

# UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN



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Jewish Studies Library  
Bloch House  
6 November 2000

Philip Stodel  
Box 27105  
Rhine Road  
Sea Point 8050

Dear Mr Stodel

On behalf of the University of Cape Town Libraries I would like to thank you for the donation of the book, *Letters home, 1942-1945: a collection of Myer's letters*, to the Jewish Studies Library. These letters written home by Myer Kramer whilst he was on active duty between 1942 and 1945, will add to our insight into the South African Jews who served in the Second World War. It will have a bookplate indicating that it was donated by you.

Best Wishes

Sincerely Yours

*Veronica Belling*

Veronica Belling  
Jewish Studies Librarian  
University of Cape Town.

# LETTERS HOME

1942 - 1945



*Port Elizabeth, January 1942*

A COLLECTION OF  
MYER'S LETTERS



*First print July 1994  
Second print September 1996  
Third print October 1998  
Digital revision January 2024*

## FOREWORD

I never had the privilege of knowing Myer. To me he was always just a name, some photos, and a letter - a letter that he wrote to his parents in 1942, in which he explained to them why he felt compelled to join the armed forces. This letter must have had an impact on my late mother, for she kept it as a memento, and often showed it to us with pride.

Myer maintained a regular routine of correspondence, and whether his letters showed humor, wit or frustration, they all reflected honest values and clear love, respect and concern for his parents and sisters. He had an interesting style of writing, probably not uncommon for the era. I am fascinated when I consider that these letters were written by a young man in his early-20's. I particularly favor those with detailed narrative that vividly describe some of his tours and travels.

Some of his letters are poetic, some are flippant. Some are serious, and some are light. Each of them is a gem.



December 1944

Myer died in 1948 at the age of 27. The publication of this booklet coincides with the 50<sup>th</sup> ש"נ נס"ה of his death.

Philip Stodel



June 1984

MIRIAM STODEL  
(1924 - 1984)

Cape Town, South Africa

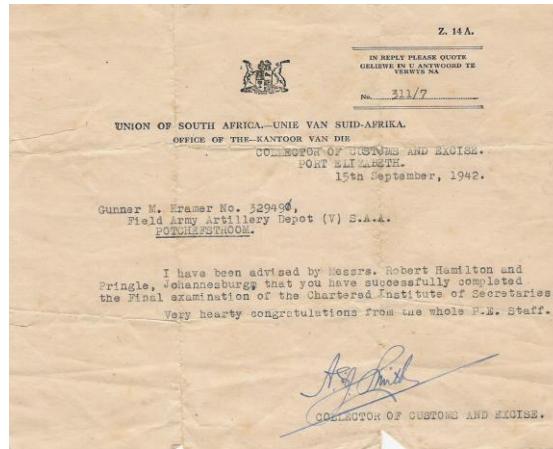
I remember some farewells to Myer. The day he left Cape Town for his new job in Port Elizabeth. How we spoke for months afterwards about the train "swimming out of Cape Town station". The day he left for destinations "somewhere up North" - the train again swam. And the most tearful of all, the day we said our last farewell to him in October 1948 - close on 50 years ago.

But I also remember joyous days - especially his homecoming after the war. My parents had invited relatives and friends to come to the house the following Sunday to welcome him, and with true Kramer hospitality our Dad celebrated the occasion by insisting that each visitor have a "schnapps" with him. I remember Myer jokingly explaining to the latecomers that "I had to put my old man to bed!"

I remember our happiness and pride when he heard that he had passed his Chartered Accountant exam on his first try. And I remember the happy day when he and Ida got married, when I was one of their bridesmaids and Liebe a flowergirl. While I was growing up, Myer was always my tall dark and handsome, and clever, big brother, with an infectious laugh and a keen wit and sense of humor; someone I hero-worshipped and hoped to emulate.

I need not here give a thumb-nail picture of his fine and uprightious character. I think the "Letters Home" will convey his deep and loving feelings for his parents, sisters and family members. Everyone reading these letters will sense his love for Judaism and its laws and traditions; and anyone from Maitland who knew Myer will remember how he never sat down in Shul on Yom Kippur, but stood with our father throughout the services.

Myer's letters were a lifeline for my parents in those days, each one read and re-read. It is not surprising that they were treasured and found amongst Mom's papers.



This is to Certify

that Myer Kramer  
was admitted a Member of the above  
Society on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of August 1942

Given under the Common Seal  
of the Society at Capetown the 20<sup>th</sup> day  
of August 1942

Done  
Cape Town  
August 20th 1942

I cannot end this Foreword without a word of praise to our nephew, Philip "Sam" Stodel, who spent many many hours transcribing Myer's letters from the originals onto the computer, and then



January 1945

EDIE RADOMSKY  
(1926 - 2023)  
Las Vegas, Nevada



April 1997



1944

## TO FOLLOW

GERTIE FRUMER  
(1930 - 2000)  
San Diego, California



**T**here is a saying "some who live are dead and there are those dead who still live", which I feel aptly describes the way we all think of our brother Myer. Being 13 years younger than him I barely remember the days before he left home - but I do remember very clearly his homecoming from "up North" after the war. How we all gathered at the station, waving flags, to welcome him, the joy and the excitement.....

During the war years, and through his letters home, he had quite naturally become "my hero", and when he arrived home, I as a young teenager was enchanted to greet this tall, dark and very handsome young man who was my adored older brother.

Now, nearly 50 years later, having had the privilege of reading his letters home (as an adult), I realise how fortunate I am to have had such an exceptional young man, sensitive and caring, with strong family feelings, as my brother. These precious letters bring home to us very vividly what a void his early passing left in the lives of those who knew and loved him.

I feel that some word of acknowledgement and thanks must go to Philip for all his hard work in setting these letters in book form. He too could be described as an exceptional, sensitive and caring young man, with strong family feelings. His parents and grandparents would indeed have been proud of him.



September 1944

SYLVIA BERMAN  
(1933 - 2016)  
Pretoria, South Africa



June 1994

**I** am the youngest of the six children born to Ruben & Rachel Kramer. Our only brother Myer was the oldest and he was nearly 20 when I was born. I have many precious memories of Myer that I will treasure always. Myer died when I was seven years of age and I think that many of the memories that I have of Myer are memories that I collected after Myer died. The memories that I have of Myer are so precious to me and I feel that putting them in print might trivialize them in some way.

I do remember, however, the excitement each time a letter arrived from Myer, and over the past 50 years I have read those letters over and over again. Many of Myer's values are reflected in his letters. It is obvious that he cared deeply for his parents and his sisters and family, and indeed for all humanity. He was a master of the English language, had a keen sense of humor and lived by a high set of morals.



1944

When our loved ones pass away we are left with memories. We must always remember those who have stirred our hearts. The memories we have of them mold and shape us, and as long as we keep the memories in our hearts, our loved ones are still with us.

LIEBE LAGNADO  
(1941 - )  
Houston, Texas



December 1994

**W**ith strong memories I am writing the foreword for this booklet. It has been compiled from the many many letters which my beloved cousin Myer wrote during the war years to his very loving parents, my dearest Uncle Rubin and Aunt Ray Kramer. Myer was my dearest cousin and treasured friend, who was cut down in the 27<sup>th</sup> year of his life. Had he lived, he would have been a man amongst men, possibly the doyen of the Kramer family in South Africa, a man that his loving parents would have been so proud of, and to whom his five sisters would have looked up. A giant among men, successful in every possible way.

Humbly I thank God that I was privileged to be a part of that family, and to have had Myer as my cousin. To know him was to love him. Myer, a man in a million, to be remembered by his loving family.



March 1944

ROSE BALKIN  
(1920 - 2004)  
Johannesburg, South Africa



June 1994

I thank Philip for all he has done in the undertaking of this booklet.

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the contributions of my aunts in the compilation of this booklet.

Aunty Liebe introduced me to this collection of letters when she sent me a selection of those which she felt were of particular interest.

Aunty Gertie is custodian of all the originals. I make special mention of her efforts in providing me with the photocopies of each and every one of them. Where the copies were unclear, or the handwriting illegible, I relied totally on her to decipher words and phrases. This was no easy task, and I know that she spent many hours on this.

Aunty Edie was particularly helpful in filling in some gaps and providing me with explanations of certain events and products of that time. It was her idea to include the image of Myer's diploma, the original of which she holds.

Aunty Sylvia and cousin Rose, in sharing their own recollections, put the era and events into perspective for me.

I thank them all - their interest and support during this project has been most encouraging, and has sustained my own enthusiasm.

Philip Stodel

Same old Box 27  
Port Elizabeth  
28·1·42

Dear Mom, Dad & the family

Here I am, back in gay old P.E., and I've just completed a day's work. That is perhaps an exaggeration, as all the work I did today could have occupied only  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour, no more, nevertheless, we'll pass over that. I hope you received my telegram which I sent first thing on my arrival yester-morning.

And now let me record the march of events in their chronological sequence since my departure on Sunday. As soon as the train pulled out, one gentleman in the compartment asked whether the Kramers had been to see me off, and, on my replying in the affirmative, introduced himself as a relation. His surname is Louis, & it appears that his sister's husband is Aunty Etta's brothers. That will be one of the Mrs Ger's, I suppose. In any case, I wasn't overthrilled, & didn't have much to do with him on the train. With John Elias, however, it was different. He's the chap with whom I play tennis in P.E. & whom I think I pointed out to you. He was also in my compartment, & as he'd been staying in a boarding-house in C.T., he didn't have any food with him. He intended going to the saloon but I managed to dissuade him. I pointed out that I was going to have difficulty in consuming all my food alone, so he kindly consented to help me. You'll probably not be surprised to hear that neither of us went to the saloon at all for meals, & that we managed five meals, quite solid ones too, out of my food, and then I've still got polony and sweets and crystallised fruits over. All we did was to get coffee from the saloon with each meal.

Elias had a certain distant-relative on the train, & she had a girl-friend with her, so the two of us had company as far as George, where they got off. Before they left us they introduced us to two girls in the next compartment, so once again we had company up to Oudtshoorn, where the last two deserted us. Then we read & ate & time simply flew. When we awoke on Tuesday morning we were 30 miles from P.E. and we arrived at P.E. at 8.45,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours late. Mr Elias' wife was there to meet him, & they gave me a lift, trunk and all, up to the house, whence I phoned to the Post Office to send a telegram.

I arrived in P.E. to find it raining. In fact it rained pretty well most of the way from C.T. to P.E. I understand they've had a lot of rain here the last few days.

Mrs. Van can't thank you enough for the cushion-cover, & as I suspected, Miss Mattisson says she can't use one at all, as she simply lives in one room herself. However, she was most thankful for the gift of a 3-lb box of crystallized fruit which I gave her. Yes, I decided to give her that instead of the honey. The honey now rests on our table in the dining-room. It was just as well I gave the crystallized fruit to Miss M., because I still had a few pieces over in my drawer, & when I awoke this morning the packet was black with ants so I threw it away. The packet of sweets you gave me also had to be thrown away. The biscuits, wurst, & Nestles chocolates, however, seem immune to ants.

I spent yesterday morning in phoning one or two people & visiting others, & in the afternoon I visited another one or two girls at their work & then did some shopping (Toilet Smalls) & then had a bath before supper, & in the evening I went out. So this morning, I overslept. I awoke at 8.

P.O. Box 27  
Port Elizabeth  
25·2·42

Dear Mom,

Here I am again, only this time I'm not in such a hurry as I was on Monday, as this letter goes on tomorrow-morning's train, & can be posted any time up to 7.30 a.m. tomorrow. On Monday I just

about got to the post-box at 5.30, & I stood until  $\frac{1}{4}$  to 6 to see if the van arrived, but I didn't see it. So I either missed the post, or else they collect it later, as 5.30 is the general closing-time for all boxes in P.E., so perhaps they empty those nearer town slightly later than the others which are farther away.

The weather of late has been stifling hot without a breath of wind, week-ends excepted, and the air has absolutely been charged with electricity, so nobody was surprised when the thunder-storm broke last night. We listened to some marvellous claps of thunder and witnessed a fine exhibition of lightning, & the rain came down by the bucket-full. I was studying at the time, so I couldn't appreciate it to the full, but even what I saw through the door I enjoyed.

I haven't yet stopped showing my photographs to my friends, and, as I forgot to mention on Monday, they all think that Miriam is marvellous too. I fear that if she ever comes here on holiday the boys won't let her go home again.

I'm finally settling down to serious, determined studies, as I've been intending to do the whole month already. I gave up gallivanting right at the beginning of the month but I just couldn't settle down to my books. I would study half-an-hour & then go to bed. However, now I'm doing really well. I must write to the Secretary of the Institute in Jo'burg at the end of this month for a syllabus, past examination papers and entry forms for the June exam, & I must also get a decision whether I'll be eligible to write then.

I'll be writing to you again on Sunday, when I'll enclose the usual £2-10-. My financial position this month won't be too hot, as my board had gone up 10/-, I'm paying £1 cricket subs, and the repair of my brown shoes will cost me 10/. In addition, I'm visiting the dentist tomorrow, but that account can wait at least a month.

Further than that, there seems nothing to write about, so I'll end with regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

P.O. Box 27  
Port Elizabeth  
30/3/42

Dear Mom,

Received your very welcome letter, enclosing cheque on Friday, for which many thanks. The cheque has been filled in & crossed to "The Chartered Institute of Sec." & for the amount of £2.2.0. I wrote to the Genl. Secretary in Joburg about my age, but I've had no reply yet. However, the local Secretary has advised me to put in my entry form & let the Council decide whether I'm eligible or not.

We played cricket on Saturday, & had quite a party in the evening to celebrate the end of the season. It was most enjoyable.

Despite the lousy weather yesterday morning I went to the beach, where it was cold & miserable. I set off at 12.15 to walk the four miles home & it started raining, & I got home sopping wet, having walked about two miles in the rain. However, I didn't mind that, in fact, I rather enjoyed it, as I was roughly dressed as usual, khaki shorts, old shoes etc.

In the afternoon I slept from two to four o'clock, & then wrote letters, & in the evening I went to the café & had quite an early night, so I'm not very tired today. Of course, today being Monday, the sun is shining beautifully.

While I think of it, let me wish you all a Happy Pesach, & as I said to Aunty Lil, enjoy it for me too. I haven't been asked out yet. Never mind,

שָׁנָה טְהֻרָה בְּמִילָאָן

And now there's nothing else to write about, & I've already used some of my employer's time, so I'll end with regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

P.O. Box 27  
Port Elizabeth  
15·6·42

My Dear Mom and Dad,

Of any letter which I have ever been called upon to write, this is by far the most difficult. In fact, I've put off writing this letter for the last two or three months, but recent developments make it imperative for me to write forthwith.

Dear Parents, you know how I've always felt about this War that is raging at the moment. I feel that it is the duty of every right-minded citizen to get in and help win this war and restore peace and order to this world, to make it a fit place for all the other Mothers and Fathers and Sisters to live in. The issues involved are too great to permit of comparison, and for the last 18 months, as you yourself once remarked, my heart has been up North, with my friends who are fighting my battle, while I look helplessly and hopelessly on.

Quite 3 months ago, when I first settled down to serious study, I once again began to feel the urge and necessity to participate actively in this momentous struggle. This war has covered many countries, brought hunger, famine and unhappiness and misery to many, and subjected countless peoples to the miseries of being over-run by the "Herenvolk". That state of affairs must not be allowed to come to South Africa, and the only way to safeguard against it is by defending ourselves in the North.

All the time I've been studying for my final exam., the whole driving-force which drove me to greater effort, and which comforted me night after night when I had to sit in my room at my studies, was the thought that immediately after my exam I could apply for release to join the Springboks in this terrific battle. The thought that if I failed in my exam in June I might be unable, by virtue of being in the army, to write again for some time, spurred me to greater efforts than would otherwise have been possible, and as I pointed out in my other letter, I am confident of the results of that exam. While I was studying, one phrase from one of my Lesson Supplements was constantly before me. That phrase was: "The only failure a man need fear is failure to cleave to the purpose he sees best". The only purpose which I see to be any good at all is to join the army and fulfil my duty towards myself, yourselves and our country, and I will indeed have failed if I don't cleave to that purpose.

About a month ago it became apparent that great changes in the Department were being contemplated, including a further release of officers for Active Service. Accordingly, I made an application to be released for Active Service, and I was told that my application would be considered at a later date. This morning a pal of mine from office, Miskin, and I were told that the Commissioner had granted our release. There remains, therefore, only the Medical Examination. Both Miskin and I have been rejected before, but we're to be examined again tomorrow.

I want you to understand everything correctly, Mom. I haven't on the spur of the moment decided to sign on just because I've attained majority. In fact, it hurts me to think that that beautiful key which you sent me should be put to its first use against your wishes. Nor is my decision to attest controlled by feelings of unhappiness, or any dissatisfaction at all. I am terribly happy here in P.E., I can at any moment gather crowds of friends, young, middle-aged and old, around me, I can go out every night, I have all the money I need to have a good time, I'm happy in my work, and I haven't a single worry in the world. But that's not good enough - I've no right to such perfect peace and happiness. The war is drawing very close to our shores, ships are being sunk right off our shores, Durban has been blacked-out on two successive nights, and there's no point in waiting here in P.E. So, following the dictates of my cold, sober reasoning, I feel I must join the army.

So please don't be annoyed, and don't worry about me unnecessarily. I shall probably be stationed for many months in the Union, probably at Potchefstroom, where I shall be absolutely happy.

Anyway, we'll see what the morrow's medical examination brings forth, and I'll continue then.

Wednesday 17·6·42

Well, I was examined yesterday morning, and Miskin too, and we were both classified as AI, so we're all set, and we're both terribly excited. The question of a short period of leave remains. In

view of the fact that it is barely 5 months since I visited Cape Town, there seems to be no need for me to come home before commencing training, especially as I'm pretty sure that I'll be able to get leave within a few months of reaching Potchefstroom, where I shall probably be stationed, and then I can travel at the expense of the army, and I'll almost definitely be able to get leave and visit Cape Town before the end of this year. I should, I suppose, mention that I'm going to attest for the S.A. Field Artillery, and it is most likely that Miskin and I, who are both joining the Artillery, will leave P.E. together on or about the 31<sup>st</sup> July.

Apart from all this, news is but scarce. I visited my old friends, the Bergers, with whom I spent Rosh Hashona, on Sunday night, and they were quite pleased to see me after not having seen me for about 7 or 8 months.

In a most unexpected letter from Aunty Lil today, I learnt that Jack Harris too has joined the army, and is stationed in P.E. I'll try to contact him, but it'll be rather difficult, as I don't know his rank or number or anything.

Well, Mom, I think I've written quite enough now. I'm awaiting an early reply, as I've not yet heard from you this week, and let me know how you feel. Please don't be annoyed or upset; God's in His Heaven, and, while all is perhaps not right with the world, I have been well looked after up till now, and we'll have faith in God that all will come right and end up happily. So if you'll just bless me with "Go and God be with you", we'll pray that all ends happily.

Write soon, Your Loving Son, Myer.

P.O. Box 27  
P.E.  
28·7·42

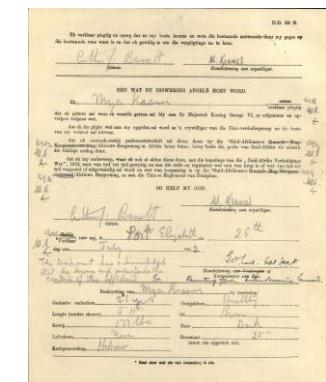
Dear Mom,

Here I am again. There's almost nothing to add to what I wrote yesterday, but I'm taking this opportunity of enclosing the usual monthly amount. Your next payment from me, or rather, for me, will come to you direct from Customs, Pretoria, round about the end of August.

I don't think I made any mention yesterday of the train journey. It wasn't bad, but it was most cold, & for some reason or other I didn't sleep too well for a change. There were five of us in the compartment when we left Cape Town, but during the whole of the journey I had 10 different travelling companions in my compartment. I was the only one who travelled all the way from C.T. to P.E.; the others disembarked at stations en route, while others joined me at various stations & came to P.E.

The clothes I brought with me will just about last me until I get into uniform; I've had to stand & wash out handkerchiefs & socks, however, & Mrs. Van ironed the hankies for me. I've not yet made any arrangements about sending my trunk home, but I'll fix it up tomorrow.

Anyway, there seems to be no more to write about, so I'll end with regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.



No. 329491  
F.A.A.D. (V) S.A.A.  
Potchefstroom.  
Monday, 17-8-42

Dear Mom,

At first sight of the familiar old pad-paper, you might jump to the conclusion that I am out of hospital. That, however, is not the case, as I am still in hospital, only there is no more of the other paper available, & in any case, now that I have my own pad there's no need to use red cross paper.

You'll be pleased to hear that the X-ray revealed no obvious fracture of the jaw-bone, so I'm all O.K. On Saturday the doctor almost discharged me from hospital, but then I brought up the subject of dental attention, so he told me to stick around, as it were, until my teeth were fixed up. So I went down to the dentist this morning. He extracted one molar, & I have an appointment for Thursday morning, when he will fill one tooth if possible, otherwise he'll pull it out. So I suppose I'll have to stick around until then. Anyway, as long as my teeth get fixed up that's all I want.

The folks from Joburg were supposed to be coming down to see me yesterday afternoon, so I got a pass to leave the hospital grounds from noon until 6 p.m. Then at 11 yester-morning they phoned to say they couldn't come, so after lunch I walked down to the Pimstones, & paid them a 2½-hour visit. It's about 3 miles from hospital to their place, & I had to step it out both ways, & I was thoroughly disgusted at not being offered a lift. Anyway, after being cooped up in the ward for 2 weeks, I quite enjoyed the little walk. Of course I walked down in hospital blues.

Miskin was up to see me on Friday night, & he brought up some mail, which included two letters from you, dated the 6<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>. I'm pleased you're all keeping well.

After two weeks in hospital I'll probably get some sick leave before resuming duty. In fact, there's just a slight possibility of my being able to come to C.T. on sick leave, but I'm not counting on it, so you'd best not count on it either.

Otherwise there's no more to write about, so, regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself,  
Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491 etc, at  
present stationed at  
52 Raleigh St. etc.  
Tuesday 25-8-42

Love from all, & I mean "all".

Dearest Mom,

Well, 'tis only I again. I'm still knocking around Joburg, delighting the hearts of the whole happy family, the only trouble is that each one of my aunts & uncles expects me to stay with them, so when I come here next time (P.G.) I think I'll come back twins or triplets, that will solve all the problems.

The record of my tour thus far is as follows: I arrived Friday p.m. at about 4: during the afternoon I visited everybody, & slept the night at Sybil. Saturday morning I went down to Rose & spent the morning there, & lunched there too & in the afternoon went to a wedding in Germiston with Aunty Lily. In the evening Lily, Lakie, Minnie (Lily's pal) Jack Causland (another pal of Lily's) & I, went to a show. This Causland kid is a 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant, & of course it's beneath my dignity to hob-nob with mere 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieuts, but being a pal of Lily's, I made an exception in his case. Sunday morning Rose took me for a game of tennis, then I lunched with them, & in the afternoon they took me for a drive & we ended up at Northcliff, if that means anything to you. After supper, Rose & I & Fanny (Roses's future sister-in-law) went out together & I slept that night at Uncle Harry's. Monday I went to Pretoria for the day, (as mentioned in my postcard from that city), & last night I dined with your brother, Uncle Sime, & played cards there in the evening.

