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19088
Sgt. R.T. Street,
26 Bn. H.Q.
2 N.Z. Div.,
M.E.F.
15 July, 1943

No. 3

Received 11/10/43

Dear Mum & Dad,

Before I continue with No. 3 of my Palestine holiday letters, I want to say how pleased I was at receiving some mail yesterday, two from Edna & one from you, dated 23 May. Received also a cablegram from Edna, saying she had received mail & parcels from me. Those would be the remaining three parcels I sent from Tripoli.

Well, after seeing the jets at the Wailing Well in Jerusalem & the Temple area, we walked along the "Via Dolorosa" - the way of the Cross, that path trod by Christ nearly two thousand years ago. There is an arch of stone over the narrow street called "Ecce Homo" - which, translated from the



Latin means "Behold the man." It was at this spot that Pilate uttered those words when Christ was delivered to the people. Along the way of the Cross are the various stages of Christ's journey to Calvary & these are marked by a simple inscription in the stone walls of buildings along the route. There is the place where they stumbled & fell, the place where his mother saw him pass by, & so on.

We finally came to the end of the journey, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, very old & built over the site where Christ was crucified & buried. You could see the original rock which has been built into & around the stone walls of the Church, so as to protect it. It was so cool & quiet in there & one felt very humble.

Well, this brought our sight-seeing in Jerusalem to an end. I could have spent a week



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there, looking around the place. In the evenings which were lovely & cool (Jerusalem is over a thousand feet above sea level) I would take a stroll around the newer part of the city & the residential parts. There are some magnificent buildings there, so clean & simple in design. The streets & footpaths would be filled with people, out for the evening promenade. You will see snuff of some of these buildings in the album I have sent you.

We left on the return journey after lunch & two hours later were back in camp.

Our next trip was a day one to Haifa, & even a little farther on. It was very pleasant sitting in the bus, puffing at my old pipe, & seeing the green orange trees pass by with now & again a glimpse of the blue Mediterranean sea out of the left hand windows. Haifa is at the foot



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of Mount Carmel, home of Elijah
The prophet who lived in a cave
on top of the mountain where there
is now a Carmelite monastery, a
fine motor road runs up the
side of the hill & the bus took
us to the top. We dis-embussed
& for a few moments admired
the excellent panorama spread
out below us - the new town of
Haifa, oil port with barrage
balloons flying in the sky, with
a strip of sand to the right
in the elbow of the Bay where the
Phoenicians first discovered
how to make glass - & farther
round on a point, here,
known both to the Crusaders & to
Napoleon.

One of the Carmelite Fathers who
spoke excellent English (in fact
he was English) took us in-
side & we found ourselves in
the most beautiful church I have
ever seen. Not the biggest & by
any means, not was it over-
hung with draperies, candles &



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a lot of other things of the sort - but it was dazzlingly clean with white marble (I probably) with the sunlight streaming down through a big dome overhead, containing magnificent stained glass. I went under the altar was a fairly large cave in solid rock - the home of Elijah of old. We mounted to the roof & from there had an even better view. When Napoleon had to withdraw from here, his wounded soldiers were taken to this monastery & cared for by the monks.

We had lunch in the town of Haifa & then drove some ten to fifteen miles round the bay to Haifa where we saw the fortress, now a prison. From there we went on a couple of miles to a stud-farm run by the Government in order to improve stock in the country. It was a very picturesque place with very modern



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convenience for the animals (I was almost going to say "pull-chain" saws for the cows - but that would be stretching it a bit!) However, there wasn't a snail & scarcely a fly about the place & we saw some magnificent Arab horses, stud bulls & sheep & goats. Cohen, who is a farmer, was in his element. We returned to camp in time for dinner at 7 P.M. & then to bed.

At 8 next morning we left by bus for Nazareth & the Sea of Galilee. We wound in & out along a valley used by the cavalry of Lord Wellington during the last war & finally emerged on to an extensive plain - the largest in all Palestine - the plain of Esdraelon (I think my spelling is at fault.)

At three buses stopped: we all got out & the padre who



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was in charge of the trip gathered us round & pointed out items of interest. A way across the other side of the plain was Mount Tabor, or the mountain of Annunciation. A few of the buildings of Nazareth could be seen up on the skyline. This plain is supposed to be the site for the final battle. Some say so - but I'm afraid it would accommodate only about our N. 3. Division when we get into battle formation.

So I think the last battle will have to be fought elsewhere.

We continued our trip across the level plain, & then ascended a first class road (all the roads in Palestine are first class) up to Nazareth, resting among the hills. We had lunch here, after which we were shown the place where Mary & Joseph lived. Mary's well, or the Virgin's well is still there & the water from it is



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beautifully clear & cool. As with
the other Holy Places in Pales-
-tine, there is a church above
the site of the carpenter's shop.
We went on from here by bus
to Tiberias, passing en route
the village of Cana where Christ
performed the first of his
miracles - turning the water into
wine at the wedding feast.

