

IRVING

JUNE 22, 1992

DEAR RACHEL,

IT WAS INDEED A GREAT PLEASURE TO HAVE RECEIVED YOUR VERY NICE LETTER OF JUNE 3, WHICH YOU ADDRESSED TO ME AT THE VAVS, VETERANS ADMINISTRATION EXTENDED CARE CENTER, IN ST. ALBANS, NEW YORK. I RECEIVED IT, YESTERDAY, INASMUCH AS THEY HAD TO FORWARD IT TO MY NEW RESIDENCE IN FLORIDA, TO WHICH MY WIFE AND I HAVE MOVED, AFTER MY WIFE RETIRED IN AUGUST OF LAST YEAR. WE HAVE BEEN LIVING HERE SINCE SEPTEMBER OF 1991. AS A MATTER OF FACT, I, MYSELF, HAD RETIRED FROM THE VOLUNTARY SERVICES I HAD EXTENDED TO THE INFIRMED RESIDENT-PATIENTS AT ST. ALBANS, IN FEBRUARY OF 1991, AFTER HAVING SERVED FOR 10 YEARS AND HAVING DONE 12,000 HOURS OF SERVICE FOR MY MORE UNFORTUNATE COMRADES, WHO SO NEEDED AND DESERVED ALL THE ASSISTANCE THAT WE VOLUNTEERS WERE ABLE TO AFFORD.

IT IS MOST INTERESTING THAT YOU ARE RESEARCHING AND ARE IN THE THROES OF A THESIS ON THE IMPACT OF AMERICAN SERVICEMEN ON SO WONDERFUL A COUNTRY AS AUSTRALIA. PLEASE BE APPRISED OF THE FACT THAT I AND ALL MY "COBBERS" IN THE 1st MARINE DIVISION HAVE ALWAYS CONSIDERED AUSTRALIA AS OUR SECOND HOME. I CAN NOT PUT INTO PROPER PERSPECTIVE THE MANNER IN WHICH THOSE FINE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE TREATED WE FELLOWS, WHO HAD JUST COME OUT OF COMBAT WITH THE ENEMY AND WERE IN DIRE NEED OF LOVE AND AFFECTION. HONESTLY, IT WAS LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT WHEN WE LEFT GUADALCANAL ON JANUARY 5, 1943, AND ARRIVED IN YOUR WONDERFUL COUNTRY IN THE MIDDLE OF JANUARY. IT WAS INSTANTANEOUS THAT WE FELT SUCH CLOSE ADMIRATION FOR EACH OTHER.

MY ORGANIZATION, THE 11th MARINE REGIMENT WAS BILLETED IN THE PARK IN THE NORTH END OF BALLARAT, ALONG WITH THE 1st TANK BATTALION AND SPECIALWEAPONS BATTALION, ALL INTEGRAL PARTS OF THE 1st MARINE DIVISION, OF WHICH THE 1st REGIMENT, THE 5th REGIMENT AND THE 7th REGIMENT, ALONG WITH MANY OTHER ORGANIZATIONS, SUCH AS THE 1st PARATROOP BATTALION AND THE 1st RAIDER BATTALION ALL TOGETHER FORMED THE 1st MARINE DIVISION. WE WERE SEPARATED TO MANY DIVERSE AREAS AROUND MELBOURNE, THE 1st REGIMENT OCCUPYING THE CRICKET GROUNDS IN MELBOURNE, THE 5th REGIMENT IN PICOCKERICKY (PARDON THE SPELLING) AND THE 7th REGIMENT SOMEWHERE ELSE, WHICH PLACE I CAN NOT RECALL.

YOU MAKE INQUIRY AS TO THE IMPRESSIONS WHICH WERE CAST ON US BY THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE. BELIEVE ME, THEY MADE AN EVERLASTING IMPRESSION ON ALL OF US, IN THE MANNER IN WHICH THEY ACCEPTED US AND NURTURED US IN A MOST GRIEVOUS TIME OF NEED. WE HAD JUST COME FROM COMBAT WITH THE ENEMY, VERY TIRED AND VERY SICKLY. A VAST MAJORITY OF THER DIVISION WAS INFECTED WITH MALARIA AND WE WERE ABSOLUTELY A SICKLY BUNCH. IF NOT FOR THE KIND TREATMENT AFFORDED US BY YOUR COUNTRYMEN, I AM SURE WE WOULD NEVER HAVE OVERCOME OUR MANY MALADIES. I FOUND THE LIFESTYLE OF THE AVERAGE AUSTRALIAN TO BE COMPLIMENTARY TO THAT OF WE IN THE UNITED STATES. WE HAD BEEN IN NEW ZEALAND PRIOR TO THE INVASION AT GUADALCANAL, SO WE PRETTY MUCH WERE COMFORTABLE WITH OUR ANZAC CONTEMPORARIES, EVEN THOUGH WE WERE ONLY IN NEW ZEALAND FOR ABOUT 2 WEEKS.