You know, your family in this town hardly ever play cards. They played at Sybil's place only on Friday, Sat. & Sunday nights, & at Sime's place on Monday night. It's a pity there are only 7 days, or nights, in a week.

My itinerary for the rest of my time here is as follows (subject to amendment & depending on the weather).

This afternoon Rose is taking me to the zoo (I hope she brings me back again) & tonight Sybil & I, & perhaps Sime & Blume, are going to bioscope. Lily & Barney of course go to C.P.S. tonight. So I'll be sleeping at Sybil's tonight, (I slept at Sybil's last night too). Tomorrow morning Sybil Blume & I are going to Germiston for the morning. We'll go when Sime & Mossie go to work, & we'll come back to Joburg with them at lunchtime as they don't work in the afternoon. I don't know whether you've heard that Sime changed his job. He was working for Publix, & last week they told him to join up or get out, so he got out. Anyway, it only took him a day or two to get fixed up with a new job in Germiston, so he's alright now. Anyway, to continue my itinerary. Wed. night I'm going to bio with Rose & Fanny, while in the afternoon Aunty Lil has arranged a game of tennis for me. For Thursday I'm not yet booked (amazing?!), but in the evening I'm visiting Sime Master. Friday night I'm again going out with Rose, & Sat night we're all going to a C.P.S. dance. By all I mean Sybil & Barney, Lily & myself & probably Rose & Fanny. Sunday morning I'm playing tennis with Rose, & in the evening I return to Potch. Wed, Thurs & Friday nights I'm sleeping at Rose, Sat night at Sybil, & of course I divide the meals between the two families as well. So you see what a job I have arranging my tour in Joburg.

While I'm here I'd love to look up Miriam & Bessie Firer, whom I haven't seen in ages. I believe they're big girls now, but poor Bessie has been in hospital for about six months, suffering from St. Vitus' dance.

Uncle Harry showed me some letters from America last night. Aunty Fanny mentions that they had a letter & a snap from me, which I sent in February, & she says her daughter Jane is also working away from home & comes home occasionally for two or three days.

No. 329491  
Survey Course 194A  
F.A.A.S. (V) S.A.A.  
Potchefstroom  
Tuesday, 8-9-42

Dear Mom,

I intended, & indeed would have written on Sunday, but I was waiting to hear whether I'd been selected for the course or not, & I thought I'd write on Monday when I should have learnt definitely, as the Course started yesterday. However, I was damn annoyed because they left me on the string yesterday, and it was only this morning that I heard that I had been selected. I regard this as a terrific stroke of luck, and will end up with either 2 or 3 stripes. I was surprised to see my pal Miskin back at camp on Sunday night. He was sent down from Barberton to take the same course, so we're together once again.

The Initials in my address now stand for Field Army Artillery School. Technically I've been transferred from the Depot to the School, but actually I'm still in the same bungalow. However, I may be moving to a bungalow in the School shortly. Nevertheless, there's quite a difference between being on the strength of the Depot & being on the strength of the School. The School is all that the name implies. We set out in the morning with note-books & text-books, pens & pencils. We have no drilling on cannons or with rifles, instead we go out into the field in the mornings & do surveying, & in the afternoons we have lectures in the school-room. Our hours are also slightly different, being 8.30 - 10.30., 11 - 12.30, & 2 - 4, & then we're off. Of course, we'll probably have

a bit of private studying to do, as the course is quite difficult, but if your son isn't used to that then no one is. Finally, there seems to be more freedom as regards passes out of camp when one is in the school.

It was quite a nerve-wracking experience waiting to learn whether or not we'd been selected for the course, but I hoped for the best, paid no attention

No. 329491  
Survey Course 194A  
F.A.A.S. (V) S.A.A.  
Potch.  
At 18 St Georges St.  
Sunday 27/9/42

Dear Mom,

Here I am again, spending another week-end in Johannesburg. I managed to get my week-end pass, & arrived in Joburg at 6 pm yesterday. I came straight to Uncle Harry's, & then for a short visit to Aunty Blume, where I didn't see Uncle Sime as he was on duty. Then I went to Aunty Sybil for supper, & then Rose, Fanny & I went to bio together. We saw a most marvellous show - "Friendly Enemies". It's really a good show, & if you ever get a chance, you & Dad must see it. After the show we picked up Uncle Harry at the Balkin's, and then I slept at Uncle Harry's place. Uncle Harry was on duty last night from 12.30 - 4.30, so he played cards until 12.30. We all played tennis this morning, Aunty Lil & her pal Minnie too, and now I've just finished lunch at Rose's & in a few moments I'll be going up to Aunty Sybil for the afternoon, & I'm having supper at Aunty Blume tonight, & then I've got to get my train back at 8.20. So you see, I have quite a busy time with all my social engagements.

We're just listening to a broadcast from "Way up North". Perhaps you're listening too, we've just heard a broadcast of the Rosh Hashona service at El Alamein, which sounded lovely, and which was followed by messages from Jewish boys.

The parcel which I received on Friday, was neither my spectacles nor my certificate. Instead, it was a lovely metal mirror from a girl-friend in P.E.

Our survey course becomes more & more interesting each day, and our studies now include astronomy. I'm becoming quite familiar with the various constellations, & I'm beginning to call all the stars by their first names.

Well, there seems to be no more to write about. All the folks, Firers, Kramers & Chaitis, send best regards & love. Give my regards to all, & Tons of Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

P.S. How are my specs getting on?

No. 329491  
Gunner Kramer, M.  
Survey Course 194A  
F.A.A.S. (V)  
Potch  
Thursday, 8·10·42

Dear Mom,

No complaints at all, thanks! On Monday I received your letter dated the previous Monday. Yesterday I received your letter written on Sunday, & today I received your letter written on Monday, the 5<sup>th</sup>, as well as letters from Gertie & Sylvia.

I'm sorry I haven't written since I left Joburg on Sunday, but I must plead extenuating circumstances. I hope Aunty Lil didn't forget to post the letter I left with her, so you will have received the £2 I gave her, which, with £5-1-8 from Customs isn't at all bad, what?

My diary of the week is as follows: Monday was spent in the field, & we got home at about 4.30. After supper we went up to the Y.M. where we saw a perfectly horrible show. Tuesday again was spent in the field, & this time my pal Miskin & I were left in charge of preparing the food - chief cook & bottle-washer.

On Wednesday morning we had another exam, & while we haven't yet got the result of that exam or the previous Saturday's, I feel that I've got 100% for Wednesday. As I mentioned, for last Wednesday's I got 100% for one subject & 94% for the other.

Last night I got a pass & I and two pals went down town. I saw the Pimstones for a few moments, & then we went to a Dance, getting back to camp at about midnight. Today we did another scheme in the field, & got back to camp at 4.30. After supper we had a little game of pontoon, 30 limit, & I came off 8/6 to the good, which is all-right. It's the first time I've played for months.

Tomorrow our course ends, & my pals will be going to Barberton. I don't know yet whether I'm going or not, so I'm applying for a week-end pass for Joburg.

I'm enclosing a few documents which may be of interest to you. In regard to the letter from the Commissioner, my certificate I fear is already on the way to "Mon Desir", so I've made arrangements for them to forward it to me, I'll forward it to the Commissioner, with a letter requesting him to return it to you. So just get those gilt-edged frames ready!

The glasses are still O.K. and the frame is very nice. Incidentally, what did they cost, so that I can pay you back some day.

How is Aunty Masters keeping. I believe Lakie has managed to wangle a two months transfer to Cape Town, so you'll be seeing her shortly. Rose & Arthur too will be back in a few week's time, so you'll have first-hand accounts of myself. I've heard rumours of Uncle Philip not being too well, but you've not mentioned anything. All Mazelton on Barney Louis' daughter.

Well, there seems to be no more to write about, so I'll end with regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

Oct 42

Dear Sylvia & Gertrude,  
or Dear Gertrude & Sylvia,

I hope you don't mind my writing a letter to the two of you together, but if I write separately, then each letter will only be about two lines, & that's not much good, is it?

I'm glad you both did so well at School. As you know, I've also been at school for the last five weeks, and I also came second in class. Now I'm going to Barberton, which is still further away from home.

Did you get those stamps I enclosed last time, Gerty? And did you, Sylvia, get the Croxley jotter. This time I'm enclosing some more stamps for Dirty Girty.

Write to me again when you have time, love to all, Myer

No. 329491  
Regimental Headquarters  
22<sup>nd</sup> Field Regiment.  
S.A.A.  
Barberton.  
13·10·42

Dear Mom,

There's no news to write, but this is just to let you know that I arrived safely at Barberton today, after leaving Joburg at 7.5 p.m. yesterday, and to give you my new address, so that you can resume writing to me.

This afternoon was spent in polishing etc, & talking to the new boys in the bungalow, & this evening I went to bio at the Y.M. Now it's almost time for lights-out, so I won't write much more. It's still too early for me to have formed any impressions of Barberton, but I like the meal-arrangements. We get waited on by natives, & actually eat out of plates on a table-cloth.

Well, I'll end off now & probably write more tomorrow, regards to all, & Tons of Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491  
Regimental Headquarters  
22<sup>nd</sup> Field Regt.  
S.A.A.  
Barberton.  
15·10·42

Dear Mom,

Here I am with more details of my new life. We arrived here on Tuesday, after a trip which wasn't too bad. It didn't start off too well, as my seat wasn't booked on the train, but I managed to find a seat & had a good nights sleep. Tuesday afternoon we were simply interviewed by the Officer in charge of the surveyors, & had the afternoon off, & in the evening we went up to the Y.M. On Wednesday morning we had 1½ hours gun-drill, & when we had to push the gun I perspired so that I must have lost about 50 lbs weight, or perhaps slightly less. Incidentally, I weighed myself at the station at Kaap Muiden (look for it on the map), and I weighed 199½ lbs in my army kit. After the gun-drill we had a lecture, & had the afternoon off. Today we did a bit of mountaineering. We climbed a hill, about 700 feet, & was I glad to get to the top - and what a journey coming down.

Conditions in this camp are damn good. The food is excellent, & we no longer have to line up for it. Instead, we park at the table, & are waited on by natives.

We have lovely showers in camp. They're not under a roof, but simply in the open air surrounded by a wall of reeds, & one can shower & sunbathe simultaneously - almost a nudist colony.

They're quite free with leave passes here, but once again the town is quite far from the camp. However, I understand that it's possible to go to Joburg for a weekend about once a month, so perhaps I'll still go.

There's no more news, so regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

Dear Edie,

I haven't got many moments to spare, but I feel I must take this chance of wishing you many many Happy Returns of the Day. I hope you get this on Saturday, but in any case, you'll probably have received a telegram on Saturday, & you'll know your brother hasn't forgotten you.

Love to all, Happy Birthday, Myer

No. 329491 etc.  
28·10·42 (Wedn)

Dear Mom,

Well, here we go again. Many thanks for your letter which I received on Monday. It was welcome, most welcome 'cos as you say, you didn't write for about a week, but for a change I didn't worry, as I knew where the delay lay, namely, your not knowing my address. Your letter was still more welcome as it reached me when we were way out in the veld on manoeuvres. We went on manoeuvres on Monday morning, spent the night in the open, & returned on Tuesday afternoon. The manoeuvres went off quite well, we used live ammunition, & the noise was terrific. The surveyors had quite a good loaf most of the time.

When we returned from manoeuvres on Tuesday, at about 3 p.m., I immediately got stuck into washing my clothes. One's clothes get rather mucked up on these schemes we do, and, as I haven't done any serious washing since I left Potch, and, as I wanted to have my clothes clean for Jhb, I had one devil of a lot to do. It took me about 2½ hours of hard work to get finished, & what do you think happened after all that. I was advised that my week-end to Joburg had been cancelled for some or other reason. It was most annoying, & I, of course, decided to apply for the next week-end, in about a fortnight's time. It gives me great pleasure, however, to tell you now that I've changed my mind. Instead, I've applied for leave from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> November, & also for the weekend 13<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup>, so that I'll be able to get at least about 12 days at home. As I mentioned in an earlier letter, the whole regiment is given leave round about Xmas, but we only get 10 days, giving us Capetonians only about 5 days at home. So I've decided to take this other leave instead. If it is not granted, I'll still be able to fall back on the Xmas leave, which is during Dec & Jan.

The period of Xmas leave is divided into 4 sections, so that only 25% of the regiment is away at a time. The periods are ① 5<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> Dec, ② 16<sup>th</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> Dec ③ 27<sup>th</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> January ④ 6<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> January. We can apply for whichever period we want, & it's pretty well immaterial to me which one I take. However, I'd like your advice. If there's any particular period you want me to apply for for any particular reason, just let me know by return of post. In the meanwhile hold thumbs that my 15 days leave is granted for November.

We managed to get passes from 2 p.m. until 6.30 p.m. today, & we spent the p.m. at the swimming baths. It was lovely. Even now, at 10 p.m. it's so hot that the boys are sleeping without blankets.

The surveyors are accompanying another battery on another scheme tomorrow. We leave tomorrow morning & will return Friday p.m., which will give me a chance to iron my clothes in the afternoon, so that I'll have something to wear if I go to town on the week-end.

Well, there's no more news, & 'tis already 10 p.m., & I must still fill in my leave form so that I can put it in tomorrow before going out, as we leave at 7 a.m., so, regards to all, & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

Name & no.  
R.H.Q.  
22 Field Regt. (V) S.A.A.  
6<sup>th</sup> Armoured Div.  
c/o A.P.O.  
Durban.

Dear Mom,

Don't be surprised at the address. We arrived at camp today straight from hospital, & have been told to use the above address. It'll mean that your letters will take longer to reach me, but any letters which you may have addressed to me at the address given last week will reach me quite quickly.

I've got something between 20 & 25 days leave coming to me, but I don't know when I'll be leaving here. It's a matter of waiting for a booking on a train. Furthermore, I'm afraid there's no way of sending a wire from this camp, so I may be unable to warn you of my arrival. However, I'll do my best to let you know from Joburg as we pass through.

We left Middelburg Hospital at 9 p.m. yesternight, & waited in the train until it left at 2.30 this morning. Fortunately, we had beds, so we were able to sleep from 9 until the train reached camp this morning at about 7.

I'm feeling very fit, & am looking forward to that long period at home. So I'm hoping it doesn't take too long to get that seat.

Don't expect to hear from me for the next week & if you wish you needn't write until I arrive. And please don't worry. Everything will be made clear when I get home shortly.

Regards to all & Tons of Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 22 Fld Regt S.A.A.  
6<sup>th</sup> S.A. Armd Div.  
c/o A.P.O.  
Durban  
28·3·43

Dear Mom,

I looked forward all week to Sunday, for I hoped to sleep late, & spend the rest of the day writing letters & washing clothes. Unfortunately, we had to get up at the usual hour this morning & attend the usual parades, & do the usual work, so I'm writing this during lunch-time.

We lead a very quiet life in camp these days. We rise at about 6.30 a.m. attend two or three parades during the day, attend a few lectures, & go to sleep with the fowls, as there's no light in our tent. Last night it rained heavily, & after we'd been in bed for what seemed hours, we found it was only 1/4 past 7. Most of the boys have quite a lot of time to themselves during the day, but my time has been taken up in the office. I'm glad of having something to do, but it prevents my bringing my correspondence up-to-date. We'll have to beg, borrow or steal a lantern so that we can write letters at night.

We, (the occupants of our tent which we called the "Poplars") were rather in disgrace at the beginning of this week. An inspection of tents by the O.C. revealed that ours was the worst in the lines. We were told off considerably, & given about 1/2 an hour to set our house in order. That half-hour was one of feverish activity, at the end of which our tent shone like a newly-minted coin, & we were all but praised on our effort. Some wag has taken the opportunity to change our name from "The Poplars" to "The Unpoplars" - a cruel sense of humour.

Well, it's almost time to get back into harness again, so I'll end with regards to all & Love to

Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

P.S. Have you received a cheque from Customs yet, as well as my allotment from the army. Love,  
M

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
M.E.F. A.P.O.  
Durban  
22·3·43

Dear Mom,

I've received two letters from you in the last week, and I don't think I've yet acknowledged either of them. The first one, written on the 10<sup>th</sup>, reached me last Friday, & the second written just after you'd received my telegram that I was spending a week-end in Jhb, reached me two nights ago. That letter was a terrific surprise and pleasure, for we had then already been at sea a few days, & I didn't expect any letters until we reached our destination.

I suppose Dad & Phil are by now back at work, their holiday a thing of the past. How did Dad enjoy his? And thank Sylvia for the letter which she wrote.

Well, we, of course, are enjoying a life on the ocean wavy. "Enjoying" is hardly the correct word, but we suffer in silence. The first day at sea wasn't too good. Most of the boys were sick, but I, fortunately, experienced no more than a sensation of giddiness, & from the second day on I felt absolutely fit. By now I feel like an experienced salt.

We spend all day up on the open decks, where it's horribly hot, but which is better than being down below on the Troop Deck, for there it is stuffy as H... and our port-holes are closed, so all the fresh air we get is thro' a ventilator or two.

There are any number of us eating & sleeping there, so at night half of us sleep in hammocks, & the other half on mattresses on the floor. I was very fortunate, for I managed to sling my hammock directly under a ventilator, & so slept quite well. Last night we were shown pity & allowed to sleep on deck.

I've met Joe Faivelowitz on board, & also Wolfe's brother, Sammy Fish. Ask Miriam or Edie, if they see Wolfe, to tell him that I've seen Sammy.

I've no idea when you'll receive this, probably after we've disembarked, so don't worry about me. Please keep writing, as I look forward to your letters, & I think you'd best start using Air Mail Letter Cards, & I'll do the same.

Don't send me any money yet. I'll let you know when I need it.

That's all for now, so regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
M.E.F.  
c/o A.P.O. Durban  
"Somewhere at Sea", 26·4·43

Dear Mom, Dad & Sisters,

Here I am again - still at sea. The days are long, and monotonously boring, or rather boringly monotonous, so, having grown tired of reading, I'm turning to writing.

We are becoming quite accustomed to the life at sea. We're up each morning bright & early, in the words of the popular song, at 6 a.m. to be exact, but against that we go to bed at about 8 p.m.,

owing to the blackout which is most rigidly enforced, so we have plenty of sleep. Furthermore, apart from "boat-drill", which occupies  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour each morning, and an occasional lecture, we have all day to ourselves, so we spend the day gazing at the sea, reading, eating, sleeping, & then looking at the sea again.

We spend little or no time at all down on our mess-deck, where the heat & stuffiness is indescribable. We're even allowed to sleep up on the open decks at night, so the only time we go down below is for meals.

At first it seemed quite strange to see every chap on board walking around with life-belts slung across their shoulder; by now, however, it seems so common-place that I can't picture ourselves without it. We have it with us all day, & use it as a pillow by night. I swear that even after we have eventually disembarked, I shall instinctively feel for my life-belt whenever I go from one place to another.

It's strange that one never seems to tire of sitting & gazing out to sea. There's such a hell of a lot of it, & you would expect that one would sicken of seeing the same thing all day long.

But, somehow, the sea is never the same, but is forever changing. Sometimes it is calm - it was so all day yesterday, so calm, with not a ripple breaking its even surface, that it stretched like a huge mirror on every side; as the sun rose on the calm sea yester-morning, it flecked the small wavelets at the side of the ship with gold, a most beautiful sight; last night, so still was the sea that the reflection of individual stars could be seen therein. Sometimes it is choppy, at others quite turbulent, but always changing. It's colours too: they vary from green, thro' light & dark blue, to black after sunset. And, as the ship cleaves her way thro' the water, little wavelets are sent out from the sides, breaking into white foam, but, before breaking, showing a pale blue colour like a puff of smoke, and at night one sits for hours watching the flashes of phosphorous as the waves break.

A strange sight is seeing flying-fish darting in & out of the water. They leave the water, glide for about 20 or 30 seconds or more, covering quite a distance, & then disappear back into the sea. As they skim the surface of the water, they might easily be mistaken for swallows, for they, or rather, those I've seen, have been no bigger.

The meals on board leave much to be desired, but we are able to augment them by the purchase of jams, biscuits & chocolates, so we're able to stave off the pangs of hunger.

A tug-of-war contest is being arranged. I'm in the regimental team, and we should have a good chance of winning the competition.

We have already crossed the equator, & the weather seems to have become cooler. None too soon either, for the sun was unbearably hot these last few days.

Well, folks, that's all for now. Give my regards to all & Love to the Family, & keep writing, Your Loving Son, Myer

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
c/o A.P.O. Durban  
8<sup>th</sup> May, 1943

Dear Mom,

Here I am again. This is probably the first letter you'll have received from me for quite a time, for, altho' I wrote two letters while we were at sea, they probably went down by surface mail, so they'll arrive after this. You've no doubt heard rumours & stories that we had left the shores of the jolly old South, and I'm sorry that there was no way of sparing you the worry you've almost certainly, I think, experienced at not hearing from me for a few weeks, and wondering how we were faring at sea.

Well, this letter will serve to reassure you that we arrived safely and that I am pretty well in the pink of condition. We had quite a pleasant trip up, which I shan't describe in full, for I have already described it in my letters posted on board. The ordinary common or garden variety of cold seemed to be the order of the day towards the end of trip, and I'm still suffering with a cold now. However, I don't doubt I'll shake it off as soon as I get acclimatised.

I seem to have overlooked to mention that which you're most interested to hear, namely, where I am. The answer is Egypt - the land of the Pharaohs. While I was on board, I thought it strange that while you at home were celebrating Passover, the exodus of our forbears from Egypt, I should be on my way back there. It only goes to show something or other.

I can't tell you much of this country, for all I saw of it was from the open door of an Egyptian State Railway luggage-van as we passed thro' various stations. All I've seen so far are a lot of dirty-looking houses, & a multitude of Egyptian beggars & hawkers - equally dirty - who tried to sell us 1/- slabs of chocolate for 4/1. However, there's a possibility of our being allowed to go to Cairo on leave shortly, after which I'll give you some more about the land. Oh yes, I've seen lots and lots of the desert, great stretches of sand.

Reverting to our voyage, we had a tug-of-war contest during the last week. Our regiment entered a team of eight, of whom I was one. Interest grew more & more as we came thro' each round unbeaten, until finally we won the final, & each man in our team received a prize of two pounds.

The currency up here is quite easy, but I'm always inclined to think in terms of £.S.D. Actually the Egyptian pound is worth £1-0-6 of ours. It is divided into 100 piastres, that is 5 piastres to the 1/-, say 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d each. Further the piastre is divided into 10 millemes - equivalent to our farthing. We've had to accustom ourselves to the Egyptian numerals, for some of the coins have no English numerals on them at all.