Tiberias possesses many modern
stone buildings & is rather a pretty
place, on the slopes overlooking
the lake. The Sea of Galilee
looked beautifully blue,
nestling among the brown hills.
We had time for a swim
& a row in a boat. Then
we returned, through Nazareth
& this time round the back
of Mt. Tabor, joining our
original road farther on. We
went back in camp in time
for dinner.

On another day Alan &
I went to Tel Aviv, an
hour's run by bus from camp.



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Tel Aviv, or "Mill of Spring" is one of the world's newest cities & now has a population of some 150,000 people. It is almost wholly a Jewish city - consequently everything is very expensive. A meal at a cafe costs anything from 6/- upwards. It is a very pretty place, with a wealth of trees, a lovely beach & promenade & very fine buildings & shops.

The day before our leave was up, we visited a Jewish settlement, many of which exist throughout Palestine. This one had been going for 10 years. Before the Jews came the land was a sandy waste: today it is a green mass of orange trees, vegetable gardens & hedge-rows. You have to see it to believe it. And are the Jewish settlers proud of their achievement? When we arrived, we hadn't long had breakfast at camp.



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But these people had another meal awaiting us, in the dining room of the community school. And such food! A big glass of milk beside each plate (I excused myself + they made me tea!) boiled eggs, tomatoes + cucumbers, cheese, wholemeal bread + grapes. No wonder the children + people look a picture of health. No chewing of sweets here, nor rotten teeth. I thanked the ladies who had provided the food, on behalf of our party + next visited the class-rooms where I met the teachers, the headmaster + 2 female assistants. Besides Hebrew, English is taught. I spoke to the senior pupils + said I would get my pupils to correspond with them, send stamps + so on, when I get back. This settlement also ran fowls (white penguins) geese, turkeys + ducks + what big



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eggs. The food given is all scientific-
typically mixed - so no wonder
the results.

Some of these Jewish settlements
are run on communal lines -
that is, no one earns anything
for himself: it goes all into
a common fund. Women marry
& raise families at 18: there
is no worry about not earning
enough or not having a house.
The others all help. And they
are making the land run with
milk & honey, by scientific
methods & irrigation. If we
had known when I could
have stayed at one of these
settlements, seen things for our-
selves. The Jews will come you
& refuse payment. At an
office we met on the train
coming back from leave had
spent a week at such a
communal farm. He said
he was amazed - the food
- everything so fresh & plenty



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of it. I mark you. These people of these settlements had nothing to begin with. The money was advanced from a Jewish patriotic fund for them to get started & each year they pay so much back. With people in such circumstances, the scheme is bound to work. When the money is paid off & they are making a profit out of their farms, we may find them breaking away from their present mode of existence.

The evening before we left, Colan & I were invited to the home of a German Jew who with his wife & baby son had been dispossessed of land in Germany seven years ago. This chap - Karl Frankel spoke quite good English & in Germany was a vintner. He grows grapes & manufactured wine.



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He showed us his name in a published list of those Jews whom Hitler had dispossessed of land. We also noted the name of Professor Einstein. Where his parents were, he didn't know. He had come out to Palestine & had set to work helping to build his own house, plant trees & a garden. His wife worked too & still does, in order to get ahead. We had a most interesting evening: he was such a decent chap: not at all like a Jew. He would like to come to N.Z. if he could get some job dealing with wine culture or wine making.

Well, our holiday in Palestine had at last come to an end & we were both very sorry. It had been an unforgettable experience to have seen the Holy Places.



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One had often imagined what they were like, but really one has to see them in reality to fully appreciate everything about them.

I forgot to mention two things. First, I heard the Palestine Symphony Orchestra at a concert one night. It was magnificent with many refugee musicians from the best of Europe's orchestras in its ranks. I counted six violas among the strings.

The other point was that of "the eye of the needle & the rich man going to heaven." You will know the reference.

According to our guide who showed us over the old city of Jerusalem, the eye of the needle doesn't refer to a steel needle, but refers to a small square door built into the big door which closed the city gates at night. This small door could be used by a person

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when the big gate was shut, but it would be next to impossible for a camel to get through. In the old city we saw an old inn, with the stalls on the ground floor, a ladder leading up to a balcony running round each side with rooms for sleeping above. This inn led off from a street, & had a big door with a smaller one let for built into it.

Well, here I am back among the sands of Egypt. We are in the middle of Shamer now, but this year hasn't been hot so far. We may get hotter weather next month.

I will close now & see if I can squeeze all these pages into one envelope. I am, I hope you all in health & all the same.

Love to you all
from your loving
son,
Hewari