

April 27, 1994

Dear Ms. Jenzen:

I write a monthly column for a small newspaper here in Euclid, Ohio and I enclose my column scheduled for November, the month of Veteran's Day here in America. I saw your ad for information on our days in Australia during World War II and so I take pen in hand to contribute.

I was a Corporal in the 5th Bn. 11th Marines (later became the 3rd Bn.) and joined the First Marine Division in the Spring of 1943. For a week or so, we were in the Cricket Grounds with the 1st Regiment, but were transferred to Ballarat later on. I have recollections of a very kind hearted populace who treated us very graciously. I recall dining in your hotels and drinking in the pubs with their very uneven hours, i.e. Open 4 to 6 and 8 to 9 or similarly. I remember going to an amusement park one night near Melbourne, but cannot recall the name. Was it Luna Park?

The young girls were lovely and very friendly, but I was not dating since I was engaged to a lovely girl back home who faithfully waited for me and wrote tender love letters each and every day. We later married and she cared for and nurtured me for 42 years 'til her heart gave out.

As I said in my proposed column, A Grandma McAllister and her son sheltered us on weekends, and we remember her fondly as a warm hearted motherly type with a penchant for playing the horses.

When we were transferred to Ballarat, the Lawry family took over as host and hostess. The father, George, I believe, managed a factory that made our rations, while Dulce, the mother, had a full time job mothering her lovely daughter Isabel, engaged to a serviceman, her son, John, in the service and ten year old Gracie, at home. Dulce was a fine woman and the fact that we only corresponded once or twice is to my shame. When she last wrote, her daughter Isobel had married Austin Dowling and had two boys, Bill and Peter. John has a daughter Helen and son, David, and my "stonsies" partner, Gracie is married and has two daughters Margaret and Catherine. George, alas, had passed away in the late fifties.

I remember playing snooker at the service club, dining at a hotel and taking in the cinema, that featured mostly American films with an occasional George Formby comedy. We loved your cities and your people and I always planned to go back for a visit, but procrastinated too long. I think Dulce may have gone on to her reward, but I pray the children and grandchildren are all well and happy. God bless them all.

Gratefully

*Herbert*

Herbert

former Sergeant, USMC

P.S. I stayed with the division 'til November 1945 and enclose a couple of articles about our experiences, in case you are interested. Good Luck.

Note: We didn't know the comparative values of your money, so in many instances, we simply held out our hand filled with currency and the shopkeepers picked out the exact price. They never cheated us.

One day, I started out with five friends to the movies. One by one, they peeled off to talk to one of your young ladies and I ended up alone at the theater. I'll never forget the film. It was: "For Me and My Gal" with Judy Garland and Gene Kelly.