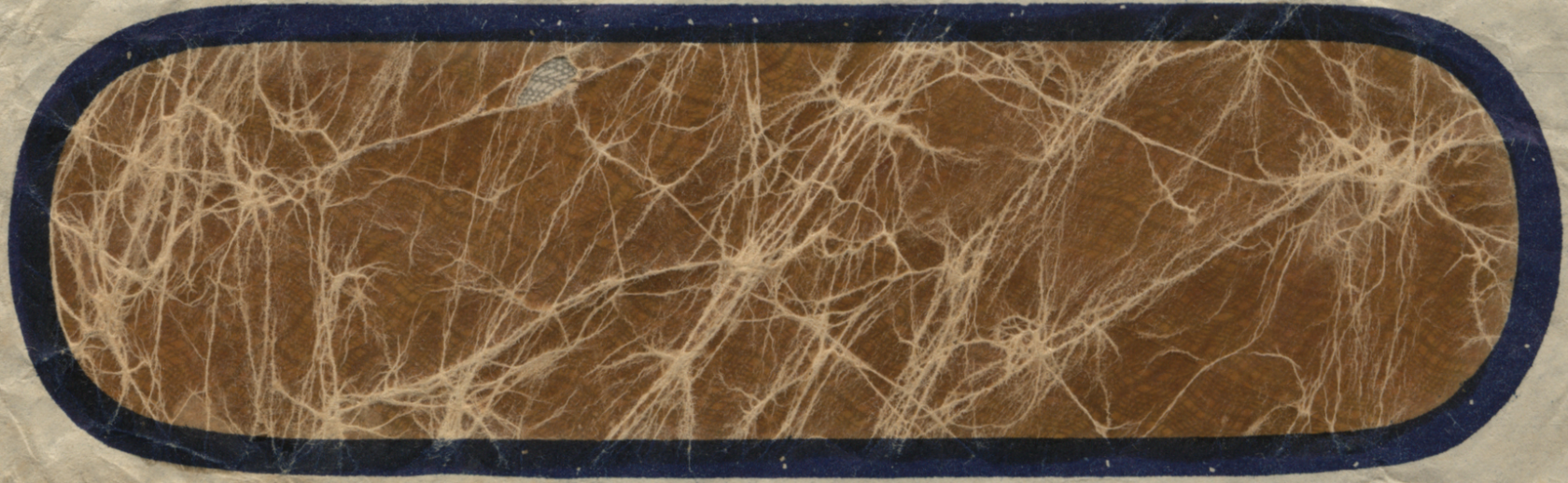

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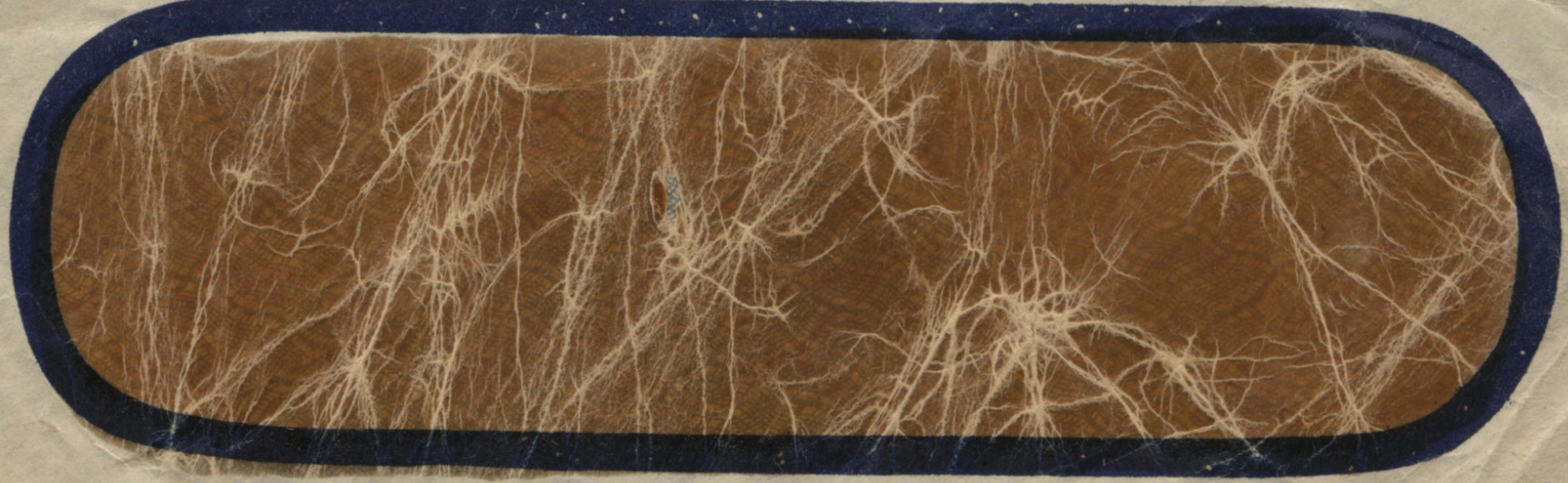

