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Overseas

Friday July 23rd 43

cdt sea

Dear Kathleen & Uncle Gerard

Just a short note to let you know that I am still alive & kicking and in the best of health, I hope the same applies to you & the family.

Up till date the trip has been one long holiday, it is some time since I left Australia since then I have enjoyed a few weeks leave on dry land, & what a leave! By the time the leave drew to close I was glad to get to sea again for rest for late nights & nightseeing, however it only took me four or five days to catch up with

Gerard!

For the past weeks we have been living like royalty, the cabins are beautiful with hot & cold water laid on, electric fan & reading lamps to each bunk, there are also ample draws & wardrobes to keep our belongings in. The meals are excellent, there is always five or six courses to each meal as well as afternoon tea served in our cabins every afternoon.

Well folks! That seems to be the lot at present, I hope the children are in the best of health & that everything is rosy at home. Remember me often in your prayers

Your loving nephew

Jim.

P.S. I just like to make a small request before I seal the letter, just before I left home I had a talk with Vincent

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who was going to write to me often
& tell me how Ellen is in health
& how she is standing up to Paddy &
myself being away, I don't think he
will forget but I would like you
to jog his memory every now & again,
also when you drop me a line as I
hope you will you might tell me
what's worrying Ellen as she never
tells me anything like that in her
letters, hoping this is not too much to
ask you

Love

sleep loused ² (sleeping rate 29 hours per day)
& now I'm ready for more leave if it
should come our way.

We had a marvellous time whilst
on dry land, we were taken on numerous
trips & saw many interesting features.

One of the trips we were taken on was
to the Thermal Area of New Zealand at
Rotorua, unless you saw the boiling pools
& hot mud holes you could hardly
believe that such things could exist;
we visited one Maori Pa where we saw

Boiling water Pools everywhere the
Maori Women had taken advantage of
them & use cook their meals by them,
they use also do their washing along
the banks of pools that were not quite
up to boiling Point. Other pools were
also used as swimming pools for the
Maori Children, whilst we were there
they decided to have a hot bath also
combine a little business with it

so they stripped off where they stood & dived into the pools & yelled ^{at} us to show them pennies ~~is~~ so they could dive for them.

The Boiling Mud pools were just as interesting as they were ugly, the mud use boil ^{like} just water in a kettle does, sometimes the gases coming up though the mud would form a bubble of mud which would burst when the pressure became too great, the bursting mud would be flying in all directions & if you were unlucky enough for some to land on you it was quite on the cards for you to get a nasty burn. How some of these silly women can plaster their face with mud is beyond me, I think they should go to see Rotoua & its mud before they go in for their Mud Baths. (besides mud doesn't do their "looks" any good, they are usually too far gone)
at this particular Pa, we

saw the boys in action. Before we left we were entertained by the Maori with a concert, Golly! can those Maori Girls sing! They sang numerous songs both in their language & in English always without a musical instrument of any description, they seem to harmonize more than sing individually.

Another Maori Pa we visited was very similar to the first one we saw, except it had boiling sand instead of mud, the boiling sand was quite solid to walk upon but was far too hot to stoop up in your hands, another strange feature of this second Maori Pa was a Boiling Water Fall, steam we rise for the water as it ran over the rocks.

The cities of New Zealand were very nice, they were on a much smaller scale than Australia & the main street in nearly every one that I saw ran up & down numerous hills, in particular

was very lively & the streets ran in all directions. We had some time in [redacted] & I liked it very much, there always appeared to be something to do & before we left we had got to know the people so well that it was almost impossible to walk down the main street without meeting somebody we had got to know, (it was mainly a number of the fairer sex that we met).

Whilst in the big smoke I went to several Dances at the Catholic Services Club, we got to know nearly everybody at the Club & had the time of our lives, another chef & myself were taken out several times by the people running the Club, one man even boarded us out for a couple of days when we were without a place to rest our weary bones.

It was amazing how many christians we met over here, I came away under the impression that every good person was an christian or their parents

were bushmen, I even met a lady whose sister is married to a chap by the name of "Lahii" in Beeloy, no doubt Ellen has told you all about it so I won't go into the details again.

The rationing of clothes etc is not as severe in New Zealand as it is in Australia, things such as slippers & sandals do not require coupons and all other articles of clothing do not require as greater number of coupons as they do at home. Wool is very scarce, whilst we were in Wellington I saw numerous queues for wool running for 100 yds up the street. Jewellers seem to carry on business as usual, their windows are well stocked with rings & brooches a thing unseen for some time at home. The fruit was the only thing with abnormal prices, oranges were 6^d each if you could get them, pears were 4^d to 5^d & grapes 8/- (eight shillings)

few lb, as you can imagine I suddenly
lost my appetite for fruit & stuck
to orange drinks, they are much
easier on the pocket.

Well I suppose that will do for
N.Z. I had a marvellous time there, but
hoping we call in on the way home.

Now that we have struck the
warm weather we have discarded our
blue uniform & got into shorts & shirts.

We manage to fill our time in
very well, sometimes I sleep in
until about 9 o'clock & just get up
in time for the cabin boy to make my
bed, the morning is usually spent
in deck games & reading, the
afternoon is given over ^{to} reading &
loolling in the sun when it is out,
over the pass week I have done quite
a bit of reading which included
a couple of Books by Phillip Gibbs
& H.V. Morton.

after tea we collect for the Rosary in our cabin, we have a mustering of about ten for this which is very good I think. The evening is filled in by playing Housie-Housie or cards.

The Housie is run by a couple of claps you pay three pence for a card & the winner takes all, at the moment my books show a credit balance for Housie, how long I will stay on the credit side I don't know!

Today a swimming pool was erected for us, it should be in use any time now, from rumours that I hear Father Reftine is expected on board any day now, so the swimming pool is just being put up at the right time.

a few nights ago a concert was held, it was composed entirely of our claps & was the best concert I have ever seen, ~~that~~ perhaps it was

the fact that ~~we~~⁹ I had not seen a concert for sometime that made me appreciate it so much.

There were numerous solos & duets, some were properly composed songs whilst others were parodies composed by the artists themselves, the programme included a few skits on well known characters also a few humorous short plays, everybody voted it a great night & are looking forward to the next one.

Last week the Deck Tennis competitions started, myself & another chap were going rather well in it until today when we met our Waterloos at the hands of a couple of the officers.

On board things are very cheap cigarettes are 3/- per 100, or the Captains the ones we have at home are 5^d per pkt, its a pity I can't send you a few hundred love uncle