We get an issue of two of these cards weekly, & pay for the stamps ourselves. However, I'm afraid two aren't enough for me, so if you get a chance, please send me say a dozen cards to carry on with. You can enclose them in a parcel if you wish.

I suppose that by the time you receive this, Miriam will be in Joburg, so I'll write to her tomorrow, as it's now almost bed-time.

That's all for now, Mom, so I'll end with regards to all & love to Dad, the girls & yourself, & please write soon. I'll write again shortly, Your Loving Son, Myer

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
26-5-43 No. 6

My Dearest Edie,

Many thanks for your most welcome letter which I received today. It's rather sweet of you to apologise for not having written for so long, but at the same time the apology goes to my conscience, for, altho' you don't know it, I owe you a letter. However, I shan't keep you waiting at all this time.

I'm glad to hear that all at home are well, & I too am in the pink. This life suits me right down to the ground.

[One whole quadrant of this letter has been torn]

really appreciate our country. We work during afternoon, & then go for an hour or two. wander lazily up hill farmland & orchard, along and across small the streamlets, inhaling the We're so absorbed in the field, & recalling we've not used or that we mark neither the distance we at about 8.30 that in an attempt to before dark. course of our meanderings

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F. A.P.O.  
Durban  
2·6·43

No. 3

Dearest Mom,

I've decided on a new scheme, and I'm putting it into practice right now. Up till now, I've always had difficulty in trying to fill one of these cards once or twice a week, so I'm going to write a few lines every night, and then post the card when it's full. We'll see how that scheme works.

I had another good day today - I received 8 air mail letters, including one from yourself, which was written on the 22<sup>nd</sup> ult., for which many thanks. I'm terribly disappointed that on the 22<sup>nd</sup> you had not yet had any letters from me, because the folks in Joburg had by that date received my letters written at sea, and furthermore, Aunty Lil had already received Miriam's letter which I actually wrote a day later than my first air mail to you. However, I'm confident that you will by now definitely have received these backward letters, and you'll know I've been writing all the time.

So Miriam's in Joburg, Becky and Sam are (or were) in C.T., Bertha Trakman's going to Joburg, and Edie is probably in Calvina. Yes, I know all the news, for I've had letters from Rose, Miriam and Lily today as well, and I'm perfectly happy. What with having received 17 letters in two mail-days, the shortage of air mail cards presents quite a problem, but I very luckily received a letter from Rose today in which she enclosed 3 cards, and I've been able to beg some, borrow some and buy some, so I'm O.K. until next mail-day.

Have you heard anything about my allotment yet? When you do hear, you'll probably receive a cheque for the last few months - I've fixed up everything this end.

How is Dad feeling now? I hope he is fit and completely got over having his teeth out. Dad, and you, will be pleased to hear that I still attend a service every Friday night, in fact, last week I attended a special service on Thursday night as well, to honour the Senior Chaplain of the Jewish members of the forces in the M.E., and next Tuesday and Wednesday will be having Shavuoth services in the evening. Moreover I have a Sidur with me, which I keep very handy, as I use it as a

table on which to write my letters, so I often read parts of it and keep myself from going rusty. Well, I can't think of anymore now, so I'll carry on tomorrow night.

6·6·43

I received two letters from home today - and weren't they just welcome. One was from you, the other from Gert - and I can't tell you how much I enjoyed Gert's letter - it's about the most enjoyable letter I've had for a long time - she certainly writes well. I'll write to her tomorrow.

I'm glad you're all keeping well and fit. I'm in the pink, and am going on leave to Cairo tomorrow. I'm hoping to be able to buy one or two things there to send home.

Now that you've received all my letters, I'm quite happy. The one, as you say, was obviously incorrectly dated - it should have been 22/4/43.

I haven't yet received your letter containing the snaps, but I've not doubt they're on the way up - I should imagine they'll arrive here in about a month's time. As I told you in my last letter, I've already signed new allotment forms, and you should be hearing from Pretoria very shortly.

I was at Shul on Friday night, and the Padre spoke about modern Hebrew classes which he intends holding. He can't give us all the particulars yet, but when he does I intend attending, and brushing up my old knowledge - it'll probably come in handy.

It seems that Mr Natas is up here, for I saw a reference to him recently in a report of the opening of a synagogue in Cairo. I should really like to see him.

Well, there seems to be no more to write about, so I'll end with regards to all and Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F. A.P.O.  
Durban  
8·6·43

My Dearest Gertrude,

Your letter was the loveliest surprise I've had for a long time, & I can't thank you enough for it. You really write well, & I enjoyed reading your letter immensely, & my only regret is that you write so seldom. In future you must write more often, & tell Sylvia & Edie & your big sister to write as well. I can't promise to write to everyone all the time, because in the first place there's not enough news and in the second place we have other work to do in the army, besides writing letters, but I'll write to you all as often as I can.

I've got quite a bit of news to write for a change, for I spent a day in Cairo recently. But before I tell you what we saw & did in Cairo, there are one or two other things I must tell you. First of all, let me wish you a Happy Birthday on the 25<sup>th</sup>, and many many happy returns of the day. I've posted a present to you, an Egyptian bracelet, which I hope you'll like. Unfortunately it will take a long time to reach you so you'll probably receive it about the end of July. Please tell Mom that I've sent her a big leather shopping-bag, & Miriam a photograph album. The two articles were put into one parcel, & should also reach home about the same time as your bracelet.

And now let me tell you about Cairo.

We arrived at Cairo station in the morning, and immediately all the guides in Cairo started pestering us to let them take us all over the town. We weren't interested in them, for we wanted to have breakfast first, & then go sight-seeing, so we "shoo-ed" them away, but they clung like flies. Then we found that it was impossible to get rid of them, so we hired one. He took us to a place for breakfast, & at table we discussed the day's programme. There were 7 of us together, & I must admit we were surprised when the guide came into the cafe with us & sat down at our table, because, while some Egyptians are very light-skinned, the majority are dark (and dirty) and we sort

of expected him to wait outside for us. The guide's name was Moses, & he was a most amusing sort of chap. His English was quite good, & we decided amongst ourselves that if we wanted to discuss anything in front of him without letting him understand us, we would use Afrikaans - and as soon as he heard us talking Afrikaans he said "Eendrag maak mag" - it sounded very funny, but that was all he knew of the language. After breakfast we started on our sight-seeing. The seven of us clambered onto a gharri - a four-wheeled horse-drawn vehicle - and rode thru the town until we came to the Mosque. The trip was quite breath-taking because all traffic in Cairo rides on the right-hand side of the road, & everytime we saw a car approaching we thought we were going to have an accident. Furthermore the gharri-driver has got his occupation down to a fine art, & he would pass pedestrians & other vehicles with only a hairs-breadth to spare. We dismounted at the Sultan Hassen Mosque - a 70-year old mosque, where worshippers of Mohammed used to pray, but which is seldom used these days. It is a huge building, walls 150 feet high, & much marble, granite, ivory, ebony, & mahogany is to be found in it. The blocks of stone of which it is built are so high that it's wonderful how they were moved around & put together to make the building. When Napoleon was in Egypt his guns fired on Cairo, and one of his cannon-balls is still to be seen lodged in the wall of this mosque. Then we went to another Mosque, called the Coronation Mosque. This was built only 85 years ago, & in it are buried the members of the Royal family of Egypt, dating back to King Farouk's grandfather. This is a very costly building, and like the other mosque, strongly made of expensive materials. The roof is beautifully rich with colour, and the floor is carpeted with a thick heavy carpet. The inscriptions on the tombs of those buried there are in gold, the tomb itself being of marble. Then we went to the Bazaars. Now a Bazaar isn't the same thing as what we call Bazaars in the Union - it is a collection of small shops, each one dealing in a different line, spread over a big area. There are mingy little lanes, not streets, winding their way between the shops, & I think it would be the easiest thing in the world to get lost there. The whole place has a most unpleasant smell, & all one sees is peddlers & dirty small children, on whose faces the flies sit untroubled - the flies sit on their eyes, their noses, their mouth & ears, & the children don't even trouble to chase them - it's a most disgusting sight.

Then we had lunch at the Ouma Club, & in the afternoon we visited the Pyramids of Gizeh, & the Sphinx. There are in all 9 pyramids of Gizeh, of which three are large & 6 small. The first large one is 350 foot high, & the base covers 12 acres of land - it's terrific. The stones used to make the pyramid are at least 5 or 6' high, & it's miraculous how those pyramids were built 5000 years ago. It took them 30 years from start to finish of the pyramid. 100,000 men used to be kept at work at a time, & every 3 months they had to change their men. We didn't go into the pyramids, but we went into the Temples of the Sphinx, & in one chamber we saw the skeleton of a minister of one of the Pharaohs.

From there we went to a Photo studio to collect some photo's we'd had done, & that was the end of our visit.

Cairo itself is quite a big town, but it's very dirty & evil-smelling. In the street one is pestered by peddlers selling every conceivable object. Some of them even have cans of coffee strapped to their body & sell it - of course we've been warned against buying food or drinks in the town, & the only places we eat at are the Soldiers' Clubs. If you stop for a minute in the street, then the shoe-shine boys get busy - they just about pull the boots off your feet until you let them polish the boots.

I'm enclosing a snap of myself & a group-snap of the seven of us who went in together. I've got quite a few snaps of myself, & I'll be sending another one or two home by surface-mail, so if Dad likes he can send a copy to the folks in America.

Tonight is Shavuoth, & I'm going to a service, so I'll end now.

Love to Mom, Dad & Sisters & Thanks again for writing. Please write again, Your Loving Brother, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F. A.P.O.  
Durban  
13-6-43

Letter no. 4  
Dear Mom,

I don't seem to have stuck to my proposed plan of writing a few lines each night very well, have I? However, I've had a pretty busy week of letter-writing, for, what with my recent visit to Cairo, I had much to write about. Furthermore, I've had a good week as regards inward mail, for on Wednesday I received 3 letters, & today 4 - I've heard from Lily, Rose, yourself, & one or two friends. I also had a letter from Gita in Palestine - remember her? I've written her quite a long letter: I'm welcome to visit her anytime I'm on leave in Palestine; I'd like to make such a visit round about Rosh Hashona, and I'm hoping for the best. I've sent a copy of my Cairo photo to each of the Joburg families, & I'll write & enclose a snap to Aunty Beck tonight or tomorrow. I still have three or four over, as I had a dozen printed (I actually ordered six, but they printed an extra six by mistake), and I'm sure Dad would like me to send them to the Capetonian Kramers & Joffes. I'm not too keen, 'cos I won't know what to write about, but if Dad wants me to, I'll get a letter together & send them off. Just give me the word.

I'm glad our correspondence has sorted itself out at last, and we're receiving one another's letters regularly. I don't think there's much chance of our letters going astray, & I think you've now received all my letters up to the point where I started numbering them. Some of your letters, however, have yet to reach me, & I'm looking forward to getting them in the next surface mail - I'm particularly keen on getting those snaps. Tell me, how did that rather embarrassing snap of Baby Liebe turn out?

I didn't manage to attend the Pentecost services last Tuesday & Wednesday, because they were held about 2 miles from my camp. However, I attended the usual Friday evening service, and there I bumped into one or two old friends - the first was Willie Levenstein, whom I first met in P.E. at the Nirwin's place - I think he's a brother of the Doctor in Milnerton; the other was Asher Bernstein, Mrs Geffen's brother who had that day had a letter from Mrs Geffen in which she mentioned that I was in Egypt.

A feature of all the letters from the Union seems to be the cold spell you're having - letters from Joburg, from Durban, from C.T. - they all tell the same tale. We usually have to wear our coats only if we go to bio, for then we get back late, & it's usually chilly in the mornings, but during the day it's so hot that chocolates & polish just melt.

The cheque from Customs seems right - I take it you've received that cheque every month. When you do get my allotment, which I have fixed up here, you'll get quite a packet, for there'll be 4 or 5 months back-pay.

I haven't yet received the Joburg parcels, but Aunty Lil posted hers early in May so it should be here soon. Thanks for getting a parcel together for me - the things you suggest will be most welcome, but I'd like to suggest that you include one or two small medical things, e.g. a small bottle of iodine, a drop of boracic powder, a small roll of sticky plaster, and that's about all - these little things are always useful.

I mentioned in my letter to Gertrude that I had sent you a parcel containing a leather shopping-bag & photograph album. Please let me know when you receive it. Gertrude's bracelet is in a separate package, registered by surface mail.

Many thanks for your good wishes for my birthday. We weren't able to celebrate in anything

like time-honoured fashion for beer is only sold twice a week, & my birthday didn't fall on beer-day so we had lemonade & chocolate instead. I was very lucky to receive postal-orders both from Aunty Lil & Rose & her Dad - the Joburgers are definitely good to me - I do my best to deserve it.

The Jewish Padre conducts classes in Modern Hebrew daily from 3-4 p.m., but unfortunately the classes are held 2 miles away, & the hour is most inconvenient, so I can't attend them.

Well, this letter leaves me well, fit & happy and I hope it finds you all the same. How is Dad keeping? Has he got over the loss of his teeth.

Give my regards to all relatives and friends, & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F. A.P.O.  
Durban  
18-7-43

No. 9

Dear Mom,

Altho' a whole week has passed since last I wrote to you, I have in the meantime written a letter to Miriam, so it's going to be rather difficult to fill this letter-card without repeating things I've told Miriam, particularly as news here is terribly scarce. However, I received a letter (F) from you today, and also 3 air-mail cards (for all of which many thanks), so I'll do my best, and you can't accuse me of not trying.

I am glad to hear you're all keeping well at home - I am too. I suppose that Edie and Sylvia are home again, so you've got the house full. Give Uncle Philip and Aunty Ann my love, and thank them for their message.

In your letter you said that the cheque from Customs "was as follows", and then you left a space to fill in the details, and promptly overlooked filling them in. Anyway, I've a pretty good idea of how the amount was arrived at. Let me know what allotment you receive.

Baby must be growing into quite a big lady. I'd love to see some new snaps of her, but I suppose you can't get any spools. I'm not sure whether spools are available in Cairo, but next time I go in I'll look out for some, and try to send some home. I don't suppose you've yet received the parcels I sent home early in June.

Have you seen "Desert Victory" yet? We went to see it last night, and it was really good.

Have you ever received my Diploma from the Chartered Institute of Secretaries? You've never mentioned it, so I suppose it's got lost somewhere in transit. Seeing as how I did qualify in the exam, I suppose I might as well have the diploma, so I think I'll start making enquiries about it one of these days - I must write first to "MonDesir" and Customs in case it was sent there. Do you know whether Dave has yet received his Diploma?

Today's newspaper has just given us the news of the Governor General's death. The flags in camp are being flown at half-mast.

We all voted on the 25<sup>th</sup> June, but I'm not sure whether I'm actually a registered voter. Things moved so fast about this time last year, just after I turned 21, that I can't remember whether I registered or not.

Well, Mom, that's seems to be about all for now. Regards to all, and Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F. A.P.O.  
Durban  
28-7-43

No. 11

Dear Mom,

I received my usual amount of letters today, & I should get stuck into replying to them, but somehow or other I just don't feel like writing letters, so I'm writing these few lines, & then I'll turn in early.

I've just posted off a parcel addressed to Miriam, containing half-a-dozen tubes of toothpaste, and I included a tube of shaving-cream & a packet of blades for Dad. I hope it reaches you in good condition, & I hope it doesn't take too long. I've had to squeeze the bottom of the tubes slightly & roll them up to make them smaller, so that I could fit them into the tin in which I've packed them.

When you receive the parcel, you'll see that the tin and the cloth in which it's wrapped have had quite a bit of travelling. The tin, as its label shows, came up from the jolly old South in our last batch of parcels, while the cloth is one of our celebrated "glory-bags". You'll see in one corner of the "glory-bag" that it originates from Woodstock S.A.W.A.S. Now its on its way back to the Union again.

The heat up here is terrific these days. It's nine o'clock at night now, & I'm lying in my tent clothed only in a bathing-costume, & believe it or not, I'm perspiring. We had a terrific soccer-match against one of the batteries today, which we lost 5-3. We played at 4 p.m. in the heat of the day, & I felt like lying down during the last 10 minutes - I just couldn't take it.

Today was quite an unusual day, for on Wednesday's we always get our weekly ration of 100 cigarettes, we get our letters, and today, in addition, we received our monthly allowance, the magnificent amount of 150 piastres - £1-10-9 sterling. So now we've got nothing to grumble about - we've got money, cigarettes, letters, & we even got a ration of beer tonight. Our beer ration is actually 1½ bottles of beer per man per week, but we're usually able to get an extra bottle or two on account of the chaps who don't buy their ration. In any case, the 5 of us in our tent make our beer last by "pooling" our beer, & drinking chandies each day.

I've been able to sample the Vico & Nescafe which Aunty Lil sent me, and it's really delicious. A few soft & sweet words with the cook, & he gives me a pot of boiling water, to prepare the drink.

29-7-43

Does today's date mean, or rather, convey anything special to you, Mom? No, it's not anybody's birthday! Today marks one year since Gordon & I signed on the dotted line, & left the happy surroundings of P.E. for Potchefstroom. Hell, I'm becoming quite an old soldier, aren't I? All of us in our tent belong to the "Tobruk Avenger" vintage of volunteers, and one chap celebrated his anniversary last week, while all the others celebrate theirs in the next week or two. The jocular greeting on these occasions is a good-humoured "Many Happy Returns", but it's not at all appreciated by the recipient of the greeting, in fact, he takes a very dilapidated view of it. This is a damn fine war, an all that, but the sooner it's over, the quicker, as someone once put it.

The S.A.A. are having a sports meeting with the New Zealand Artillery tomorrow. There will be tennis, cricket & swimming, & I'm going along in the role of spectator. I've been lucky, as only 3 chaps out of the 10 of us can go, so we drew lots, & I was one of the three. It will be a nice break from camp, altho' the outlook of rising at 4.30 tomorrow morning is not so hot.

You know, you often ask what to send me in a parcel, & I never know what to ask for. Well, from time to time things come to mind, so I'll mention them in my letters, & you can make a note of

them, & bear them in mind until you send a parcel. I'm thinking at the moment of boot-polish. We can get it up here, but it's a useless Gypso make, so if you can send me some S.A. polish, I'll be glad. I prefer Kiwi Dark Tan, but if you can't get Kiwi, any other S.A. polish will knock this Gypso stuff into a cocked hat.

31-7-43

Well we certainly had a good day out yesterday. The sports meeting was held at Maadi, a suburb of Cairo, & obviously a better-class suburb too. It has quite a number of English residents, people who lived there before the war, and the town is really beautiful with tree-lined streets & avenues. The town has built itself a wonderful sports ground, in which there are tennis courts, a cricket field, an athletic track, and a swimming pool, bowls greens, etc. and yard upon yard of invitingly green grass, a variety of trees and flowers. The South Africans beat the New Zealanders at cricket and athletics, but they beat us at tennis and swimming. We, the spectators, had, I think, the most enjoyable day of all. We wandered from place to place, watching first one sport & then another, and never tiring of any. During the morning we wandered down to the Recreation tent, run for soldiers by the British residents of Maadi, where the attendants are voluntary workers, much like at the Y.M.C.A.'s & Soldiers Clubs in the Union. There we had a delightful mid-morning meal, a salad consisting of tomatoes, cucumbers & egg - most welcome vegetables, altho' we often have cucumber in camp, & boiled eggs for breakfast every morning. The New Zealanders took us to lunch, after which the swimming races were held. In between races, chaps were allowed to swim, and the absence of bathing costumes didn't worry us. We also dived in, & the swim, my first in about 4 months, was all I needed to perfect the day.

The "Kiwis" have "Springboks" and we They are built much tanned, as their lives at down South. Another they are also

I received a surface-Guess when it was exactly 4 months ago. written by you after my much travelling & re-up with me. It contains Simon in P.E. who lent him. In that letter Liebe's behalf, for Didn't I remember it in did overlook wishing dreadfully sorry, & it can apply to my other never forget their birthdays.

Apropos of birthdays, while I was in Maadi yesterday, I bought two presents, one for Edie & one for Sylvia. They're intended for their birthdays & as I've sent them down in one parcel by registered surface-mail, they ought to arrive about in time for Sylvia's birthday, & long before Ethel's. They'll probably read this letter, so if you want to keep the news as a surprise for them, pencil out this paragraph before giving Ethel the letter.

Well, that's about all for now. We'll probably go to bio tonight, & tomorrow is Airmail day, so I should be hearing from you.

Regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.



much in common with the got on very well together. like ourselves, & are also home are as open as ours point in common is that volunteers.

mail from you today! written - 31<sup>st</sup> March '43, It was the first letter embarkation leave, & after addressing, it has caught that letter from that chap returned to you the book I you picked me out on forgetting her birthday. a subsequent letter? If I her "Happy Birthday" I'm won't happen again. You sisters for references - I

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F. A.P.O  
Durban  
1-8-43

No. 12  
Dear Mom,

Well, it's Sunday morning, and the day stretches lazily away before us. There's some delay with our post for a change, so while I'm waiting for letters, I'll make a start with this. We went to bio last night, & saw some terrible cowboy-show. We came back to our tent to a good meal, on tinned pineapples & a tin of cream which I bought at the canteen. Now we have finished our parades for the day, & the rest of the day is ours to do with as we wish - it's a lovely feeling. Of course, occasionally something unforeseen occurs to mar the peace and beauty of this day of rest, but then, there's a war on so we can't complain. In general it seems to be the policy of the leaders of this Div that the men be allowed to rest on Sunday. A very wise policy, too, for it's been proved over & over again that that makes for better work during the week.

Hello, hello, & hello! Here's our morning coffee (with cake donated by John) and our mail. How many letters for me? One, two, three, four, five - that's all. Not bad either. A letter from Gert & yourself, one from Miriam, one from Rose, one from a girl-friend in P.E. and an envelope from you containing 4 A.M.L.C.'s (short for Airmail Letter Cards). Rose's letter also contains 2 A.M.L.C.'s so the position is quite good.

I'm sorry that you & Miriam haven't yet got your parcel. John & Harold sent exactly the same bag to their mother & wife respectively on the same day as I bought yours, & they've also not been received. As a matter of fact, I was so sure that you had received the parcel, that I gave Harold a 5 to 1 bet that today's letters would acknowledge receipt of those parcels. I almost won the bet, for Gert has acknowledged receipt of her bracelet; anyway, 5 to 1 in piasters is very little - it's equal to 1/- to 2½<sup>d</sup>, so my losses aren't terrific. That's one way we have of amusing ourselves in our tent, and of creating extra interest in ordinary events. For instance, the Egyptian Daily Mail publishes a picture every morning of some beauty or other - a film star, a stage actress, a singer, anything. Well, Gerry & I have quite regular bets as to whether she'll be blond or brunette, auburn or bald.

I'm glad you received my allotment at last - it was a goodly amount too, wasn't it. If you continue putting away a fair quid for me each month, I should have quite a bit put away when I get back.

