

No. I

Received  
11/10/43

19088  
Sgt. R.T. Street,  
26 Bn. H.Q.  
2 N.Z. Div.,  
M. E. F.

9 July, 43.

Dear Mum & Dad,

Here I am

back again in camp after  
my most enjoyable 14 days'  
leave in Palestine. There  
was some mail awaiting  
me on my return - one from  
Dad & you dated 23 May,  
one from Edna of the same  
date, & a letter each from  
Mr & Mrs. Bullock & Mr.  
& Mrs. Davis of Waikoaan.  
On the day I left for my

leave, a parcel arrived from Edna containing a cake + a tin of short-bread, so I took it along with me + my friend Eslan Boyd + I made use of it while at the leave camp.

Prior to leaving for my holiday, I climbed the Great Pyramid one evening after tea, having nothing to do + not at that time having met Eslan (whom I met while going to the station to catch the

leave train.) So it was a solo effort on my part, & I had the whole pyramid to myself. As I stood on the summit surveying the plain spread out below to the East & the desert to the West, my thoughts went back to the time when Bob Holmes & Colin Skinner (now a P.W. in Italy) climbed the pyramid more than a year ago.

When I had descended, I stopped at a cafe on a corner near the tramline to the pyra-

-mids from Cairo & had  
supper at a table out of  
doors under green trees.  
I did well on two fried  
eggs, potato chips, fried  
tomatoes & onions, bread  
& butter & tea. It was very  
pleasant, in the cool  
of the evening.

Well, I didn't expect to  
get my leave to Palestine  
as I had missed it while  
in hospital. However, it  
was "gacked up" - to use  
an army term - & I  
found myself in charge  
of 22 others from our

camp who were all going to the leave camp in Palestine. They were privates except one - another Sgt. - Alan Boyd whose people have a pretty big sheep run in Central Otago - so he + I got together + stayed together during the course of our holiday.

We were taken by truck from camp to the main station in Cairo + there we boarded the leave train. It finally left - more than two hours late (but nothing unusual

61

for the army) it was packed with Tomnies, South Africans + Kivis going on leave. We crossed over the Canal sometime during the night (staying in our carriages, as we went over a railway bridge) + morning found us in the Sinai desert. When we crossed the border into Palestine, the country became less of a desert + in time sand gave way to fields of green + orange trees, vegetable gardens etc on. This

is what makes Palestine such a delightful change from Egypt - & it is due mostly to the efforts of the Jewish settlers about which I shall speak at greater length later on.

The train journey was a wearisome one due to many stops for reasons known apparently only to the native engine drivers. The trains over here can move when they have to, as they have the broad gauge,

but they seem to use up all their steam in tooting the whistles.

We had been in the train for 24 hours when we at last reached our destination so far as the rail journey was concerned.

At the station we were met by trucks driven by A.T.S. (women drivers) & taken the remaining few miles to the beach camp right on the sea coast - a lovely spot. Everything was



so well arranged. The  
Spts. checked in at  
their orderly room & there  
we drew our blankets &  
were shown to our tents  
among the trees. Then on  
to mess in a very  
well appointed wooden  
building where we sat  
down to an excellent  
dinner, off china plates,  
white table cloth & so on.  
We were waited upon  
by Italian P.W.s.  
who knew their job 100%.  
Each one had been  
picked for the job. The

head waiter had held a high position before the war at a London hotel. We had soup (vegetable) followed by beef & gravy, potatoes (grown in Palestine for the army) green peas & marrow, with rice & peach for sweets.

When I had two glasses of grape-fruit juice at the bar before returning to our tent.

We then had a cold shower, made our beds (on camp

" stretchers having a sort  
of wicker base (very  
comfortable) &  
retired for the night to  
make up some of the  
sleep we didn't get on  
the train the previous  
night.

(to be continued)

~~4/2~~

Hawai