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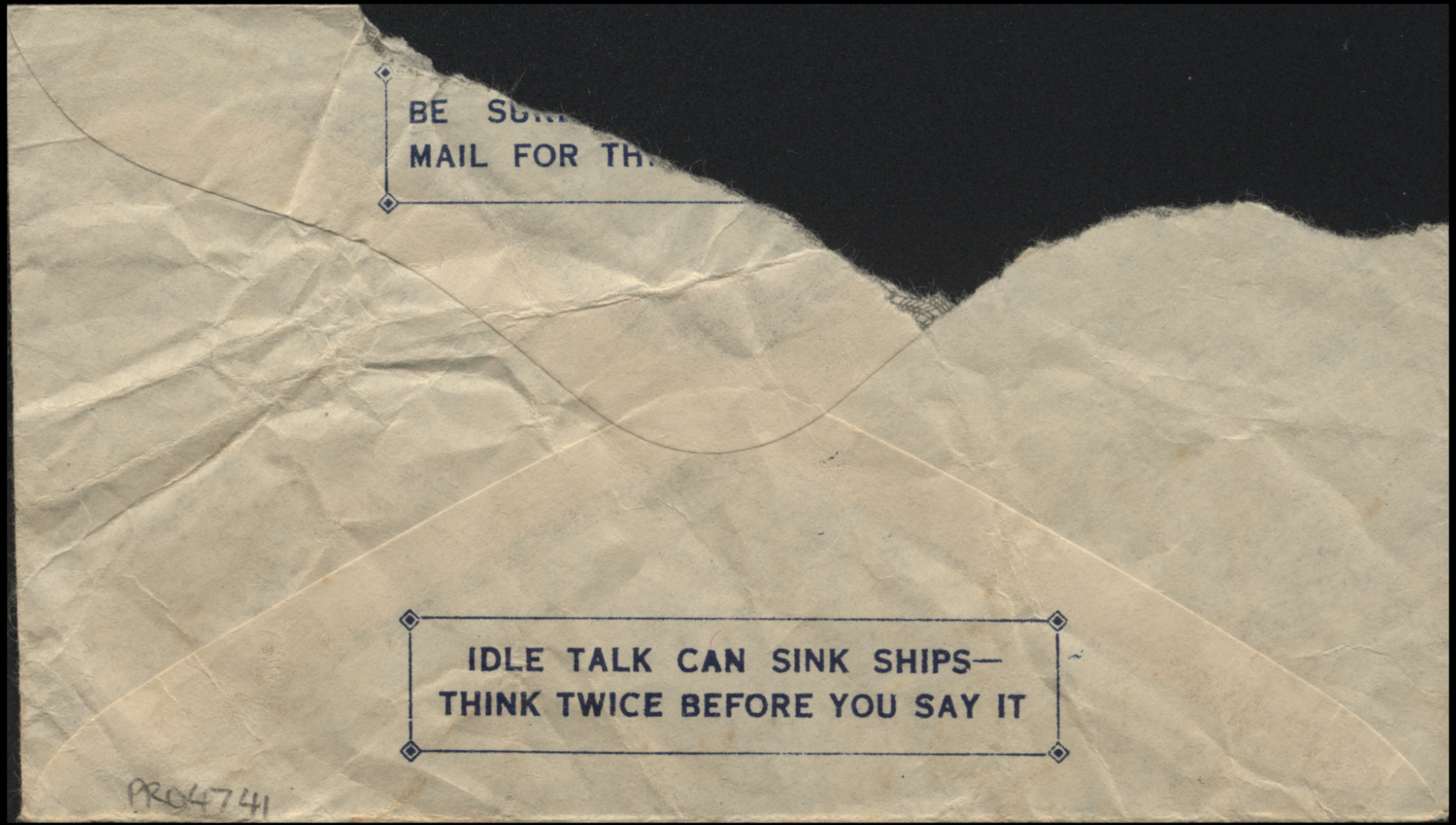

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