

Symon letter 17

Private Mail Bag, Wynbring Siding S.A., 23/4/44

Dearest Kilmeny

Thanks so very much for the 'Times' copies (4)! So welcome and so satisfying to my 'hungry for English news mind'.

Heat and flies prevent activity and also interfere with my letter writing. The National Geographic Magazine was a welcome gift and I am passing all and each to the Spitfires headquarters, tho' I doubt if any of my papers and books to the Spitfires reached their 'locality'.

Your newspapers always bring your dear face before me, with its beautiful British 'Poise' and I love to see it as I lie awake in the lengthening nights. Summer or winter, in camp, I rise and set with the sun, using no artificial light, tho' I have a candle stick and fresh candle by my bedside but have not lighted the candle as stars or moon are sufficient for my wakefulness. I walk round my tents, and within my breakwind (I walk 75 paces round and keep from the bushes by using star friends. And I think of the dear children whom I love, and long to be in their company again.

I have no communication with my kind and am as a sort of "Internee" with Unionists only "in the offing" when I call twice weekly for bread and weekly groceries. My water supply was cut off without warning in August, and the line taken up, so that I had to carry my water supply and at the beginning of this month I "fell down" over it, and resolved to send an S.O.S. to the Unionist P.M. Next day, the Fettleers carried buckets of water till my tank was filled but no word came from the P.M. D.M.B. is "Persona non grata" to her great joy, with that great crowd.

And so I keep heart and head up as I am sure many of our Prisoners do in enemy camps. And Koolardi the butcherbird has eaten nearly all my wee wrens and those left are too frightened to come into the open but we exchange 'notes' and I place their crumbs and water twice daily and now and then I will see a little bird flitting into the bush near the feed and am happy. I've nothing to shoot Koolardi with and I've lost my catapult superiority thro' failing eyes. Such heat and such flies! Even today 23rd and no sign of rain. A true drought period, such as I have often experienced, is here, but the nights are now cool and as six hours suffice for my 'sleeps' I can commune with my favourite stars. Vega comes up about 2 am. I have such a lovely native legend about him and Altair (in Aquila) who was his wife and whom he speared, because while he was out hunting meat she allowed their two boys to wander and they got drowned and the two stars above Vega are the boys and the star on each side of Altair is the spear Vega killed her with.

How I long to see your dear face in reality and to rub shoulders with humans again.

God bless you always. Your papers are my greatest pleasure for they are Home.

My dearest love, Daisy M. Bates