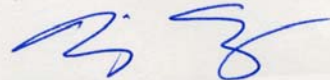
IT IS AMAZING THAT YOU REFER TO THE GREAT ATTRACTION OF THE AMERICAN MARINES TO AUSTRALIAN WOMEN. I, FOR ONE HAD A TREMENDOUS LOVE FOR AN AUSTRALIAN YOUNG LADY. I MET THIS VERY PRETTY YOUNG GIRL AT A DANCE IN THE VESTRY AT ST. THOMAS CHURCH, IN BALLARAT. SHE WAS VISITING HER

COUSIN, WHO RESIDED IN BALLARAT. I WAS TAKEN BY HER BEAUTY AND CHARMS IMMEDIATELY. SHE WAS A GREAT GIRL, SO YOUNG AND VIVACIOUS, AND WE WERE ALWAYS HAPPY TOGETHER. SHE CAME FROM MELBOURNE, LIVING IN A MOST QUAIN T LITTLE WHITE HOUSE IN THE NORFOLK SECTION. HER MOTHER AND DAD WER DE-LIGHTFUL PEOPLE, OF WELSH EXTRACTION. SHE HAD A BROTHER, IN THE AUSTRAL- IAN ARMY, SERVING IN NEW GUINEA. I CORRESPONDED WITH HIM AND SENT HIM PACKAGESD OF MAGAZINES AND "GOODIES" WHICH WERE AVAILABLE TO US IN OUR POST EXCHANGES. HIS NAME WAS TECWYN. HER OTHER BROTHER WAS AT HOME, AND HIS NAME WAS CEMLYN. ELUNED (HER NAME) WAS AN EXCEPTIONAL PERSON. HER MOTHER AND FATHER, TO WHOM I REFERED AS AUNTIE NELL AND UNCLE HUGH CER- TAINLY BROUGHT UP A LOVELY FAMILY. WE LEFT TO GO BACK INTO COMBAT, IN OCTOBER, AND I SPENT MY LAST NIGHT IN MELBOURNE WITH HER. THE NEXT A.M., WAS ELUNED'S 18th BIRTHDAY, AND SHE CRIED WHEN I BADE HER FAREWELL. IT WAS PURELY MY INTENTION TO RETURN TO AUSTRALIA, AFTER THE WAR, AND MARRY HER, BUT I GUESS IT WAS NOT IN, THE CARDS. SHE DID MARRY AN AUST- RALIAN FELLOW, AND THE LAST TIME I HAD COMMUNICATION WITH HER, SHE SENT ME A PHOTO OF HER BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTER KERRY. ELUNED WAS A VERY VIRTUOUS YOUNG LADY, AND IT ALWAYS COMFORTED ME WHEN I THOUGHT THAT OURS WAS A MOST CLEAN RELATIONSHIP, AND THAT I LEFT HER AS I FOUND HER, CHASTE AND A REAL LADY. YOU MIGHT KNOW THAT WHEN I MET ELUNED, I WAS 20 YEARS OF AGE, AND SHE WAS 17.

I AM ENCLOSING A PHOTO OF MYSELF, AS I AM NOW, 70 YEARS OF AGE AND AM ALSO ENCLOSING A SHOULDER PATCH FROM THE 1st MARINE DIVISION. SINCE WE HAVE MOVED, LOTS OF THINGS ARE PLACES WHICH I CAN NOT FIND, BUT IF I DO LOCATE ANY ITEMS WHICH I FIGURE MIGHT BE OF INTEREST TO YOU, I WILL FORWARD THEM LATER.

I HOPE I HAVE GIVEN YOU SOME INSIGHT INTO OUR ATTITUDES TOWARDS ALL AUS- TRALIAN PEOPLE AND THAT I MAY HEAR FROM YOU AGAIN, DIRECTLY AT MY ADDRESS AS LISTED.

RESPECTFULLY,



IRVING (RED)

P.S.

WE DID LOVE TO EAT AT THE "WATTLE". I WONDER IF THAT NICE RESTAURANT IS STILL IN BUSINESS?