Please let me know on what dates Rosh Hashona falls this year, as I'd like to send out just a few cards, & as it'll be a very bad-paying proposition if I send them by Airmail, I want to send them by Surface, which means I must send them off very early. If I'm unable to get some greeting-cards myself, I'll approach the Padre & see if he can get me some. He'll probably be able to, so that'll be alright.

We've heard no more of leave yet, but we're all hoping for 7 days shortly. Rumour has it that we're not allowed to go to Palestine, but I do think I'll be able to arrange it.

Well, Mom, I really seem to have left myself with no more to write about. I could probably fill this card if I left it over for a day or two, but I shan't do that, as I want to add a few lines to Gert. Anyway, I'll probably start another letter to you tomorrow.

Regards to relatives and friends & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

Dearest Gertrude,

Many thanks for the letter-card you wrote to me. You'll be landing yourself in trouble one of these days for writing letters in school when you should be doing something else. Anyway, as long

as you write to me, I don't mind when or where you write - the letter is the thing that counts.

I'm glad you liked the bracelet. I remembered that you asked me for a fountain pen, but now that I'm in Egypt I thought you'd prefer some Egyptian filigree to a fountain-pen.

How did you like that coloured snap? It wasn't very good, was it? But considering that the photographer had to colour six snaps in as many minutes it's not too bad. In any case, I'm no oil-painting.

I posted another "Springbok" home yesterday, just by way of a change. How did you like the other one?

Tell your sisters Edie & Sylvia that now that they're back from Calvinia they can drop me a few lines. I know nobody likes writing letters on holiday, but they must make up for it when the holiday is over.

Oh yes! You started your letter at school, & at the top you put "LETTER", and you meant to fill in the number later, but then you must have forgotten, for the letter is unnumbered. However, I know it's number H.

Well, Gert, there doesn't seem to be any more to write now, so I'll end with regards to all & love to Dad, Mom & Sisters, & write soon, your loving Brother, Myer.

P.S. Love from all the boys (ha-ha!)

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F. A.P.O. Dbn  
3·8·43

Letter no. 13

Dear Mom,

This scheme of writing a few lines at a time a few times a week sounds very well in theory, but as happens so often, theory breaks down when it comes to practice, for I'm once again encountering the same difficulty that made me discard the scheme last time I tried it; namely, when nothing out of the usual occurs, there's little enough to write about even once a week, let alone four or five times a week. However, I'll give it a final trial, and try to make something of it.

Our little party (the surveyors) have been out in the desert for two days, and we only returned this afternoon. We were a sad sight when we got in, for we were covered in dust from head to foot - quite a lot of dust is raised in the desert when travelling across it in a vehicle, and as we sat on top of our vehicle all the time, we caught all the dust. We were begrimed, bedraggled and be-bearded, for we hadn't shaved out in the desert. However, we'd had a good time, working all day, preparing our own meals, and in general, revelling in the relief we feel when we're able to get away from the routine of camp - parades, inspections, etc. We had to maintain a guard over our camp while we slept, so we took turns but even that was almost a pleasure, as it meant only  $\frac{3}{4}$  hours each, and, of course, we simply passed the beat in our pyjamas.

I'm writing this up at the Y.M.C.A., where we're playing Table-Tennis. Rather than waste the intervals between games, I'm making good use of the time. Please excuse the horrible blotch on paragraph 1 - it's either honest sweat off



Washing-day in the desert.  
Johnie Bartleet at right

the brow or it's a splash of well-earned cold-drink. Which it is I'm not sure, for I'm both sweating and drinking at the moment, and one minute the splash wasn't there, and the next minute it was. Apropos of table-tennis, I have a request to make, which will require Jack's co-operation perhaps (I'll write to him in a day or two and tell him of it). I want you to send me a table-tennis racket, as the only ones they have at the Y.M. are wood, while I prefer a wood-rubber face on the bat. So if you give Jack the money, and ask him to buy me a T.T. bat, faced with pimpled rubber, I think he'll do the rest. He'll know best what bat will suit me - tell him not to worry much about the weight, but medium-weight is about the best. Finally, it'll probably be some time before you send me another parcel, so, rather than keep me waiting unduly for the bat, just send it up on its own. I thank you!

4·8·43

Wednesday! Mail and cigarette day! And they're both right there, 100 cigarettes and no less than 5 letters, including letters from Rose and Lily. One letter was from Middelburg - my girl-friend at the hospital, a one-pipper. I don't know whether I mentioned that I've been corresponding with "my nurse" ever since I left hospital. She was one of those who put up with my ravings, fads and fancies while I was in the throes of malaria, in fact, I gave her more trouble than I gave any of the others, for she was on night duty, and you know how the nights are when one is ill. When I was unable to sleep I used to have her bringing me hot coffee, cocoa, ovaltine and rusks, whatever I wanted. She was very good to me, and I promised to look up her mom while I was in Jhb, but with all my pressing engagements, I couldn't make it, so I was content with phoning her mom. Anyway, my nurse is still waiting for my snaps of Middelburg; has Edie had another set printed yet? She and I are able to carry on an interesting correspondence, for she was up North for many months, before returning to the Union.

I can't decide what to do this afternoon - I've got lots of washing to do, but I've also got many letters to write. I'm horribly behind on my correspondence again, the excuse no longer being letter-cards, but sheer laziness and lack of subject matter for letters. I'm beginning to think that I'll get too many correspondents; I'll have to give the matter deep consideration.

5·8·43

Well, my troubles solved themselves yesterday - I neither wrote nor washed. An officer had a little job he wanted done, so Gerry and I spent the afternoon doing it. However, I was able to get a letter to Jack written while I was at the Y.M. for Table-Tennis last night, so it's not so bad.

I'm writing these snatches of letters during lunch-time. We break from 12.30 until 2, and by the time we've eaten and laid out our beds, it's 1.15. Then we usually get onto our backs and snatch forty-odd winks; all the boys are occupied that way at the moment but I've given up the practice, cos you no sooner close your eyes than it's time to get on parade, and then one feels damn annoyed at being so rudely disturbed.

6·8·43 7 p.m.

Well, I made a visit to an old, old friend of mine today. No less than the dentist himself. My teeth haven't been troubling me, but I got the opportunity of visiting the dentist today, so I took it. You see, normally when you want dental attention, you have to put your name on a waiting-list at the Medical Officer, and wait your turn. And as I'm keen on getting a new plate, and as the opportunity presented itself on the spot, I made a visit today. The battle with the dentist ended in a draw; he extracted one tooth, which hasn't worried me, but which was due for extraction just a year ago. It was a tooth which broke almost in half when I did my little faint in Potch a year ago, and at the time, while I was having dental treatment, the dentist didn't want to pull that tooth as my lower jaw, after its fracture, was too weak. Anyway, the dentist made no bones about it today. It's just over two hours since I've returned, and my tooth, or rather, the yawning abyss where my tooth used to be, has already stopped bleeding, and the effects of the injection are beginning to wear off. I'll be getting two partial plates - upper and lower, for I've got almost nothing left on the lower jaw with which to chew.

Tonight is Friday night, but I'm afraid I've missed the usual services the last two weeks, and I'm missing tonight's as well. Normally two services are held - one at our Y.M., and one at the Y.M. at the other end of the camp; the Padre himself officiates at one, while a Capt. Silverman takes the other. At the moment one of them is away, so only one service is being held, two miles away, so I'm missing it. I'll probably start again next week.

'S all for now. Regards to all, and Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F. A.P.O. Dbn  
11-8-43

No. 15

Dear Mom,

It's rather difficult to account for my not having written to you these last two days. If I were to be perfectly honest with myself, I'd admit that it was due to laziness, - but why be honest with myself? Anyway, lack of subject-matter for a letter has something to do with it - it's difficult to write when there's nothing to write about. So these last few days, instead of writing to you during lunch-hour as I've done up till now, I've been allowing myself the luxury of a little horizontal exercise after lunch - "ironing one's blankets" is the technical term in the army - it costs no effort at all, and it's the most delightful sleep of the day - you lie down, read about two pages, put down the book, and then drift slowly into the tender and welcome arms of Morpheus. It's a very light sleep, for you fall asleep with the full knowledge that the sleep will last for only  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour, and your ears are tuned for one of your tent-mates' shout of "come on, come on, 'stme for that so-and-so parade". Then you gather your scattered wits, and your cap and shirt, and boot along to the parade-ground, and it's only after you've done half-a-dozen left-turns, right-turns and about-turns automatically, that you begin to come to life and register.

We had some terrific Table-Tennis on Monday night. Our team turned out to play a match with the Ac-Ac (Jack Walt and Co), but they didn't turn up, so we had a bit of practice amongst ourselves - I played about 25 games during the evening, and then I was so tired that I couldn't fall asleep for hours after I got "home". I managed to find a rubber-bat, but it's rather light, so I'm looking forward to the one you're going to send me, even tho' it won't be here for some time.

We saw a fine show at the local last night - incidentally, our local has been christened "The Olympic" - quite stylish, what? The show was "Stand by for Action" - a lot of flag-wagging about the Yankee Navy, but there was plenty of action and plenty of humour, so we enjoyed it. We're going to bio again tonight. My correspondence seems to have fallen off rather, so I needn't spend every night replying to letters - the only letter I received today was one from Rose.

13-8-43

I had a busy day yesterday and I'm still feeling tired. We played a soccer match in the afternoon, and a Table-Tennis match last night - quite a bit of exercise all-in-all, and I didn't get to the tent until after 11, so I'm slipping-up on my beauty-sleep. This afternoon we've got a soft-ball match on, and tomorrow we're again playing soccer and table-tennis, so I'll enjoy a good rest on Sunday.

I still see red every time I think of the shopping-bag incident. Honestly, I'd rather that they hadn't sent anything home at all than that they should have sent a cheap unfinished bag. Anyway, I've learnt a good lesson from that, believe me. I find that I'm not allowed (for reasons of security) to write to the shop, so I'll have to wait until I'm able to go in to Cairo and see them - not that I expect to get anything from them.

I haven't written to Edie yet, but I shall probably do so early next week. In the meantime, thank her for her letter, as I forgot to mention it in my last letter.

14-8-43

Saturday afternoon! Our soccer match has been cancelled, so as soon as I've written a few lines I'm going to lay me down and enjoy a beautiful sleep.

I went along to the usual Friday night service again last night, after which I adjourned to the bio, to see a very disappointing show called "Hit Parade of 1943".

"The Sable", the official organ of the 6<sup>th</sup> Armed Div. has been published. I'm sending it home. It contains some quite good articles, and there's one story, about the Armoured Div., which is really excellent. The trouble is that you won't really appreciate it, as it's written in Biblical style, and common-place names are spelt phonetically and disguised as ancient names, e.g. Smuts is represented by "Jah-nih", so unless one knows all the people they talk of, the tale loses much of its meaning. I'll find out whether we're allowed to make a note in the margin explaining the names, for that will help you to enjoy it.

15-8-43

Many thanks for your letter which I received today. I had a letter from Gladys too, and, believe it or not, one from my Uncle "Sime".

I've spent a most unusual Sunday today. Usually I start writing letters as soon as the mail arrives in the morning and spend all day at it. Now, however, it's just after 8 p.m. and this is the first time I've put pen to paper today - I've slept all day instead, getting up only for breakfast, 9 o'clock parade, tea, lunch and supper. Then after supper I did a quick hour's washing, and now here I am, all ready to go back to bed again.

I saw Jackie Walt again last night - we played a T.T. match against them, and we had some good games.

When I went to Maadi, I managed to buy one spool, so we've taken some snaps in camp the last day or two. So when we've had them developed I'll be able to send them home.

One useful job that I managed to get done today was that of sewing a collar onto a shirt. You probably remember when I was on leave once I gave you the job of making and sewing-on a collar. That shirt has given me notice, so I handed it in and got a new one, but before I handed it in I cut the collar off. I'm quite proud of the job I made of sewing it on.

Thank Gert for her contribution to your letter. I'll write to her one of these days. Incidentally, the letter I received today was 'K'. Please make a point in future of letting me know which letter you've received from me.



*My regular barber, Harold Hudson.*

*A bank official learns to manipulate the scissors & clippers.*

Well, Mom, that seems to be about all for now, so I'll end with regards to all, and Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F. A.P.O. Durban  
23·8·43

No. 16

Dear Mom,

I suppose there was a letter from you for me at camp yesterday, but as I'm not in camp I'll receive it during the next few days. Where am I? Guess! No, you're wrong - I'm not on leave. I'm just paying one of my six-monthly visits to hospital with a recurrence of malaria. It's not as bad as my first attack, & the worst is already over - my temperature is back to normal and it's only a matter of another two days perhaps and I'll be up and about.

It all started on Wednesday last, when, feeling rather groggy, I went to sleep at 2 pm, then took some Aspros & slept the clock round. I reported sick on Thursday morning, & the M.O. said it was probably a slight touch of 'flu, so he gave me 48 hrs excused duty, & I spent Thursday in bed, taking the pills he prescribed. I spent a bad night that night, so I reported to the M.O. again next morning, & he said I'd best go to hospital, as it was probably what is known as Sanofly Fever. (Trust me, I thought, to catch something new). So I went to the Camp hospital, where blood tests showed negative for malaria, and as that hospital is only a transit hospital, I was moved next morning to No. 5 S.A. General H, where another blood test has shown malaria, & I'm on the old diet of Quinine again - what a horrible taste it has. I thought that the maximum temperature I reached at Middelburg was high - remember, it was 103°. Now I think that was a mere nothing, for altho' I don't know what my temp. was like in this hospital, I do know that I scored 105.6° in camp hospital on Friday - not bad, what? In fact, quite a heat wave.

The movement from the one hosp to the other was a comfortable experience. I was, of course, a stretcher-case, so I went by ambulance to the station, & by ambulance-train to Cairo. The coach is well fitted out to take 10 stretchers, & seating accommodation for 15 others.

I haven't given you the address of this hospital (for one thing, I don't know it) because if you address your letters to the hospital, by the time the first letter reaches the hospital I'll be back in harness. So rather you address the letters in the same old way, & our regimental post-bloke (he appears on my left in that group snap I sent home - the guy with the Fez) will see that I get all my letters in time.

There were  
Mail last week, & we  
parcels over the week-  
whether they arrived.  
to them in a big way.

Excuse the pencil,  
has run out of ink, &  
nurses so much  
want to bother over

I hope you are all  
don't worry about me,  
worst is over and I'm

I'll write again shortly. Regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son,  
Myer.



rumours of a Surface  
were expecting our  
end. I wonder  
I'm looking forward

but my fountain-pen  
I've worried the  
already that I don't  
asking for ink.  
well at home. Please  
Mom, because the  
almost fit.

Regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son,

Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F. A.P.O. Durban  
31/8/43

No. 18

Dear Mom,

Many thanks for your letter which I received today. It was most welcome, & I shan't even comment on its brevity, for that is unimportant. A letter from home is a letter from home. Also, thank Edie for her letter which arrived today too - I really enjoyed it, and will reply in the near future.

Meanwhile, here's some good news for you, just by way of a change. Your son leaves hospital tomorrow, and is going to a convalescent home at Alexandria, where he will spend the next 7 days. And then back into harness, to help win the war.

I've had no more news of leave to Palestine, but, after waiting 2½ months, I received day-for-yesterday a letter from my girl-friend (pardon me!) in Palestine. I was sorry to hear that she has just lost her father. I'm looking forward to seeing her in the near future.

I've heard from Cousin Jack, and he tells me its rather difficult to get a decent bat in Town, so I've written to him & told him that in view of the fact that the Padre has acquired one or two rubber bats, which are at our disposal, he needn't worry about buying me a bat.

I've thought of something else I'd like you to send me some time. If you've just posted a parcel to me, then you can make a note of it & send it up at your leisure. There's definitely no hurry for it at all. My request is for a pair of athletic shorts - white, blue, black, or any other colour of the spectrum. You know the thing. Just a thin pair of shorts, for use at P.T., soccer, etc. At the moment my bathing-costume serves all these purposes, but I feel like a change.

Are your cheques coming through O.K. now? The allotment, & the monthly balance of civil pay from Customs. Let me know details of the cheques, just to make sure there's no mistake. Incidentally, I'm almost due for another increment again. It starts from 1<sup>st</sup> November, two months hence, and it means an increase of two guineas in the monthly cheque from Customs - not bad, is it?

I've managed to catch up on my correspondence beautifully during my sojourn here, & the only letters I owe really are to Miriam & Edie. I've been writing so much to you lately that heaven alone knows what I'll write to them. But, you know me, I'll do it somehow. I also owe Uncle Sime a letter, but he's used to waiting.

You've no idea of the number of parcels on the way to me. In fact, I've almost lost count myself. As far as I can recall, the position at the moment is that there are two from Aunty Lil, at least one & probably two from you, one from Rose, one from Aunty Beck of Calvinia, and one from Uncle Sime - a total of seven, I think. The good days are just around the corner.

Well, that's about all for now, & I'll be writing shortly from con-camp to give you all the latest dope.

Regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F. A.P.O. Durban  
11·9·43 No. 21

Dear Mom,

Many thanks for your most welcome letter which I received yesterday. I was relieved to hear that all at home are well and I too am in fine shape. Since Tuesday I've been doing P.T., which isn't at all strenuous, but the exercises are really good, and I'm feeling very fit. I've continued with

swimming and rowing, and a photo, which I had taken yesterday & which I'm posting on by surface-mail, will show you how I'm sunburnt. I received one or two letters by surface-mail this week, one being from Aunty Beck, of P.O. Box 4, & Sylvia. Thank Sylvia for her letters - they were most welcome.

This letter will be quite a relief to your eyes after my last few letters, but I haven't got quite as much to write about as has been the case in my last few letters.



words - "Italy has surrendered unconditionally." Just imagine the cheers that almost lifted the roof off the house! What excitement! What an apt and appropriate climax to "Desert Victory"! Nothing could have been better timed.

I and Falcon Smith, who came here together, went for a trip to Alexandria yesterday. The Y.M.C.A. advertises a sight seeing tour daily at 2.30, & we hoped to go on that tour, but we were disappointed, for when we got there at 2 p.m. the tour was full. So we were left to ourselves, & tried to see as much as we could of Alex. We took a ride to the Beach, Stanley Bay, & the tram-ride wasn't bad; it recalled Cape Town on a Xmas Eve, for, instead of the conductors using whistles, they use something that sounds like those cone-shaped paper affairs with streamers waving at the end that is, or used to be, fashionable on Xmas Eve. At Stanley Bay we learned that the best places for us to patronise are the Services Clubs, Y.M.C.A.'s, & so on, for we went into a café & ordered two teas & two cakes. And do you know what it cost us - the equivalent of  $\frac{3}{9}$ D - I ask you! You could have bowled us over with a feather when we saw the account.

Alex is rather a nice, & slightly cleaner, place than Cairo. A feature of Alex is that every second shop sells war snaps & views of Egypt, Libya, Tripoli & Tunisia, & also is a photographic studio. Another thing that I noticed in Alex which didn't strike me in Cairo was the sight of seeing two full-grown male Gyppos walking around arm in arm. I thought at first one was blind & was being led by the other, but it seems that it's just a gesture of mutual friendliness. Looks strange, all the same. In Alex one is still pestered by street-hawkers, beggars & "shoe-shines". One can usually disregard all this & simply walk on & be lost in the crowd, but we were caught at a disadvantage yesterday, for we stopped at a wayside photographer (one of those beach-cameras so popular at the Cape many years ago) for a photograph, & we stood there about 10 or 15 mins. Waiting for our snaps, so we

were a wonderful target for the shoe-shines. We've learnt never to stand still in the streets for one moment. So while we stood there, these little 5,6, & 7 year-old-shoeshines pestered us. Their recital is very amusing. It goes like this:

"Shoe-shine, George?" - No! "No money, George?" - No! "Skinned, George?" - Yes! "Broke?" - Yes! "Absolutely?" - Yes! "Clean your boots for a cigarette, George!" Old Smithy finally gave one a cigarette & told him to scram. So he was back a minute later, saying that as old Smith had given him a "backsheesh" cigarette, he would polish his boots "backsheesh" - Big-hearted Arthur! And them, while polishing the boots, the little so-and-so said he wanted 10 piastres (2/-) for the job. Smith finally got away with paying 3p. - and if you tell them to scram in stronger terms, in their own language, they tell you where to get off in English or Afrikaans.

We had supper at the Y.M. & then went out to meet the truck which was supposed to pick us up at 8 p.m. We got there at 7.45 & waited till nine, but no truck, so we can only assume that the truck left early, & 30 of us went out in the truck, & at 8 there were 6 of us there, so the other 20-odd must have gone in without us. We managed to get a lift most of the way back to camp, but it left us with a 2-mile walk to our camp. Were we tired? - and annoyed! The only consolation was that I found a letter from you waiting for me when I got in.

I've received no parcels yet. I'm posting by surface-mail the snap I had taken in Alex, & some snaps of Egypt I bought. I find I can't send a suitable telegram to Maitland-Brooklyn H.C. for Rosh Hashona, so offer them my apologies. Regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
at 1.S.A. Con Depot,  
11-9-43

No 22

Dear Mom,

Just after I had finished off letter no. 21 to you, Smith (where've I heard that name before?) came in & told me of an Archaeological Tour to Alex on Monday, so I decided to go promptly & forthwith to the orderly room & put down my name fore the tour. I took over my completed letters & posted them at the same time, and then I happened to look at the notice-board, & saw that there was a registered letter for me. So I dashed along to the Post Office, established my identity & received the letter, dashed along to the U.D.F.I., exchanged the Postal Orders for piastres at a discount of 6d in the £1, as the S.A. £ is only worth 19/6 in Egypt, & then back to the Post Office for stamps, so this letter, which I intended sending by surface mail, can now go airmail. I was running short of money, for we only get paid £1 weekly here, & Smith & I went to Alex yesterday with exactly 12/- each, & returned with 3/- between us - we had to count the pennies, & we were prepared to live on the 3/- for the next three days until pay-day. Anyway, the money arrived most timely - I'm rather glad it didn't arrive before I went to Alex, for I might have been tempted to spend it, & as you know it's ear-marked for my leave, so I've got to carry on normally & look after it. I only hope I get my leave. Many thanks for the money - I'm truly grateful.

I'm enclosing the snap of Smith & I taken yesterday. Don't I look black? I'll tell you an incident about that. On the train from Cairo to Alex, when I was coming to this place, a little Polish lass in the A.T.S. settled down in our compartment. She spoke a bit of English, & helped to pass the time in the train. Yesterday, walking along some street in Alex, we bumped into her, & the first thing she said was that I look like a Gyp - not exactly a compliment, isn't? She was an interesting kid - a Jewess. She was in the Polish army at first, & got out of Poland when the Jerry took over & is now in the A.T.S.

I must tell you of two chaps who moved into our "villa" recently. They're sergeants, & both

Yiddishe boys, but here's the amazing thing. The one is the spit-image of Arthur J., even down to, or up to, the moustache; while the other is a replica of Cousin Dave. And it's not only in appearance that one marks the resemblance; it is evident in their manner, their speech & their actions. Arthur's double is independent, full of himself; Dave's is a quiet sort of chap, been thro' it with the first div, but doesn't talk of it, very kind, talks very deliberately, as tho' he's weighing up everything he says & does. Honestly, I only have to lie on my bed with closed eyes, & I hear Dave & Arthur. To finish it off, "this" Dave is single, while this "Arthur" is married & has a kid of about the same age as Arthur's kiddie. "Dave" knows most of my friends in P.E. as he used to holiday there, and also knows "my" nurse in M'burg: "Arthur" was once stationed in Brooklyn, & knows the Levetans, Ashbergs, etc.

Beyond that there's little to add to letter no. 21. By way of explanation, the enclosed photograph was taken at the base of a statue erected for one Zaghloul Pasha, or sumpin like that, one-time Premier of Egypt. The statue is in Ramley Square, Alex. The snaps aren't too bad, considering the photographer.

Well, that's really about all for now. Regards to all, & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt.S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F. A.P.O. Durban  
19-9-43 No. 24

Dear Mom,

There's almost nothing to add to all that I've written to you recently, & news is very scarce. However, I've just written to Lil & Rose, from whom I had letters on Friday, & there's about 1/2 an hour in which to catch the post, so the mood takes me to drop you these few lines. Don't worry about the brevity of this epistle - I'm expecting a letter from you on Tuesday, & then I'll be writing again.

So this is just an old-fashioned Firer-style note - hullo, I'm in the pink, and goodbye.

We saw the Italian Fleet coming into port on Friday morning. We were on the beach doing P.T. when we saw this impressive sight - a column of about 20 ships stretching out to sea.

Friday afternoon I spent in Alex again, & this time I actually went on a sightseeing tour. We visited the catacombs & Pompey's Pillar, all of which was very interesting, except that the guide himself was disinterested & uninteresting. However, I'm hoping to do the same tour again tomorrow, as a party goes from this camp every Monday under the guidance of our Information Officer, & then I'll be able to write you an account of the sights.

I managed to get a couple of spools for my camera in Alex, & I've already taken some snaps here. I'll send the snaps home as soon as they're ready. I'll reserve the other spool for my trip (I hope!) to Palestine.

I'll be seeing the MO again tomorrow, when I hope to get the good news that I can go back to camp this week.

Well, that seems to be about all for now.

Before ending, let me express my sincerest wishes for a Happy, Peaceful & victorious New Year for all, & well over the Fast.

Dear Mom, I had written some words in Hebrew here, but I find it means special censorship, so, to avoid delay, I've taken them out. Regards to all, & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Keep Well, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F. A.P.O. Durban  
On leave in Jerusalem,  
29-9-43

בְּרוּשָׁלָם,  
אַרְצַת שְׁרָאָן  
שָׁבָת רָאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה, חֶשְׁבָּן  
No. 26

Dearest Mom, Dad and Sisters,

In my last letter, written in haste on Sunday night, I intimated that I wouldn't be writing for about 10 days. Well, what I really intended to convey was that you would be receiving no letters from me for that period, for we're not allowed to post letters while on leave, and not that I wouldn't be writing, for there is so much of interest here, and so much to write about, that I intend writing each day, and posting the accumulation when I return to camp.

Now, to proceed in a logical, and chronological, sequence, we'll start at the beginning. We arrived in Cairo yester-morning, in time for breakfast, and, as our train for Pal. was scheduled to leave at 2.15 p.m., we had the morning in Cairo to ourselves. We passed that in as leisurely a fashion as is possible in the hurrying city of Cairo. I allowed myself the luxury of a shave at the hands of an Egyptian barber. He wielded his cut-throat with masterly skill, but, in the manner born of "Gyppos" (and of barbers), he held animated discussions with his friends in the saloon while he was shaving me. You get the impression that his job is just a necessary evil, and that he is concentrating on his friends rather than on you. His words are accompanied by flourishing and waving of the hands, the hands that hold the cut-throat, and one has the uncomfortable feeling that at any moment one's eyes, nose, or some other necessary and convenient part of one's physiognomy will fall foul of the keen-edged weapon. However, I survived the ordeal, I was immediately subjected to hot towels, during the course of which I found myself swathed, almost mummified, in these towels - and they were hot! Once again I got the feeling that having failed to make away with me during the first part of the proceedings, he was now determined either to burn the skin off my face, or suffocate me. Even this too I survived, and then I waited to see what other fiendish ideas he might contrive for my discomfort, but apparently he had decided I'd had enough, and he simply proceeded to anoint me with 3 different hair-oils, and then I was just about able to dissuade him from waxing my moustache. The whole joke cost me 2/- which isn't a cheap shave in any language, but the experience was well worth it. Then we went to the Metro, where we saw "A Yank at Eton". The Metro is a fine bio, and compares well with any of ours. Then we took the train from Cairo at 2.15 p.m., and, after a not very comfortable journey with the Egyptian State Railways, we arrived at Rehovoth, in Pal., this morning. We had tea with the Services Club there, and then came on by bus to Jerusalem, where, after breakfast at the Services Club, I took myself to Haia's place, where I'm staying for my leave. We've got an excellent programme arranged for us here, so that we'll see as much as possible of Jerusalem and Pal. in the few days we have. This afternoon already we've been to Rachel's Tomb (קֶבֶר רָחֵל אַמְּלָאָן) and to the Dead Sea (הַלִּבְנָה). Tonight I'm going to Shul at Yeshurun Synagogue, the newest and most modern in Jerusalem. It's almost time to go, so I'll have to end off now.

4.10.43

Dear Mom,

Well, our leave is over, and of course I didn't get a chance to write while in Jerusalem, Thurs. and Fri. being Yomtov and I couldn't write on Sat. and on Sunday we were on the move.

I've had a wonderful time in Palestine, not in respect of a gay holiday, with dances, bioscopes

etc., but I've had a real peaceful Rosh Hashona. I was made to feel absolutely at home at Haia's place. I've seen most of the places of interest in Jerusalem, in the old city as well as the new, I've seen the modern Palestine, and our trip was rounded off with a morning in Tel Aviv and the afternoon at Givat Brenner, a collective settlement. I've been wonderfully impressed by Palestine and its people, but I'll tell you all about that in my next few letters.

I actually met Gita. I suffered rather a disappointment, for during the first 3 days there I was unable to locate her, but on Saturday afternoon I was able to get to her. The trouble was that she had moved to a new address just a day or two before my arrival in Palestine. Anyway she's a beautiful kid, wonderful, in fact, and instead of going to the dance which had been arranged for us on Saturday (by "us" I mean the 50 S.A.'s who had gone over on this organized trip), we spent the evening at her place, as she's in mourning for her dad. I met her sister and mother, and we spoke until the early morning.

I've had to bring my rusty Yiddish back into commission, for Haia's mother speaks only Yiddish, and I also made good progress with my Hebrew - I think I did pretty well. And now it's all over, and we're on the way back to camp. There was some slip-up with the trains, so we're at a Transit Camp where we slept last night, and this afternoon we'll be going back to Egypt.

From camp I'll be writing the full story of my trip to Palestine. In the meantime, regards from Haia to you, and to the rest of Maitland, and regards from me to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F. A.P.O. Durban  
Wednesday, 6/10/43 No. 27

Dearest Mom,

I'm starting this letter on the 6<sup>th</sup>, but when I'll finish it is probably quite another story, for I've a feeling that I'm going to write reams and reams and sheaves all about my trip to the Holy Land - Eretz Israel. And of course, time is the big factor. However, I'll try to finish this letter as soon as possible, for until I've completed it, all other correspondence must wait, & believe me, what with my travels of the past few weeks, I've got piles of letters fairly clamouring for attention. So if you hear anybody running me down as a bad correspondent, give them my regards & apologies, & I'll be writing to them as soon as possible; which goes also for my dear sisters, Edie & Miriam, whom I have indeed treated badly.

I'm back in camp again & I received today letters from you (Q & R) & one from Miriam (I), for all of which many thanks. I'm glad to hear you're all well at home, & that you've received my letters, & enjoyed the photographs. I hope letter no. 21 has turned up by now. Of course the children were welcome to last month's allotment. I'm only sorry there wasn't more of it. And now let's go!

Our party of 120 strong arrived at Rehovoth in Palestine at about 7 a.m. last Wednesday morning, & there we split up into two parties - half going to Jerusalem & the other half to Tel-Aviv. We weren't supposed to dally at Rehovoth, but we were met at the station by the Chairman of the Rehovoth Services Club & welcome committee, who said that the inhabitants of Rehovoth would deem it a direct insult if we didn't partake of some tea and biscuits before proceeding by bus to our destinations. So we had tea with them - and that was typical of our whole trip; everywhere we were feted and welcomed, & made to feel absolutely at home; the hospitality of the Palestinians is beyond praise, & they couldn't do enough for us. Rehovoth is a beautiful little village of 10,000 Jewish inhabitants, about 30 miles from Jerusalem, and the drive by bus from there to Jerusalem is a beautiful country, quite, or rather, comparatively flat most of the way, with green trees, orchards,

etc. on every side. Then you reach the Mountains of Judea, & after quite a hectic drive thro' the mountains, over the Seven Sisters, you reach Jerusalem. On the way the bus was stopped & our guide pointed out two beautiful little settlements in the mountains - their names were Kiryat Anavim (meaning The Hill of Grapes) and Maleh Hamishah (The Ascent of the Five). The latter place derives its name from its history. Some years ago five chalutzim went up into the hills to found a settlement & farm, & they were murdered by the Arabs. So when the pioneers who followed got the place going they commemorated these five in the name. It's amazing the ways they've grown crops & forests there, as the settlement is on a hill, & the hills all round look as tho' not even a weed could survive in the rock, & yet these settlements do very well. What a thrill it was sighting Jerusalem from afar. One's mind reacted to the fact that these very hills thro' which we were travelling were steeped with the history of the Jewish nation, that every nook & cranny held a story of the past glory of the nation, and one felt the influence of the old Jerusalem. One felt that he was really returning to his homeland - what dreams were realized when we first saw the city - Jews the world over repeat every year the three words *לשנה הבאה בירוחם*, the sincere hope of all in the Diaspora, & here was I, entering Jerusalem on the eve of Rosh Hashona.

Arrived at Jerusalem, we proceeded to the Services Club, where we partook of breakfast, after which each of us was given the address of the people with whom we were to stay, as every member of the party was accommodated by private people. I of course went straight to Haia's place. Haia was glad to see me, altho' she must have been surprised for a moment when she found that I was not quite what she'd expected - however, she then remembered me as the son of Aunty Rachel, & then I felt better. Haia didn't tell me the joke until her mother came into the house, & when I met her mother, her mother said in Yiddish "Oh, so the girl has turned into a boy". Then Haia told us the full story, & we had a good laugh. Within no time I felt absolutely at home, & I was laughing at myself at ever having hesitated about writing to Haia.

A programme of sight-seeing had been arranged for our stay in Pal., but all the tours were done in the morning, & we were left to ourselves in the afternoons & evenings. Except on Wednesday afternoon, when we visited first the Tomb of Rachel & then the Dead Sea. Rachel's Tomb is rather beautiful inside, with rich tapestry donated by Jews in every country. In all the places of biblical interest, I felt the richness of the Jewish tradition, a pride in our history and a hope for the restoration of our country. Every person in Palestine loves the country with a love that is unsurpassable, and has a deep pride in the country & its development, & their feeling is so strong that it pervades the very air, & one becomes imbued with it. The depth of their ideal, "Palestine for the Jews" is so that one sees it for the first time not merely as an ideal, a dream & a mere possibility, but as something which is inviolable. Then we travelled to the Dead Sea, 1200 feet below sea-level, where we swam for a few minutes. What an amazing experience - one simply can't sink. We lay on our backs with our legs and arms crossed, & still you lay half out of the water. The water, which contains 29% of minerals, stung our newly-and-close-shaven faces badly, but we didn't stay in long. On returning to Haia's, I commenced a letter to you, & then broke off to go to Shul. I visited the Yeshurun Shul, the most modern in Jerusalem. I was pleasantly surprised, (knowing the difference that one finds in various Shuls at home as far as the tunes (תונען) of prayers go) to find that the *הונען* in Yeshurun was the same as I knew - I had but to close my eyes, & I was back in Maitland Shul. After Shul & supper, we went for a walk, & so ended my first day in Palestine.

On Thursday morning we met at the Services Club at 10 a.m. & set forth on a walking tour of the Old City. Jerusalem consists of two cities - the old & the new. The Old City is confined within its 4 walls, from the ramparts of which the Old City used to be defended in those bloody days of yore; the new city has grown up around the old. As you walk thro' one of the many gates in the walls of the Old City, you step right out of the present, & live again in the days gone by. The New City is a modern city, living in the present & hoping for the future, but the Old City is tied up with the past,

& contains endless treasures. Thro' narrow, winding, cobbled streets, thro' alleyways and arches, with every house built like a fortress from which to defend itself against any enemy; streets which today still house many families of past Jews, & which have seen the passage of tribes & of nations, streets which now are trodden annually by hundreds of sightseers, tourists searching for stories of the past. At every step in the Old City there is something to see, but with the limited time at our disposal, we could stop only at particular places of interest. We entered the city thro' "Allenby's Gate", & stopped at one of the fortresses, in which is located the Tower of David. This fortress is stoutly built, & was one of three that was used to repel the attack of the Roman's in 60 A.D. When the city finally fell to the Romans, Titus, the Roman O.C. ordered the city to be razed to the ground, but said that this fortress was to be left standing as an indication to the world of the strength of the Romans, which could conquer anything, even that fortress. Then we continued on our way & visited the Churvah Shul, beautifully painted within, altho' not very imposing from outside. The Jews, the פַּרְעִים, who use their Shul allow their side-whiskers (פְּשָׁעָה) to grow, & wear a strange head-gear, a circle of fur it looks like. We "davened" מִזְבֵּחַ at this Shul. It seemed strange that while the Shul was beautifully decorated for the men inside, the provision for women was simply a rough balcony outside - women are not allowed inside the Synagogue during prayers. The previous night I'd asked Haia about wearing a Talis in Shul, as I had mine with me, & I found that in Pal in general, a Talis is only worn by married men - quite unlike S.A. customs. Then we visited the Yehonan Ben Zakai Synagogue - the Shul patronised by the Spanish Jews. During the last days in Spain, Shuls were built underground, as they were illegal & this is perpetuated in this Shul, which is slightly below ground level. At the back of the Shul stood half-a-dozen cradles, in one of which lay a baby, fast asleep. On our arrival the congregation was airing אָן פְּאַלְלָנוּ & the rendering was quite unlike anything ever I'd heard before. (By way of interest, my girl-friend, Gita, is ex-Spain.) Our next step was way up on the wall of the city, from which we had a good view of the valley known as the "Valley of Lepers", for lepers used to be sent there, outside of the city walls. We could see too the two cemeteries, an old & a new. Then we made the final spot - the celebrated & sacred בָּ�יְלָקָן הַמִּלְעָמָד - the Wailing Wall. We were to have taken part in a service there, but we had dallied too long by the way, for on arrival at the Wailing Wall, we found the service over, & there were just a few individuals praying & weeping there. And so back home for lunch.



The Wailing Wall, which we visited on Rosh Hashana. 30/9/43

to show Haia the names of two friends that Gita once sent me, & Haia happened to know them both. And next day, as Haia & I were walking down the road, we bumped into one of these two friends, who became very excited & said that Gita was in Jerusalem, that she'd received my message, & that

she'd spent the morning looking for me. So, having established a contact, I phoned the office at which she works, & we met in the evening. And next morning I had to leave - how cruel! Actually it was quite nerve-wracking waiting to meet her, for we'd arranged to meet at a cafe, & imagine how it feels to wait to meet somebody you don't know in the blackout. Anyway, it worked out all right, & then I learned they'd (she & her sister) been searching the whole town for me in the a.m. - they'd phoned the Services Club, the Military Police, this, that & the other. What a mix up! Anyway, it was nice meeting her.

To continue. Friday morning we visited some more places of interest in the Old City. First port of call was the Tomb of the Kings - an unbelievable underground tomb hewn out of the rock. It was constructed by a family of 23 members, & there are 23 tombs there. The place is perfectly carved out of sheer hard rock - quite an engineering accomplishment. Apparently water was a great difficulty in those troublous days, & the steps leading down to the Tomb are so constructed that when rain fell not a drop was wasted, for the very water off the steps ran into aquaducts leading to reservoirs. Then we went to King Solomon's Quarries, where we spent quite a time walking around underground in the place where all the alabaster for Solomon's temple was "mined". Difficult to describe in full, but most impressive. The Quarries extend all over, or should one say all under, the Old City, & there is even a passage which is believed to bring one out of the earth at Jericho, many miles away. Then we emerged from the Old City at the foot of the Mount of Olives, from which one gets a wonderful panorama of the world of history. When reading history, it is difficult to get a picture of the relationship & proximity of one place to another, but from this spot you could see all we'd ever read about, in their true perspective. Then, having seen the Tomb of Zacharia, the Tomb of Absalom, we set off for home, passing, on the way, the Rothschild Museum, & the Mount Calvary, where Christ is said to have been buried.

Saturday morning we visited the Jewish National Institutions Building, which was specially opened so that we could see the Herzl Room & the Golden Books. Herzl's room is an amazing furniture. It is built in the exact shape of his study in Vienna, is furnished with the exact furniture, contains his own library, souvenirs, etc. Our guide expressed the thought that if Herzl were to walk into that room, he would sit down in his own chair, & his own desk, & imagine himself in Vienna. Then we went to the room in which is kept the Golden Books of the קְדֹם קִימָת לִשְׁרָאֵל and then came the biggest מִזְבֵּחַ of all - we trotted around to the residence of Rabbi Herzog, Chief Rabbi of Palestine, where we had Kiddush, & where his Eminence the Chief Rabbi addressed us & conferred a New Year blessing upon us. The line he took in his speech was very good. He pointed out that that Saturday was known as שְׁבַת קָשָׁבָה which normally means "The Sabbath of Repentance". However, he said, it can also mean "The Sabbath of Return", which did not, he said, amidst laughs, our return to פַּרְעִים next day, but he prophesied our return, each one of us, to our homes, & later our return to the national homeland - אָנָן שְׁרָאֵל אָרְגָּנוּן. His speech was really excellent.

Saturday evening there was a dance for us, but as I said in my last letter, I didn't attend, as I spent the evening at Gita's place.

On Sunday morning, we met at the Club at 7.30, & went by bus to Mount Scopus, from which one gets an unparalleled view of Jerusalem. On Mount Scopus there are the Hebrew University & the Hadassa Medical Centre - the most modern hospital in the world. At the University we saw the much-talked of Amphitheatre, a beautiful thing - the stage is quite new but the terraced steps & seats are quite ancient. At the hospital we were shown a thing or three, & then we walked along a passage, and, thro' a big glass panel we were able to watch the nurses handling new-born babes. Then, with severe pangs in the heart, we left Jerusalem behind, and headed for Tel Aviv. On arrival there we went direct to the Municipal Buildings, where we were welcomed by the Mayor of Tel Aviv, & then we proceeded to the Services Club for lunch. After lunch we rode around the town for about half-an-hour, with a young lady pointing out to us places of interest, & telling us stories of the

growth of Tel Aviv. However, from the inside of the bus we couldn't see much, & there really wasn't much to see. The snaps of Tel Aviv which I've sent will show you that it is a modern city, like any other modern city in any part of the world. Then we drove thro' beautiful hills & greenlands of Mikveh Israel, passing the settlements of Rishon-le-Zion (Miriam will probably remember that name from one of the Hebrew songs we used to learn) and Rehovoth, & landed up at the Collective Settlements of Givat Brenner. We had heard lots about these collective settlements, & it was an interesting thing to see one in practice. The place itself nestles comfortably in the hills, & is green with cultivated land, gardens, & presents a beautiful picture. As for the people in the settlement itself, they live quite comfortably, & are the happiest crowd of people I've even seen - and probably the healthiest too. The men & women are people who have given up their normal occupations to go back to the land - the men in particular are ex-doctors & lawyers & other professions. The social life of the settlement is based on social equality & collective security - phrases which have become household words since the Beveridge Report, but which, in Givat Brenner, have been in practice for 50 years. Nobody receives "pay" for the work they do, but they are supplied with all they need - food, clothes & a home. When they marry, both the wife & the husband keep on working, & children are looked after and brought up in their own quarters. They are brought up on a studied health-giving diet, & receive an excellent education. When their education is complete, & they're old enough to work, they go on to the land. Every member of the settlement is cared for, the sick, the lame, or the old. It was really an eye-opener.

When we left the settlement, we went to catch our train, & I've already told you how we missed that train & spent the night in a Transit Camp, & left Palestine by train next day.

So much for what I actually did & saw. Now for some general impressions of Palestine.

The Palestinians are proud of the country, they love their country, & they are possessed of an ideal, in the pursuit of which no sacrifice is too great, & no struggle too bitter - the ideal of "Palestine as a Jewish National Homeland". In my associations with the Zionist Society, I had but a hazy idea of Zionism, & Palestine was no more than a country where the Jews were buying land, establishing settlements, and having riots with the Arabs; their ideal now has become very real to me, & I can see the full idea of Zionism, for while we are without a country, we cannot be at peace with the rest of the world. The Palestinians think highly of the South African Jews, for the Zionist work that S.A. does & for its contributions to the J.N.F.; but they cannot understand that we seem satisfied to remain S. Africans; to their minds, every Jew the world over should be trying to get to Palestine, & every one I spoke to asked the same question "Are you coming back after the War?" How could I explain to them that we look upon S.A. as our home, we fight for S.A. and that our effort for Palestine is confined to a monthly contribution to J.N.F. There are different sides to all the questions, but our party came away enriched for we had realized as never before that we are Jews; we felt prouder of our past than ever before, & we had begun to think more deeply of the future.

The war has affected Palestine badly, and they are rationed very strictly. Meat is almost unobtainable, the ration being  $\frac{1}{8}$ th of a lb. per person per week; sugar is another luxury, & each person can buy  $\frac{3}{8}$ th of a lb. monthly. Eggs, if you get them, are a shilling each. Chicken is bought at 10/- per lb. Nevertheless, they manage very well, & the rationing is the least of their worries.

The social life of the youth of Palestine is far different from ours. They go to occasional shows & dances, but they're more serious-minded than we are. Clubs and societies are unknown. They read a lot, & think deeply. They put us to shame, really, for while we can't even speak the שְׂנִירִים they talk not only Hebrew, Arabic, etc. but even English as well as we do, & I think they read more & better English books than we do. They spend lots of their time at home, but I think they're quite happy.

Anyway, that's about the lot for now about Palestine, & as I think of any more I'll write it in

subsequent letters. Altho' I haven't said it outright, you'll have read between the lines that I had a wonderful time there, & spent a really enjoyable & peaceable Rosh Hashana. It was wonderful being in a Jewish home, eating wonderful homely Jewish foods. I became quite attached to my little "Yamelke" which I wore all day in the house. I've polished up my Yiddish, & towards the end I was even speaking a faltering Hebrew. I want to get a Hebrew Grammar Book from our Padre, & polish up the language, for I do hope to get back there again.

Local News: Nothing much really. My correspondence is coming in well & one of these days I'll start replying. I'm sending by air-mail, an envelope containing 38 assorted photographs - I hope you like them. I used two spools in Palestine, which I've sent for development, & I'll post them to you later.

Finally, by way of a warning! Do you remember my nurse at Middelburg of whom I wrote at one time. I've just had a letter from her, & she says she's been transferred to Wynberg & she said if I send her your address, she'd look you up. Her name is Nurse Gillman, & I call her Zacharia for short. I know you'll make her feel at home - she looked after me well in hospital.

And that is all for now. Regards to all at home & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F. A.P.O. Durban  
12·10·43 No. 28

Dearest Mom,

Altho' I managed to finish my last letter to you only one day after I'd started it, i.e. on Thursday night last, the 7<sup>th</sup>, I haven't been able to catch up on as much of my ageing letters as I'd have liked to, what with Sat. being Yom Kippur, & on Sunday I just didn't feel like writing. So since then I've managed to write exactly 4 letters, & my correspondence is still in a mess, such a mess that I don't know where to start, so I'll stick to my motto of "when in doubt, write a letter home". So here I am.

I received a letter from Miriam, written on your behalf, on Sunday, for which many thanks. I'm surprised that Miriam says that you hadn't heard from me for a week, for at the time that Miriam's letter was written you should have been receiving quite a few letters from me, but then I suppose the way of the Postal Services will always remain cloaked in mystery. However, I hope that you've received quite a few letters since then.

When writing about my trip to Palestine, I meant to mention, but forgot it, that Mrs. Geffen's brother was also with us. He, however, didn't go to Jerusalem, but to TelAviv. I saw him again on Saturday, at the Yom Kippur Services.

How did you all fast on Saturday? I fasted very well, & spent all day at the Y.M.C.A. Chapel, where our services were conducted by the Padre. We went thro' the whole procedure - morning service, Mussaf, Mincha, & the closing service. And at the end of the day, the Padre had a 1<sup>st</sup>-class dinner arranged for us to break our fast; he did us really well, for the meal included even roast-chicken, which is rather uncommon in the desert. The service itself was quite orthodox & I was able at last to make use of my Talis. We had a small קְרָנוּתָן in the Chapel, with a small Torah inside.

On Friday we received parcels, & altho' there were five for me, I didn't open any of them until Sunday, for I couldn't do anything with them on Saturday. They were made up of two from Lil, one from Rose, & from H. Kramer, & the last, most unexpectedly, from Gladys S. I haven't yet been able to write & thank the latter two, but I'll do so at the first opportunity. Thank you for your contribution to the one parcel - I'm so well stocked now I don't know where to turn. I've got a confession to make about the Taglech & the Pletzlech. It's like this: I know that the folks in

Palestine haven't the ingredients to make Taglech, and I thought they'd appreciate & enjoy them immensely, so, having tasted them just to get an idea of how much I was missing and the sacrifice I was making, (and believe me, they tasted good!), I wrapped them up in a parcel & addressed them to Haia. I'll bet they haven't had any Taglech for some time, & they'll be happy to receive those, so I'm sure that everybody's happy. How about you, huh?

You know, I remembered recently that I forgot to write & wish Sylvia, my little Bokkie, a Happy Birthday & Many Happy Returns of the Day. Please tell her that I sincerely regret the omission, and tell her I beg her forgiveness - I'll see that it doesn't happen again. Better still, I'll be with her on her next birthday. Actually I meant to write to her from the Con Depot, but I slipped up on it somehow, & then on the 25<sup>th</sup> I remembered, & then of course it was too late to do anything about it. Now, in the same way, I'm thinking of Edie's birthday, but I suppose that by the time that I remember to write, it'll be too late.

Did you get the New Year Greetings I sent you. I sent one (Letter-card type) to the Congregation, but I'm not sure whether they will have received it in time for Yom Kippur.

Gee, I'm sorry I wrote so small on Page 1, 'cos now I'm unable to extend this letter to a full letter-card, & even tho' my stock of letter-cards is between 130 and 140, I'm reluctant to waste any space. (I received 6 doz cards in Lil's two parcels, & a dozen each in yours & Rose's.)

I've written tonight to Nurse Essie "Zacharia" Gillman, & gave her your address, so she'll probably look you up soon. If she does, show her the snaps I sent, & you might even let her read my account of Palestine, for I don't feel equal to writing a letter like that to each correspondent, and she is very interested. It's a pity she didn't know your address sooner, for I don't think she has people in town, & I know how miserable it is to spend Rosh Hashona & Yom Kippur in anything but a Jewish house.

Well, I don't think there's much more to write about. Tomorrow is mail-day, but I'm not expecting letters, for your letters always arrive on Sundays, & nobody else is likely to write to me, for I owe them all letters.

So, I'll end with regards to all, & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

P.S. There's Shul again tomorrow night, for Succoth.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q.  
4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F. A.P.O. Dbn  
20·10·43 No. 30

Dear Mom,

About ten minutes to spare before bed time. I've just finished a letter to Wolfe, & before retiring, I decided to drop you a few lines - it always does me good. Don't ask me what I'm going to write about, for I don't know, but, the Lord will provide.

Today was mail-day, & the post yielded me one letter - from Rose, who has never yet failed to write to me once a week since I'm here, even tho' at times, I've not written to her for 10 days or 2 weeks at a time. I didn't expect any other letters today, for the effects of the weeks during which I wrote very few letters are beginning to make themselves felt, so that the only letters I expect and look forward to are your letters on Sundays. However, I'm just about up-to-date with my correspondence now, and in a couple of weeks time I should resume getting a good mail again. By "good" I refer, of course, to numbers only, for your letters are the best I can get.

I went up to visit Smithy last night, the chap with whom I spent the time at Con Depot. He had just returned from his week's leave, which he had spent in Luxor and Asawan. As I had lent him

my camera, he was able to get and show me some very good snaps of all the places of interest he'd seen. He also brought back enlargements of the snaps taken at Alex. The enlargements (to the six taken by Miriam's camera) look very good, & I'll be distributing them among the "fambily". I think I'll send the negatives home, & advise you to have the same enlargements made, as you can't see much on the small snaps.

You'll notice I've got my pen back in commission again, after having had to use pencil for a few days. I had my pen repaired by one of the boys in the regiment. The trouble was that what with the rotten ink we get in Gypopoland & the fine sand of the desert which works itself into anything, the nib had become blocked, & the "self-filling" pen would no longer fill itself.

I thought that with my little trip to hospital & the exercise of the 3 weeks at Con Depot, I had lost weight, but if I did, I've certainly picked it up again, for I weighed myself on the camp butcher's hanging-meat-scale, and I find I still turn it a neat 200 pounds - not too bad! I play quite a bit of soccer these days, & I'm feeling very fit, - right in the pink.

How are all the people at home keeping? The Kramers, P & H, Joffee's, Singers, & friends - all O.K.

I hope. Oh yes, while in Jerusalem, Haia asked me whether Aunty Annies's mother is still alive, & I couldn't answer definitely - please let me know. Haia's mother, of course, asked about all her family - Morrie, Gertie, Annie, & Annie's (aunt) brother who died a short while ago, & I was able to give her all the dope. Haia showed me lots of snaps taken while she was in C.T., & snaps which she has received since - snaps of the Singers, one of Bessie's Lois-Helen, & on one snap of Bessie's wedding I'm sure I can see Dad & Sylvia just on the edge of the snap. It was good seeing everybody I know again.

Don't be surprised if Wolfe pays you a visit one of these days. In my letter to him, I told him of the snaps I sent home, & said that if he's interested you'll show them to him. So it depends on whether he's interested or not. Incidentally, talking of visitors, has my nurse come up yet?

Here's a big item of news which I forgot to mention in my previous letters. On my return from Palestine, I cut off my moustache, for the first time in about 2½ years. Now, after two weeks of nakedness, I'm growing it again.

Well, Mom, looks like I haven't done too badly. I set out to write just a short note, to be continued on a later note, & here I've filled a whole card - almost. The Lord provided & my pen certainly ran away with me. Of course, it's taken me a little more than the original ten minutes, but I get plenty of beauty-sleep anyway.

Well so that seems to be about the lot for now, so I'll end with regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.



*Some of the R.H.Q. Soccer team, or rather, the element of surveyors in the team.*

*Egypt, 1943*

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Field Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F. A.P.O. Dbn  
24-10-43 No. 31

Dear Mom,

Many thanks for your letter which I received this morning. It was un-numbered, & dated 14<sup>th</sup> inst., at which time you hadn't heard from me for some time, because of my inability to write while on leave, as I've explained in previous letters. I trust that by now you will have received all my letters to date. I'm glad to hear that all at home are well, & that you had an easy fast - I too am in the pink.

Which papers & book are you thanking me for now? Anywhere, as long as you enjoyed them! I presume you must be referring to the "Sable" which certainly was most interesting. I'm pleased that my Letter Card found its place in the Shool, for I had no idea to whom to address it, so I simply addressed it to "The M. B. H. Cong., Maitland".

I'm particularly interested to hear from you whether you've received my letter no. 26, which is the one I commenced at Haia's place, and completed when I was spending a night in a transit camp. I suspect that you might not have received it, because I wrote to Haia at the same time, and today I had a letter from her in which she thanks me for the parcel I sent across, but she makes no reference to my letter. So I feel it's quite likely that those two letters have gone astray. I'm really sorry if they have, for my letter to Haia conveyed my thanks for all they'd done for me, & now I don't know whether to repeat my thanks or not, Haia thanks me (and us) for the parcel, and says I'm a bad bad feller for sending away sweets which my mother had sent all the way from down South.

I went up to the Y.M. on Thursday night for a spot of Table Tennis, & I met Jackie Walt there again. I hadn't seen him since before I went to hospital, for he had also been away. He tells me that he received a letter from Bella.

Last night I attended a Discussion Group at the Chaplain's tent. The subject under discussion was "Palestine - It's future". It was a lengthy discussion, and certain "decisions" were taken, as it were. We feel, for instance, that Zionist propaganda "down South" does not take quite the correct line, for all it demands of us is contributions to the J.N.F. and there is not sufficient stress laid on an equal or greater need - the need is Palestine for Youth on the lands, English-speaking youth, particularly S. Africans. Further, we feel that the Hebrew Education in S.A. is not enough, and about the best way of giving the children the correct attitude towards Palestine & the future of the nation would be by importing into S.A. Hebrew teachers from Palestine.

My Hebrew Correspondence Course is going well. Having completed 24 lessons, I took two tests up to the Padre for marking, & his comments were "Excellent" & "Very Good". All the Hebrew I learnt at School is coming back to me, & if I continue my lessons (& the Padre has given me another book to work on) & get a bit of practice, I'll soon be able to converse well. I'll probably be able to get the practice too, for we may start a Hebrew-speaking Circle.

As for my correspondence, I have, in the words of Churchill "come thro' the darkness, & am beginning to see the light". I'll even be writing to my sisters any day from now. (Sceptic groans of "That'll be the day.")

Believe it or not, but I haven't yet been to bio since I'm back from Palestine, which isn't a bad record! I've kept myself busy with writing letters, & playing Table Tennis, going to Shul & attending these meetings.

I've had a further two weeks enforced break from surveying, for since my return from Palestine I've been working in the Quarter Stores. That job came to an end today, & from tomorrow I'll be a "survivor" again.

The weather's undergoing quite a change these days. (Haven't spoke about the weather for a long time!) It's becoming quite cold. It's still warm enough, or too warm, during the days, but at night we freeze. Winter's on its way, with a vengeance. Hell, it's the first winter we'll be having for some time, for we left the Union in time to avoid the cold winter you've just had. When I think

now of the Muizenberg or Humewood beach just getting into its summer dress, I go kinda mad looking at the desert sand.

Dat's all for now. Regards to all, & Love to Dad the Girls & Yourself, & Keep Writing Puh-lenty, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Field Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F. A.P.O. Dbn  
29-10-43

Dear Mom,

For weeks and weeks, and months, I've been intending to send you the attached work of art, but somehow I never got as far - procrastination being the thief of time an' all that. Now, however, I've had another of my regular spring-cleanings, & I've decided that there's no time like the present. So I proudly present: "An Egyptian Sunset - all my own work", by L/Bdr Kramer M.

A short history of this 8<sup>th</sup> Wonder of the Modern World: This effort in wools & canvas was the accomplishment of my short stay in hospital, where all the boys occupy themselves, and stave of boredom, by stitching similar & various patterns - regimental badges done in wools are most popular. All the necessary equipment is supplied to us free, gratis, & for nothing - wools, cloth, needles, and the frame on which we work.

I had intended, by putting say a two-inch border of wool around the picture, and sewing on the necessary backing, to make a cushion-cover out of it, but in that respect my stay in hospital was too short - (I suppose that's one way of looking at things). You see, I only started it three or four days before I left hospital, & thinking that I would still be there some time, I took my time over it. Then, when it was no more than 1/2 done, I was told I'd be leaving next morning - wow! I've never done such a day's work as I did that day. I worked with frantic haste and urgency, the needle plied back & forth like a sewing-machine, & I stopped only for meals, & then grudgingly. Well, that night I finished the picture, & even had time to add the words "Helmieh 1943". Next morning I was due to leave hospital at 10.45 a.m. Immediately after breakfast I started putting the scroll around the words "Helmieh 1943". I had to leave off to go & see the O.C. & get my discharge, then I had to fetch & pack my kit, & then I sat down in a race against time to finish the scroll. What a sweat! But I just made it. I put in the last stitch at 10.30, and then we were so rushed for time that Smithy had to take it out of the frame for me & pack it in my bag while I was saying goodbye to the staff. Phew! I never thought I'd ever tackle a thing like that, & was I glad to finish it. Unfortunately, however, I was unable to complete it as a cushion-cover, so you'll please have to put it to the best use you can. By sewing on a backing, you might still use it as a cushion-cover; alternatively, some other use, such as a cover for a photograph-album; failing all else, as a wall decoration - my "unfinished symphony in wool".

As a matter of interest, I'm enclosing some Egyptian & Palestinian coins. The Palestinian coins are a complete set, & they are self-explanatory, as they're minted in English, Hebrew & Arabic. They range from 1 mil to 100 mils, 1000 mils are £1, so the value of the Palestinian coins are, 1/4<sup>d</sup>, 1/2<sup>d</sup>, 1<sup>d</sup>, 1 1/4<sup>d</sup>, 2 1/2<sup>d</sup>, 5<sup>d</sup>, 1/-, and 2/-. The Egyptian coins aren't so easy for some are in English and Arabic, & some in Arabic only. Furthermore, as fresh issues are made every so many years, & no two issues are ever alike it's difficult to get a complete set. Anyway, I'll try to explain those I'm enclosing.

The small bronze coin with a straight edge is 1 millieme 1/4<sup>d</sup>. The smallest silver coin with a hole is 2 millieme - (1/2<sup>d</sup>); then there are three different coins for 5 millieme each (1/4<sup>d</sup>) - they are



marked in English & Arabic - the Arabic figure for a '5' being an 'O': then there are 3 coins for 10 milliemes each (10 mills = 1 piastre =  $2\frac{1}{2}$  d), some marked in Eng & Arabic, others in Arabic only. The Arabic figure for '10' is '1♦'. Then the two small coins with milled edges are 2 piastres each, & the big coin with milled edge is 5 piastres (1/-). In general, the coins with holes in them are the 1917 issue, the others are 1937, & the bronze scalloped edges are this years issue. Now you know why we'd like to handle good honest S.A. money again.

Well, there's nothing more to add. (Drat my pen!). This is the second letter I'm writing to you today for I've just finished & posted no 32.

Regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Field Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F. A.P.O. Dbn  
31·10·43 No. 33

Dear Mom,

Well, here we go again. Many thanks for your ever-welcome letter which I received today. I'm glad to hear that all at home are well, & I'm in the pink myself. There were also parcels today, but for once there were no parcels for me; mind you, I still have so much over from the last lot, that I didn't exactly miss the parcels - by the time the next surface-mail brings in parcels, they'll be more welcome. I did, of course, receive 3 newspapers from you, for which many thanks. Incidentally, talking of surface-mails, has Edie posted those snaps to me or not?, for I understood that Edie had posted them to me by surface-mail, & yet on Friday we received surface-letters, & all I received was a Rosh Hashona greetings card from Esther. So Edie's letter with the snaps seems to be lost, stolen or strayed. Anyway perhaps they'll still turn up.

On Friday night we ran a knockout Table Tennis tournament - I was duly knocked out in the Quarter-Finals. Jackie Walt also played - he got thru' to the finals, before losing, so he received the 2<sup>nd</sup> prize. On Saturday afternoon I went to watch our regimental soccer team play a match against one of the other units; this afternoon I watched a team drawn from all the Artillery Regiments play against the R.A.F., a good match. This morning I passed the morning very pleasantly, playing a cricket-match. It was the first I'd played since about this time last year in Barberton, & I enjoyed the match very much. We were beaten, but that didn't worry us - we didn't expect anything else - I scored a brilliant three.

Last night we had another Discussion up at the Padre's tent. We were given a most interesting talk on the political set-up in Palestine.

And so ends another week-end; but tomorrow is not only the start of another week, it's also the official start of winter. Up till now we've been on summer-time, but when we go to bed tonight we've got to put our watches back an hour; we'll now be an hour behind S.A. time.

I received a receipt today from the Receiver of Revenue, C.T. for £1-7-6, being Personal Tax for the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> June '43. I suppose that amount will be deducted from this month's cheque from Customs.

Oh yes! One other thing that tomorrow marks - it is the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my appointment in the Service. One more year and I'll be able to apply for associateship with the C.I.S. Then I'll be able to add behind my name, in Civvy street, A.C.I.S. - Associate Member of the Chartered Institute of Secretaries - Hell, it looks quite good. I think I must write to them one of these days & find out what has happened to my Diploma.

Well, there seems to be no more news, so I'll end with regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Field Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F. A.P.O. Durban  
3·11·43 No. 34

Dear Mom,

Well, here we are again, with what has become my regular mid-week struggle to compose a couple of lines home. Anyway, perhaps I'll have an inspiration.

I oughtn't really to sit me down to write at this hour, for, altho' it's only half-past-nine by the clock, it's quite late really, in view of the fact that it gets dark now at about 6 p.m., and the time for rising in the morning is 5.30, while the sun only rises at 6. Since we went off Summer-time onto Standard Sun Time, the hours seem quite strange. The most marked effect, of course, is the fact that we have very long evenings. We eat at 5 p.m., it's dark by six and lights-out is at 10.15. If you go to bio you get back by 8.00, with an hour or two still before lights-out. At the moment I've just come back from an evening's table tennis, & as I found the boys still writing, I decided to dash off these few lines. What a comparison between these evenings, & the evenings when we first arrived here. Then they were horribly short, for we ate at 6, it didn't get dark until 8.30 & lights-out was at 10.15; one barely had time to write a letter during the evening, &, if we went to bio, the show only started at 8.30, & came out at 10.30 or 11 p.m.

Hell, please excuse this putrid ink, but it's the best I could get. Ink isn't easy to get up here at the moment; we can get "Gypo" ink, but I never use that, so when I espied some ink with a label "Made in Joburg" I fairly pounced upon it - and this is the result. I feel sure now that either some Gypo firm imported the labels from South Africa, or else the firm in Joburg who makes this ink ran short of ink-powder. So I'll probably be writing in pencil in future; if you're able to include a bottle of decent ink in some parcel or other, it'll be very welcome. Monday night I went to bio, but the show was so bad that I came home within 10 minutes of its commencement. Then last night I went to bio again, & this time we saw rather a good show, "The Navy Comes Thro!"

In the Arguses that I received the other day, I see that engagements in Maitland include Clement Searson and Myra Groenewald. I also noticed the death of one Margolis, husband of Sadie Kasimov. Do you know whether that's of the same Kasimov family whose one daughter (Sonia) was a friend of the Hermans. As a matter of fact, I think that Sonia's young sister, whom I once partnered at Sonia's 21<sup>st</sup>, was named Sadie.

I had letters today from both Rose & Lily. All in Joburg are well. Lily says she had just had a stinging letter from Miriam, which she had just answered.

Well, I haven't done too badly after all, and, what with time marching on and all that, it's now 10 past 10, so I'd best end off.

Regards to all, & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Field Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F. A.P.O. Durban  
12·11·43 No. 36

Dear Mom,

'Tis only last night that I wrote to Edie, & as I pointed out in that letter, that letter could actually take the place of my usual midweek letter to you, but as I've got a minute or three to spare I'll make it willing & see how much of a letter I can make of this.

I hope this letter finds all at home in the pink, as it leaves me here. I still play a little bit of soccer, & last night, before settling down to write to Rose & Edie, I went up to the Y.M. for some

Table Tennis. The evenings are delightfully long now, for it gets dark at 6, & one can play T.T., or go to bio, & then still come back betimes to write a letter or two. The weather is becoming increasingly cold, & it's quite an effort rising for parade in the mornings. We've been issued now with our winter-kit, which is a great help in combating the cold. The winter kit consists of the well known bunny jacket & trousers - our "teddy-bear" suits. Gloves & jerseys all help to keep us out of the cold, or keep the cold out of us.

I don't think I've told you of my latest job in the regiment, namely that of bar-tender; we run a canteen in our Gunners' (& L/Bdrs') mess, & the surveyors take weekly turns at looking after the canteen. I came into the canteen last Tuesday, & I'm still at it. I'm excused parades & normal duties, & my day is made up of buying stocks at N.A.A.F.I. and serving behind the counter. We restrict ourselves to no particular hours of business, so we never sit still for a minute all day. We sleep in the canteen too; the canteen occupies a corner of our mess, & is partitioned off with the shop in front & our bedroom at the back. We're becoming veritable jacks-in-the-boxes, diving from the bed to the counter to attend to a customer & then diving back again.

I started this letter this afternoon, & I'm continuing now at about 8.30, for we've just returned from seeing a Yankee Concert Party called the "Kwai Skiteers". (Kwai Skiteer in Arabic means "Very Good"). They were only a small party, & their show only lasted an hour, but it was a good hour's entertainment with songs, music, an acrobat, a piano-accordionist, & a magician.

Before I forget! I'd like to send a Xmas card to Joe Nunes, but I just can't think of his address. Do please let me have his address per return, for all Xmas Air Mail must be posted here by 7<sup>th</sup> Dec. So if I don't receive the address by then, I'll post it to Dock Road.

Well, Sunday is mail-day again & I'm hoping to hear from you then, & then I'll be writing again. In the meantime, that's all for now. Regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F. A.P.O. Dbn  
21·11·43 No. 39

Dear Mom,

Many thanks for your ever-welcome letter (S) which I received this morning, and thanks to Miriam for her contribution. I'm glad you're all keeping well, as I am too. I dreamt of Dad last night - all I can remember of the dream is that he was very proudly displaying to me his new plates.

I received two very unexpected letters today; one from Ida Borok, to whom I last wrote 4 months ago; the other from Rose. Rose's letter was unexpected because she usually writes to me every Monday night, and I get the letter the following Wednesday. This time, however, she wrote Sunday night, and the letter took exactly 7 days to reach me. There was some sorry news in Rose's letter, news which you probably know already, namely, the death of little Diana, Natie's only one. What a tragedy! Poor Sonia and Natie - what a blow for them. Diana was a lovely child, and I have a very soft spot for her. At a distance of 6000 miles, I just can't grasp that Diana is really gone, but when I get back, P.G., and I walk into Natie's house, I'll miss the little lady who used to come running to me calling "Uncle Myer". I must drop a few words of sympathy to Natie and Sonia, altho' words, at a time like this, are pretty futile.

To come back to the living. My luck has held good, and yesterday I got another break from camp. I went into Cairo to watch a rugger match between a team chosen from our Div. and a team chosen from an Imperial Division. The Springboks beat the "Pommies" 49-0 - quite a cricket score. I saw Steve Kirsten at the match - as a matter of fact, he played in the curtain-raiser. There's little to

write of of our day in Cairo, except that we paid an interesting visit to the famous Museum of Hygiene, where they have very interesting, and in some cases very gruesome, exhibits of the havoc wrought on the body by various diseases.

'Funny how one bumps into people in Cairo. The first person I bumped into there was Sakkie Khan (who married Gertie Milner) - I don't know whether I told you that I met Sakkie at Shul on Yom Kippur, and went up to speak to him. He couldn't quite place him, but when I mentioned 14 Bedford St. Observatory, he knew who I was. The next person I met was "Wally" Skietekat, of Maitland, who was at school with me. I used to see a lot of Wally when we were at Goudewater, and we were on the Train Enquiry together, but I hadn't seen him since then. Then of course, old Steve, and finally I bumped into a chap Fivaz, with whom I worked in P.E. Customs. He joined up in Dec '40; and left the Union in June '41, and I'd never seen him since. I was glad to see him.

Oh shucks! I've just discovered a terrible thing, namely that I'm writing this letter to you on a lettercard previously addressed to Rose. So what am I to do now, I certainly am not going to rewrite all this. Oh well, I've done it now - I've scratched out Rose's address, and substituted yours; the result is not a picture-painting or a work of art, but it will serve its purpose. So if you'll forgive the mess, everybody'll be happy.

I indulged in my weakness in Cairo yesterday - don't get worried! By weakness I don't mean a "vice" - it may not be a virtue, but it's not quite a vice - I refer to having a photograph took. We happened to pass a studio which was exhibiting some rather good photographs, so, being unable to pass a studio without going in, I went in and asked them to make the best of it. I'll be getting the snaps in 3 or 4 days time, and then I'll be forwarding them.

Dawson and I, who are now sharing the canteen had a good laugh this morning over a cutting which he received from his wife. (Dawsie is on the extreme right of the front row on that group snap I sent home months ago.) The cutting was about General Smuts' visit to our Div. on his way to London. In part of his speech Smuts said "South Africa is behind you", and some joker on the parade ground was heard to mumble - "too b--y far behind". Well, now there really doesn't seem to be anymore to write about - oh, just a minute there is! You make mention in your letter that letters seem to be taking longer to reach you. I can't quite understand that, because our letters are censored the day after we hand them in, and then they're on their way. So the delay must be at the Post Office; anyway, I'm writing pretty often these days, so you shouldn't be kept waiting long between letters.

And that's all for the nonce. Regards to all, and Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Field Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F. A.P.O. Durban  
23·11·43 No. 40

Dear Mom,

I wrote to you only two days ago, & I haven't much to add, but as I'm going to be away from camp from tomorrow morning to Friday, & shan't be able to write, I want to take this opportunity of writing a few lines. I'm feeling well, fit, & in the pink, life in the canteen goes on as usual, and the only thing there is to write about is that we went to a concert last night - a concert by one of the "Ensa" parties. (ENSA stands for National Army Entertainment Services. Artistes from all over the world tour the Middle East under the auspices of Ensa, and Ensa often puts on concerts for the troops).

You'll notice that I'm making use of a Privilege card. Normally every letter I write is censored by my own officer, who thus knows all my business. But we get issued with one of these cards monthly, and as I want to discuss a bit of financial matters with you, I'm making use of it.

The position is this: Firstly, there's a possibility of leave in the near future. I don't know yet where to or when, but when ever it comes, I'll need some money. So if you'll be so good as to draw a fiver out of the P.O. for me & post it on by airmail, I'll be alright. You must be wondering why I'm always writing home for money. Well, I'll tell you. My pay, as you know, is £10-10/- monthly, of which you draw £7, & I get £3-10-0. Now of that £3-10-0, I only draw £1-10-0 a month, so that the credit in my paybook increases by £2 monthly. When I went to Palestine, I drew all my credit, & as it's only two months since I'm back from leave, I've only got about £4 credit again. Hence the appeal for funds, for £4 wouldn't even cover board & lodging in this country.

As you can well imagine, I don't like writing home for money. So I want to make a suggestion. Every month, when you receive my allotment, send me a pound. Then I won't draw any money in camp, but will live on that £1 per month, & my credit in my paybook will go up by £3-10-0 monthly, which is faster than £2 monthly as at present. It'll also save me the embarrassment of writing home urgently for money to go on leave. I know you'll laugh at me, & say I'm crazy, for saying that I feel embarrassed, but I do. I suppose it's because I've never made a habit of it, & in all the years I've been away from home, the first time I had to write for money was when I wanted to go to Palestine last time. The fact is that I made too big an allotment, ie. I haven't left myself with enough. But I suggest that you send me the extra £1 monthly, rather than change the allotment, because while £3-10-0 isn't quite enough at the moment while we're in a base-camp & can get leave & trips to Cairo etc., it'll be ample when we get into the field. So let me know whether all's O.K.

I'm sorry to use up almost a whole letter talking about money, but while we're on the subject, what have you been receiving from Customs lately. You should receive about £2-10-0 monthly in future, but this month they'll probably deduct from that an amount of £1-7-6, which they paid for me in Personal Tax.

Anyway, enough on that subject.

I can't think of anything else to write, so I'll end now, & if I get an inspiration later in the day I'll complete the letter.

Well, it's now many hours later, in fact, it's 8.30 pm & I've just returned from bio, but I've not yet had an inspiration, so I doubt whether I'll be able to complete this page. The show we saw was called "Aerial Gunner", a bit of Yankee propaganda, in which the actions of the hero are so exaggerated that it's almost a comic.

Well, that, I'm afraid, is all for now. Tomorrow is mail-day, but as we're going out in the morning, I won't get my mail until Friday, probably - very disappointing, but what can do.

Regards to all, & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F. A.P.O. Dbn  
29/11/43 No. 42

Dear Mom,

We were rather luckier today than we expected, for the mail turned up this morning, & I received your letter no. T. for which many thanks. I really enjoyed reading that letter, for you seem to have made mention of various small things that you normally neglect, & it's just those small things that count; mentioning, for instance, that you've received certain letters, certain snaps & papers, & passing comment on them - that's what makes the letter a real letter from home.

I'm glad you liked those snaps which you received by surface-mail. I can clearly remember when I sent them, but lately I've wondered on occasion whether you had acknowledged them or not, for I was uncertain whether I'd sent them by air or surface. Now you have a good idea of modern

Egypt. What amazes me is that the Gyppos take those snaps themselves & sell them - they must be very proud of it all.

So you've had to pay Personal Tax for me for last year too - tut! That's the worst of being such a big-salaried man. As a matter of fact, I knew that I was liable for the tax for the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> June '42, but as I joined up about that time, I didn't quite know whether it had been paid or not.

Yea, you can indeed say that the tune "I like your apple-pie" strikes a chord. I'm looking forward to those Taglich you're sending and they'll certainly be welcome.

How is Sam getting on? What's he doing in hospital? Is he just having treatment, or an operation? You say in your letter that Edie has probably told me the reason for Aunty Becky's stay, & so you won't repeat it, but unfortunately Edie hasn't told me. Has Aunty Becky received the letter I addressed to her at Klipwerf about the end of last month?

Remember me to all the good people who are always asking after me & sending regards, & give them my regards.

In your letter, written on the 15<sup>th</sup>, you say that little Diana is doing well. I can't quite decide whether you were holding out on me, or whether you hadn't heard yet. More probably the latter.

Well, as I wrote to you only yesterday, there's no more to add now; I'll be writing again at the end of the week. Regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F. A.P.O. Dbn  
5·12·43 No. 43

Dear Mom,

This late-arrival of mail on Sunday's seems to be becoming a deplorable habit - I must remember to write a letter to the Editor of the Argus! Better still, can't Miriam talk to Mr. Clarkson, & get him to do sumpin about it. For today, for the third time in a month, our mail hasn't arrived, & will probably arrive tomorrow. The only trouble being that I shan't be here tomorrow to receive the mail, so I won't receive it for 8 days - that is, until I return from Palestine. What!!! Haven't I told you? There's a thing! Yes, yester-morning at about 10 a.m. I was suddenly descended upon by the R.S.M. & told to be ready to catch the train to Jerusalem at some unearthly hour on Monday morning, i.e. tomorrow. It's 8 days' leave this time, so I get back to camp next Monday night, the 13<sup>th</sup>. So don't expect any letters from me for that period.

You remember that I mentioned having applied for this leave, but I didn't think it would materialise until either late in December or even early in January. So that this trip caught me rather unawares, particularly from the financial point of view. I managed to draw the necessary £7-10-0 (being the cost of the tour) from my pay-book credit, but that left me without a penny for pocket-money, so, on the strength of the money I've asked you to send, I've borrowed some money in the meantime. So all's well. I don't yet know for sure, but it does look as if I'll be able to do as I wish in Jerusalem. Haia will be surprised when she sees me, for when I wrote to her some two or three weeks ago of course, I had no idea that I'd be seeing her so soon.

We had rather a pleasant time out in the desert this week, away from camp, & on our return I found my snaps from Cairo awaiting me. I had almost given up all hope of ever receiving them. I've sent copies to the folks in Joburg, and here's a special copy, with all my love, to THE FAMILY. I shall offer no comment, beyond the fact that when the snap was taken I was just cultivating my moustache, after having come clean after my return from Pal last time; so my "mouse-tache" really looks as if a mouse has been nibbling at it. How'd you like the snap?

I've dropped a few lines of Xmas Greetings to Mr. Nunes, but as I was uncertain of both his

initial & his address, I hope it reaches him.

I've had a terrifically busy weekend, for I've written 7 letters in order to get my correspondence up-to-date, so that I can start with a clean sheet when I return to camp and today I had washing & clothes-mending to do; the biggest job I did today was the shortening of the pants of my winter-suit. They were a bit too long, so I had to undo the hem, cut off a bit, & then sew on a new hem - what a job for my fingers!

So now I'm all set for Jerusalem, where I'll arrive on Tuesday morning - and believe me, I'll be glad when the filthy train-journey is over. Just imagine! I must be up tomorrow at 3.30 a.m.- Brrr!!

And now there's no more to write about just now. I shan't be able to post any letters to you while in Jerusalem, so I'll write as soon as I return to camp.

Regards to all, & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F. A.P.O. Dbn  
Tuesday, 7-12-43 No. 44

Dear Mom,

Well, here we are once again in Haia's sitting-cum-bed-room - normally it's a sitting-room, but when I turn up it becomes my bed-room. And once again I'm filling in the first few spare minutes of my sojourn here by writing to you. Last time too my intentions were good, but what with Rosh Hashona and the Sabbath, I was unable to make much progress. This time, however, I have no such excuse, and I feel confident that I should have two or three letters ready for posting when I return to Egypt. Shucks! Here have I just arrived, and I'm already thinking in terms of going back - the very return casts a dark shadow over my holiday; so I'll mention it no more.

And now to recount the events since I last wrote on Sunday night. I was up on Monday morning betimes to catch my train - in fact, I awoke an hour too soon, and lay awake for an hour, afraid to trust myself to awake in time if I fell asleep again.

As last time, the train for Jerusalem left Cairo at 2:15 p.m., so we had the morning free in Cairo. It was spent in much the same way as last time; breakfast, then a shave (I didn't trust myself to the ordinary barber-in-the-street this time, but patronised the barber at the Y.M.C.A.) then we went to the Metro Theatre where we saw "Journey for Margaret", and then we just had time to gulp down a hasty lunch at the Metro Buffet before going down to the station. But as we were leaving the Metro after lunch, I remembered that when I wrote to Julian Ozinsky two weeks ago, I told him that he should leave a message for me at Ouma's Club so that if I came to Cairo I might be able to look him up and as Ouma's Club is right next to the Metro, I dropped in there and sure enough found a note from him in which he mentioned that he would be having lunch at Smuts House on Monday 6<sup>th</sup>. Well, we had to go to Smuts House in any case, as we had left our kit there in the morning, so we hurried around there, and sure enough I found him in the dining-room. As a matter-of-fact, I walked right round the dining room, right past him, without seeing him, so, thinking that I had missed him, I went to the cloakroom, where John was getting our kit, but as he had mislaid his ticket and was having some trouble, I went back to the dining-room, and this time found "Pikkie Oz". He came down to the station with me to see me off to Palestine, and I've arranged to meet him for lunch in Cairo next Monday, unless something unforeseen occurs. He's looking very well, and I think he's rather thrilled with Cairo, and with all the sights he's seeing - it's definitely fascinating, though filthy. He sends regards to all. It certainly was good seeing a bit of Maitland in Cairo.

And then the train journey - well, to put it mildly, it was vile. Third class on the Egyptian State Railways compares unfavourably with 3<sup>rd</sup> class at home - it consists of a coach-ful of the same wooden "harde-bankies", but it's ever so much dirtier than our coaches. We had to spend the night

in the train, and sleeping accomodation there is none, so I dossed down on the floor, where I could at least stretch myself out. At 1 a.m. I awoke and found that we had come to a forced stop, for there was a partly-derailed locomotive on the line. So we had to wait there an hour or three, until a train from Palestine, bound for Cairo, reached the same spot, and then the two trains simply exchanged passengers, so that our old train from Egypt went back to Egypt, and we carried on in our "new" train to Palestine. The coach we now found ourselves in was still "Gynpo 3<sup>rd</sup>", but it had a wider luggage rack, so I made myself comfortable there, and slept a peaceful 3 or 4 hours until 6 a.m. The trouble with sleeping on the floor was that people were forever walking up and down the aisle, and as I was stretched out full-length in the aisle, they had to step carefully to avoid me; on the luggage-rack nobody interfered with me. Gosh, ma, having become accustomed to sleeping on the ground in the desert, and on floors and luggage racks in the train, how'm I ever going to fit into a sprung-bed again. However, to proceed. On awaking, feeling dirty and unshaven, and rather hungry, for our last solid meal had been at 2 p.m. yesterday, we found that we were running 5 hours behind schedule, so that instead of being in Jerusalem by 9 a.m., we would arrive there only at 2 p.m. The rest of the journey was without event. We quieted our hunger and thirst slightly at Gaza, where we bought tea and sandwiches, and we arrived at Jerusalem at 4 p.m. We were taken first to the Services Club, to have a meal and to be distributed to our various hotels and hostels. Before the meal, however, I dashed up to Haia's place quickly (only 200 yards away). She was surprised almost beyond words at seeing me and of course invited me to stay with them. So I returned immediately to the club, partook of the meal, and arranged that I stay at Haia's instead of at our hotel. And now it's almost supper-time, and after supper I'm going out with Haia to some affair being arranged by the A.T.S., so I'm filling in my time thus, by writing. I feel a new person, for despite the cold, I've had a delicious shave and shower, and the train journey is far behind me.

As for the "organised tour", the position is quite reasonable. We have a programme and we're at liberty to decide whether we wish to join the party or not. For the first three days we'll be in Jerusalem, then the party is going to Haifa, thence to Tel-Aviv, spending one night in each of the latter places. so while the party is in Jerusalem I shall stay at Haia's, and go and see some of the sights, and miss others, depending on how I feel. But, whenever the party leaves Jerusalem on Friday morning for Haifa, I shall accompany them and from then on stay with the party and be accomodated by them.

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup>, 8.30 p.m.

Well, last night's "affair" by the A.T.S. proved to be a recruiting drive for A.T.S. and W.A.A.P.'s at which slides were screened depicting various aspects of the work. And as the projector wasn't working too well, Haia and I decided to get out pretty early, and we went along to a cafe. I had a wonderful night's sleep last night, in fact, it wasn't sleep - it was a state of unconsciousness. I awoke late this morning, but was able to have breakfast and then get to the Services Club in time to join the party on a tour of the Old City. Now I've just returned and am awaiting lunch.

6.30 p.m.

Well, I "broke" for lunch, and after lunch walked with Israel (Haia's brother) to his office, picking up on the way some ration coupons, or "points" as they're referred to. Israel, incidentally, is the Assistant Controller of Food for the district of Jerusalem. In his office I met all the staff. Then I walked from there to look for Gita. I didn't know her address, as I've been addressing my letters to her office, so I had to rely on instinct and my sense of direction. It was not very easy, for you must appreciate the only time I've been to her house was when I walked once with her one night, on a dark moonless night two months ago. Anyway, my instinct wasn't too bad, and I found the place. She was pretty well bowled over at seeing me, of course, and I stayed with her until 5, and then she had to go to office. She works in an Army office, and her hours are most strange - 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., and 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Incidentally, it's a common thing in this country for a civilian to work in a military office. Anyway, I took her to office, and arranged to meet her at 8 p.m. when she knocks

off.

However, to complete my narrative of the day's events, let me recount the trip we took in the morning. I must point out first that last time our sightseeing was purely from a point of view of Jewish interest, as this time we saw much that was new to me.

We started off by travelling to Mount Scopus, from which one gets an unparalleled view of the entire city. Then we went up to the Mount of Olives, from where one can see the Dead Sea in the distance, and on to Mount of Olives. We entered the Church of the Ascension which explains itself; the church is built in the highest point of the mountain, and is built on the spot from which Christ ascended to heaven. In the church we were shown what is purported to be a footprint of Christ, but as the alleged footprint is in the first place not recognizable as a footprint and is in the second place "imprinted" in solid rock, it's rather hard to believe. Incidentally, the fact that the footprint doesn't look like a footprint is explained by the fact that in those days shoes were not worn, and the foot was rather different to what we know. Outside the church, in the courtyard, are 5 altars where the various denominations gather for religious services on ascension day. The church is plain and simply built, very unpretentious, unlike some of the other churches which we visited in the Old City. Leaving the Mt. of Olives, we passed the Russian Tower, and a church built by a German Kaiser and named Augusta Victoria after his wife, but which is today being used by a Military Hospital; we also passed the Hebrew University on Mt. Scopus, and also the Hadassa Medical Centre (which we visited last time), and so arrived at the Church of All Nations at the foot of the Mt. of Olives.

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup>, 6.30 p.m.

Hello, folks! Last week this time I was in Jerusalem, and feeling pretty proud of myself 'cos I had managed to write, at odd moments, one-and-a-half letters. And from then I was so rushed that here I am, exactly a week later, back in camp, and my letter no further than it was a week ago. Since my return to camp I've received three letters from you (U, dash and V), but, in order to keep everything in order, I'll finish my narrative first and then reply to your letters. I hope to manage it all tonight, as I'm writing in the mess where we now have electric light - very comfortable.

Now let's see! where did I leave off last week - oh yes! - we had just reached the Church of All Nations. So we'll carry on there. This church is rather a magnificent affair (I sent home a picture of its exterior last time). It has about 11 domes inside, one for each nation, each dome having the flag and insignia of its nation. The church was built 18 years ago, and inside there are wonderful paintings, by Italian artists, and mosaics. Just outside the church is the Garden of Gethsemane, containing 8 olive trees which have stood since the time of Christ. Then we went into the Old City, where we visited a succession of churches, and into the Churvah Synagogue, which I had visited on Rosh Hashona. In fact, I "doveled" Mussaph there then. On our journeys thro' the Old City we passed thro' a wonderful street - the street of the tanners. Every little house or shop in that street is the workplace of a shoemaker. If there's one shoemaker in that street, there must be a 100 - and every one of them is busy at his last. And so ended the evening. The afternoon I've already described and in the evening Gita and I went to a cafe.

Thursday morning our day started by visiting the Dome of the Rock (known also as the Mosque of Omar). The mosque is built over the very rock on which Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac, on the Mount Moriah. The mosque is sacred also to the moslems because it was from that point that Mohammed is supposed to have gone up to heaven when he rested in Jerusalem on his way to Mecca. The actual rock is visible, it's a huge rock which slants up a few feet above the floor level of the mosque, and it is surrounded by a low wall so that nobody can step onto the rock. The mosque was built on the site of Solomon's Temple (I hope that doesn't sound confusing) in 691 A.D., but later it was destroyed and rebuilt in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It contains beautiful mosaic works in silver and gold and stained glass windows. On one window there is a "Shield of David" worked in coloured glass. Leaving the Mosque of Omar we just looked into the Mosque of Ana at the Wailing Wall, and then continued by bus to the Dead Sea. Our first stop was the River Jordan, at the

Allenby Bridge. We walked across that bridge, and by so doing one actually crosses from Palestine to Transjordan. Then we went to Jericho, where we saw the site of the Old City. You'll remember that Jericho was the first town captured by Joshua, when the city walls collapsed to the sound of the trumpets. There is definite evidence of the walls having been there, as one can see such obvious signs as bits of brick, parts of stone doors, etc., and by going carefully one can follow the exact site of the walls. The present city of Jericho lies just below, and is a most fertile spot, quite a contrast to the barren and desolate mountains one passes in travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho. Then we carried on to the Dead Sea, where we had a swim. And then our luck gave out - we were a party in 3 busses, and half-way back to Jerusalem our bus broke down, in the midst of the waste of the hills of Judea. I was in a bit of a spot, as I had a date with Gita that afternoon, but, to cut a long story short, I managed to work myself into one of the other busses so that I reached Jerusalem at about 3 p.m., while the rest of our bus only got in at about 5.

That evening there was a dance arranged for our party, in a private house, and I spent a lovely evening. The girls, our hostesses, showed us very proudly their national dances - the "Hora" and they were amazed at my knowing all about it. It's quite exciting the cosmopolitan crowd one finds in Jerusalem - one dance was with a Turkish lass, the next with a Persian; fortunately we all talk English. And so my second sojourn in Jerusalem ended on a pleasant note. I enjoyed my stay there, but I won't say I enjoyed it more than last time, because I didn't experience the same spiritual thrill and excitement that I knew last time - somehow the atmosphere wasn't quite right. That's easily explained. Last time I spent Rosh Hashona in Jerusalem; this time I was one of a party of sightseers, visiting churches etc. nevertheless, I did enjoy it.

Next morning (Friday) I bade adieu to Haia and the family, and to Jerusalem, and we set out on our bus journey to Haifa. We travelled all morning, thro' the hills of Judea and the plane of Jesreal, and the hills of Samaria, to reach Tiberius, on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, in time for lunch. On the way we had stopped at the Well of Gucot, and at Joseph's Tomb. Tiberius is rather a pretty little resort, but we only had a general view of it for immediately after lunch we continued our travels. The Sea of Galilee is 500 ft. below sealevel (sounds Irish!) but actually it's a huge lake, of freshwater, fed by the Jordan on its way down to the Dead Sea. Our next stop was Nazareth, up in the mountains, where we visited two churches, built over the grottos in which the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph lived way back. The we carried on, and visited the settlement Nahalal. It was dark by this time, so we weren't able to see too much, but we were given a good idea of the working of a co-operative settlement. Then, a few more miles, and we reached Haifa, where, after supper, John, Alan and I went to bio to see "Sunday Punch". It being Friday night, there were no busses running, so, in the moonlight, we had to find the way to the bio, the only one showing that night (for troops only) as all other bios close for the Sabbath. We didn't see too much of Haifa, for we left immediately after breakfast next morning, but it reminds one much of good old Cape Town. Mount Carmel is to Haifa what Table Mountain is to C.T., and Haifa stretches up from the sea up the slopes of Mt. Carmel as C.T. crawls up the slopes of our mountain.

When we left Haifa we visited first Ramat Johanan, a communal settlement, where we spent a most enlightening hour or two, and where, incidentally, we drank the nicest milk (yes! milk!!) I've ever tasted - I drank at least 3 cups-ful. Then we stopped for a few minutes at the top of Mt. Carmel, and then we continued to Tel Aviv. Now Haia had given me the address of relatives of hers who live in Peta Tiqva, which is 13 kilometres (about 8 miles) from Tel Aviv, so when we passed thro' Peta Tiqva I left the party, and looked up these people. I was sure that somebody in the house would talk English, but none-the-less I started off by talking Hebrew - I told them in Hebrew who I was, where I'd come from and why, I was invited in, and I was sure that Haia's cousin at least (a girl of 16 or 17) would talk English, even if Haia's aunt couldn't, but imagine my predicament when Haia's aunt, seeing that I wasn't altogether at home with Hebrew, said I could talk Yiddish if it suited me better. Hebrew and Yiddish! and she with but a smattering of each. Anyway, I did pretty

well, and after partaking of lunch which included braun (what is the Jewish name for it - it eludes me) such as I haven't tasted since April 1940, I went for a walk with Zahava (Haia's young cousin) to see the rest of the town, and during the course of the walk, she did start speaking English. She hadn't exactly been stringing me along; she has a good knowledge of English, but she hasn't used it much, so she was hesitant about using it. In any case, she says that when I first arrived she thought I was fluent at Hebrew - she couldn't have seen me perspiring! Then we met another cousin of hers who was spending the Sabbath in Petah Tiqva, and who spoke English well, and after supper the three of us took the bus to Tel Aviv. There my first job was to find out where I had to spend the night, and then, when I'd got the information and found the place (the Balfournia Hotel) and left my kit there, we went to look for a bio. We were too late for bio however, so we spent the evening in a cafe, and then the girls took the bus back to Peta Tiqva, while I stayed in Tel Aviv. I must tell of an amusing incident which occurred in the p.m. while I was looking for the house. I stopped a little boy and asked in Hebrew "where is Rothschild Street". That was a tactical error, for he replied in Hebrew, and except for the first three words (see that house) I didn't catch another word altho' he spoke for 2 or 3 minutes, so I just agreed with everything he said, and answered yes to all his questions, and then said "todah" and walked on, no wiser than before I asked him. The next person I asked, I asked in English!! The family whom I visited was by name Maklev. Morris Singer too, visited them when in Palestine, and they send regards to him and to you all. I showed them all my snaps of you and Dad and my sisters five and they loved them. Ask Miriam and Edie if they know the name "Peta Tiqva" - I was quite familiar with it from a Hebrew song we used to sing which commences, phonetically, "yoo-la-la, yoo-la-la, etc." The town is rather nice, rather like a little country town at home, with many open spaces, with one main street which just about makes the town. Anyway, the song I've referred to is out of date, for there are no longer Arabs in Peta Tiqva! If Miriam and Edie don't get the significance of that remark, Wolfe will enlighten them.

Next morning we swam at Tel Aviv, in the good old Med. We spent the morning on the beach, and then, after lunch we had two hours to spare before leaving, and we had two hours of fun by walking along the promenade and visiting various cafes. Every cafe along the water-front, no matter how small, has its own music, and of course as soon as the musician espies the red-tab he bursts into Sarie Marais or Jan Pierrewiet, or such-like. We went into one of those cafes, and spent the time bellowing our lungs out at the tunes of the sunny south. The cafe was empty when we entered, but we were good for business, and it was soon quite full. We received quite a shock, for there were 5 of us, and we ordered 5 orange-drinks, and 5 bottles of orange-drink were placed on our table. Then I astonished the manageress-waitress (the same girl did both jobs, the cafe was so small) by talking Hebrew, and by the time we left, we were life-long friends, and she could only repeat that it was a great "cha-val" that we had to go. I'd like to spend a holiday in Tel Aviv.

And so ended my second visit to Palestine. At 3 p.m. we took the bus to the station, and at 5 p.m. we were bound for Egypt. Here's to my third visit, P.G.!!

We arrived in Cairo Monday morning and were able to spend all day there. I walked around the town in the morning, trying to buy a certain book for Haia, but was unsuccessful. I was looking for a 1941 or 42 edition of St. John's Ambulance First Aid, but, as in Pal., it's unobtainable in Cairo. If you come across such an edition in C.T. you might send it to me - I'll send it on. But it must be St. John's and it must be an issue later than 1940 as she has the earlier editions. Then I met Julian for lunch, and after lunch we went to the Diana to see "Tales of Manhattan", and after a short supper, we parted company at 6 when I had to go to my train. Incidentally, while lunching with Oz I saw Harry Salber, and I introduced them, and it appears they knew one another quite well.

And so we arrived back in camp, the end of a perfect holiday. Incidentally, the return journey by train wasn't too bad, for we started at 5 p.m., when it was just about dark, and by 6p.m. I was asleep on my luggage-rack. I slept well until 2 a.m. when we stopped for a bite at Kantara, and then I allowed somebody else the luxury of the rack and I slept on the seat. When we awoke at 6, we were

almost in Cairo. So the journey wasn't too bad.

On arrival in camp I found two letters from you (two Sunday's mail) and today I received a third (no. V written on the 3<sup>rd</sup> inst.) I should have written last night but I suppose I was lazy - I went to bio instead to see "The Feminine Touch" which is by no means a new show, as I can remember having seen it in P.E. - way back! Nevertheless, I enjoyed it.

Everything in camp is much the same - with one innovation, a most welcome one. Namely, our first parade is at 7, instead of 6, so we have an extra hour's sleep. I played a soccer match this afternoon, and we got beaten 7 - 2. We're playing another tomorrow - we can't do much worse!

And now to answer your letters. I've not yet received your parcel and Aunty Beck's, but they'll probably arrive for Xmas. I received a parcel, however, from Rose. I also had a letter from Lil today. But not a letter from Rose today, which I can't understand, as it's the first week she's missed since I'm up here.

I'm glad to see about my cheque from Customs - as a matter of fact, it's rather a pleasant surprise, for it would appear that we have been granted a war allowance, which is most welcome. It's rather strange, that there are 3 of us civil servants amongst the surveyors, and we usually know when there is a new increase or allowance coming, but this has taken us completely by surprise. I'm not squealing.

So you got regards from me thro' Sammy Solomon! I'm not sure whether I mentioned that I saw him in Shul (in the desert) at our Yom Kippur service. The coincidence of it all was that the first time I ever met him was in Shul one Pesach in P.E. I didn't know him, but he bears such a resemblance to Sammy that I asked him if they were brothers, and indeed they are. Then I never saw him again until this Yom Kippur.

You say that my letters have arrived in the wrong order, and that they seem to take some time to reach home occasionally. That is explained by the necessity of having our letters censored. Sometimes two or three days elapse between our writing a letter and the time it's censored and posted by our officers. It's rather unfortunate but there is nothing we can do about it. It was particularly unfortunate last week, because airmail letters had to be posted by the 7<sup>th</sup> to reach home by Xmas; I wrote on the 5<sup>th</sup>, the night before I went to Palestine, and on my return learnt that those letters had only been posted on the 10<sup>th</sup>, so they'll probably arrive after Xmas. I only hope these four letter-cards, which really constitute one letter, arrive home together.

Thanks for the invitation to dinner on Friday night - I'll certainly join you. I've also got an invitation from Lil to join her on a picnic on Dingaan's Day (that's tomorrow), but I don't think I'll go - I don't know any of the crowd whose going!

Your letter today was rather unexpected and irregular, and I hope it doesn't mean that there'll not be a letter on Sunday. The more letters, the merrier. Oh yes. I received 3 Cape Arguses yesterday - dated 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> October. Thanking you!

And that's about all there is for now. There's just been a message over the wireless from Cairo. They fired a royal salute of 21 gunshots to mark Queen Farida's (queen of Egypt) presentation to King Farouk (king of Egypt) of a bonny princess - they now have four daughters. By the law of the land and the religious sect to which they belong, he is now entitled to take unto himself a second wife, owing to the first's failure to present him with a son and heir to the throne.

In Tel Aviv there's a place where, for a reasonable price, one can record a message on a record and send it home. John and I went in to have our voices recorded, but, believe it or not, I couldn't think of a 120 words to say. So I cut it out.

And that's the end of this letter. Keep fit, and keep wishing, and thanks to the sisters for the contributions they've made to your recent letters.

Regards to all, and Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Field Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
19-12-43 No. 45

Dear Mom,

I've no doubt that as soon as you catch sight of this "privilege" card you'll think, "Hullo! Myer must be wanting some money again!", but it gives me infinite pleasure to disillusion you - I'm not wanting money again. It's just that we get issued with one of these cards monthly, and only a person who has had to put up with having his every letter censored, by an officer with whom he comes into daily contact, can appreciate how welcome to us is this opportunity to write an occasional letter which will not be subject to the prying eyes of others than those for whom it's intended. The point is, we've no objection to censorship as such; we realize that under existing conditions it's absolutely necessary, but there's a whole world of difference between having one's letter censored by a total stranger, and having them censored by one's own officer - this very card is subject to censorship at Base, but that's all right, 'cos it'll be censored by somebody whom I don't know, & who knows neither me nor you; but the knowledge that our letters are going to be censored by one whom we see & work with daily, places a certain restraint upon us, for nobody likes to carry their heart around on their sleeve. So we welcome and make the most of this monthly privilege.

I wrote to you on Wednesday; my letter was actually no. 44, but it was made up of 4 letter-cards, marked Part I, II etc, resp., and a 5<sup>th</sup> envelope containing diverse snaps. Trouble is, our censorship is so unreliable these days, that I shouldn't be surprised if you receive this letter before the others, or perhaps they'll all arrive together. You'll see in letter no. 44 that I've made reference to the delay in censorship of our letters. You'll have realized, of course, that the relevant chapter was really intended more for the censor than for you - it's one way of letting him know that the present state of affairs in unsatisfactory. Actually I expected him to have me up & speak a few words to me for writing that, & when one or two days passed without his saying anything, I couldn't quite understand it, but today I found that that very letter itself hasn't been censored yet, so I don't expect to hear from him now. I mean, he can't very well pick me out for picking him out now, for that in itself would be an admission that I was justified in picking him out.

Anyway, now you know what the position is, so you need no longer be perplexed when my letters arrive out of order, or if there's a long interval between letters. The actual procedure of having our letters censored is that the ten of us (surveyors) put all our letters into a communal letter-box, which is cleared by our officer daily, (or otherwise) and he then censors them & hands them to the postman. So the delay lies between the letter-box and the postman.

Now, having told you all about that, and now that you know why intervals of a week or more sometimes pass between my letters written at 3-daily intervals, I'll come back to normal.

Many thanks for your most welcome letter (W) which I received this morning, & for your registered letter this afternoon. The fiver didn't last long, for as I think I mentioned in my last letter, the day before I left for Palestine I spent a very rushed day chasing around borrowing a pound here & a pound there, on the strength of my expected remittance, to make up sufficient to go on leave with. So, the fiver was immediately swallowed up in paying my debt, & I can now "look the whole world in the face, for I owe not any man". Once again, thanks for the money, & I'll be pleased if you'll send me a small monthly remittance as I suggested; then I'll not draw any money in camp, so that by the time leave comes round again, I'll have sufficient money in my pay-book, & I shan't have to cable home an urgent appeal for money.

I'm glad to hear that all at home are well, & I'm proud of the way the girls are acquitted themselves at school. Thank Miriam for her contribution to your letter - I'll write to her shortly. Thank Edie too for her letter; letters from the girls are always super-welcome, & I really enjoy them.

Tell Edie I'm glad beyond words that my letter to her arrived in time to let her go to the dance she spoke of, and if there's anything else I can do for her, it'll be a pleasure.

I'm keeping pretty fit myself; I played two soccer matches this week, on Weds. & Thurs., & as I hadn't played for about two or three weeks previous, I suffered not a little bit of stiffness. I soon got over that however, & now I'm feeling fine. We played another knockout T.T. tournament last night, & this time, for a change, I was eliminated in the first round, by a chap whom I beat last time in the Semi-finals. Table Tennis is full of ups and downs.

Winter is certainly upon us. I don't know what sort of a summer you're enjoying, but we have to barricade ourselves well against the cold of the desert - tent-flaps are permanently closed (we'd like to have the tent hermetically sealed) and greatcoats, bunny-jackets, scarves, jerseys and balaclavas all come into their own. We've even had two or three days of intermittent rain, or rather, drizzle, which is actually quite welcome. Today, fortunately, the weather cleared slightly, & the sun shone just enough to allow our washing, which we hung up yester-afternoon, to dry. Old Gerry & I tried a new scheme with our washing this week, but we were rather disappointed. We bought a packet of LUX, and we thought that all we would have to do would be to put the lux in the water, put the clothes in, allow to soak for 3 or 4 hours, & then pull the clothes out clean as the driven snow. Well, we were sadly disillusioned - we found that we still had to scrub the clothes to get the dirt out. So in future we'll just stick to the old way - we might have known that the lux-method sounded too good to be true.

When I returned from leave I found that our tent had acquired a new luxury. During my absence in Palestine, Harold had spent two or three days with his brother in Alex., and he brought back with him a gramophone and a host of records. So, after each meal, & at odd times by day & by night, we settle down to the melodious tunes of Italian opera. The gramophone has had rather a varied existence, as Harold's brother acquired it sometime, somehow, during the Abyssinian campaign, and since then it's known many lands. The records are all classics, - they include the complete opera "Rigoletto", and part of "Il Trovatore", and music by the masters Mozart and Wagner, with songs sung by Beniamino Gigli, the famous tenor. Music, Maestro, please!!

And now I seem to have come to the end of my subject-matter, & at this stage I must start "scratching" to find sumpin to write. I saw a neat little parody recently, which illustrates very neatly the trouble we sometimes have in finding something to say. This is it:

"The moving finger writes, and having writ, marks time,  
Nor all your piety nor wit,  
Can move it on to write another line,  
"Dear Ma and Pa" is all that comes of it."

That's exactly how it is sometimes, for news is horribly non-est.

The only other letter I had today was from Natic, in reply to my letter of condolence. I haven't heard from Rose this week, for the first time since I'm here, but I'll probably hear again on Weds. I had a parcel from her last week.

Well, folks, that's all for now. Regards to all in Maitland, & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.



*Winter in the Desert*

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
19/12/43 No. 4

My Dear Edie

Your letter received today was most welcome and afforded me infinite pleasure, and as such I feel it is worthy of a prompt reply. "Promptitude! - thy name is Kramer!" - with apologies to Shakespeare. Unfortunately, there is all the world of difference between wanting to write a letter & between having something to write about; the former is my strong point, but the latter is my weak suit, if I may put it that way. However, never let it be said that I didn't try.

I'm glad you think you've kinda made the grade at your exams! What a satisfaction there is in the thought "Well, all that is now behind me" - eh? And now you talk quite glibly of looking for a job, and of earning your daily bread! Ye Gods and little Goldfishes! You're growing up, sister! In fact, you make me feel quite old - a veritable Methusela! Surely it was only yesterday that I left C.T. and you were struggling with the intricacies of Standard VII Maths, Science & Accounts! Time doth indeed fly! Well, I hope you're successful in landing yourself a decent billet without any trouble. You did say you were going to rest yourself for a week or three first, didn't you? You might as well - it'll be long before you get another.

Let me explain the last 7 words in the last paragraph. Way back in the not-so-gay 42s, when we were gracing Barberton with our presence, we heard at a U.D.F. concert the conundrum "why does a beggar wear a short coat?" to which the answer was "it'll be long before he gets another." And ever since, at the least provocation, we throw those words at one another. Take it away, kid!

In a "privilege" card which I've just written to Mom I've asked her to thank you for your letter & to tell you that I'll be writing soon. You may think that that was rather unnecessary if I'm writing to you at the same time, but the point is that I can hand the "privilege" card direct to the postman, whereas this letter must suffer the delay of censorship, so that a few days may elapse between the times of receipt of the two letters. Get me!

You must have enjoyed "Random Harvest", for I believe it's good. It was showing in Cairo on one of my visits there, but I didn't get a chance to see it. Some recent shows that I saw in Cairo are "Journey for Margaret" (very good) and "Tales of Manhattan" (superb acting) which I saw with Julian Oz. In Haifa I saw "Sunday Punch" which I enjoyed immensely. Incidentally, apropos (delete the second "p") of Julian Oz, I've just dropped him a short note, asking him to buy me something in Cairo, as he visits that cosmopolitan metropolis almost daily.

Once again, I'm the last in the mess tonight. We write letters in the mess, where we have electric light, & one by one the boys have thinned out in search of their beds, until only I remain. I'm a bit of a nuisance to the canteen-managers (my one-time job.) for they have to take the electric-bulbs out last thing at night before retiring, & I usually keep them awake waiting for me. I shall have to reform my habits.

What's your school mag. all about? D'you think it'll interest me? I think it will, if only for the sake of your article. So, if you hap to have a copy lying around, just overcome your natural and innate girlish modesty, and address it to me per "Surface" - please!

Well, kid, I've not done too badly. Nothing to write, & all night to write it in (almost, that is) & yet here I am almost at the end of the card. A little nonsensical rhyme should do the trick - apropos of nothing, this time. It's a revised edition of "Twinkle, little Star".

"Starkle, starkle, little twink,  
who the hell you are you think,  
I'm not under the alcofluence of inclehol,  
Tho' some thinkle peep I am.

I fool so feelish  
I don't know who is me  
That the merrier I sit here  
The longer I get"

All of which goes to prove that the bicycle has come to stay. Regards to all, & love to Mom, Dad, & the Sisters, Your loving Brother, Myer

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt.S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
22/12/43 No. 46

Dear Mom,

Well, here I am again, wondering how on earth I'm ever going to fill even one page of this card. Altho' it's still early in the evening, I'm the only one in the mess; it's rather cold these nights, & bed is the most comfortable place, which explains why the boys have retired early.

It's been a lovely day today - it rained all day long. And in the afternoon we played a soccer match in the rain. In contrast to the heat in which we used to play and sweat only two months ago, it was most enjoyable.

Our Xmas parcels arrived today; there were two for me, from Aunty Lil & Aunty Beck. They took just about a month to come up - not bad work. I also received two newspapers and a Blimey from you, for which many thanks. I heard from Rose today, & I've just finished writing to Rose & Lily - I haven't written to Aunty Beck yet, but will do so soon.

Well, I wasn't exaggerating when I said I had nothing to write about, 'cos now I've said it all.

So this short note will have to suffice to keep the home fires burning until I write again on Sunday, when I hope to hear from you.

In the meantime, regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.



Another informal group. Xmas '43

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
26/12/43 No. 47

Dear Mom,

Many thanks for your letter no. X which I received this morning. I'm pleased to hear that all at home are well, and I myself am keeping fit too. Thanks also for your parcel which arrived on Friday. The taiglach are wonderful and I haven't slipped up on them this time - I'm eating them and enjoying every bite of it, they're really good. I haven't yet opened the first tin of milo which I received from you and Aunty Becky some time ago, because from the label it appears that it must be prepared with milk. I'll stick to the two tins which I now have, and they'll probably come

in useful some day; but please don't send me anymore. The same applies to the cocoa, which I've not yet used, 'cos to prepare a cup of cocoa one needs milk and sugar; that's where a preparation like vico scores, 'cos all one needs add to it is water. However, when we go out into the desert on our schemes, we receive a ration of both sugar and milk so I'll be able to use both the milo and the cocoa, in limited quantities.

And talking of schemes, I'll be going out tomorrow for five days, so I shan't be writing until next Sunday, so now you know not to expect letters for another seven days.

My mail this morning included a letter from Aunty Beck, of Calvinia, so I'll be writing to her later in the day. I have yet to thank her for her parcel, which contained dry figs and biltong.

The Xmas festivities went off very well, and I think a good time was had by all. We had a bit of a party on Friday night, but somehow we couldn't quite capture the right mood, and we remained quite sober. On Xmas day we were treated to a swell dinner, with turkey, beer, and Xmas pudding, served to us by our officers. We ate so much that we had no appetite for supper in the evening. All in all it was a good affair. Then last night we went along to bio to round off Xmas day.

Today being Sunday, we're taking things easy. Until the mail arrived I occupied myself with fortifying all the buttons on my bunny-jacket, which have been coming off like leaves in autumn. Now that the mail is here, and we've had our tea, we're replying to our letters, so that we can still get them censored today.

Well, Mom, much as I'd like to go on writing, there just doesn't seem to be anymore to write about, so I'll end now with regards to all, and Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

P.S. Today, of course, is Chanukah, and there's a special Chanukah service on in Cairo; I'm sorry I didn't go into Cairo for it. Love, Myer.

Dear Sylvia,

Well, how's my little bokkie keeping now? No, I haven't forgotten that you're my sister, but the trouble is that I don't know what to write to you about. Where was your camp this year, and did you enjoy it? Most of the snaps I sent home were not taken with my camera, but some of them were. I'm very proud of you for having won the merit prize, and now you'll have to see what you can do in Standard IV.

Well, I don't know what else to write, so I'll for end for now. Please keep writing to me, even tho' I can't always answer right away.

Be good, love to Mom and Dad and the sisters and give Liebe a kiss for me.

Love and Kisses, Your Loving Brother, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
31·12·43 No. 48

Dear Mom,

The time is 9.30 p.m.; the date, New Year's Eve; and the place, the desert. And just how I come to be lying on my stomach on the floor of the tent, writing to you by the kindly light of a paraffin lamp, is not too easily explained, for it involves a complexity of feelings, of which I can give you but the merest glimpse.

We arrived back from the desert "veld" this morning, after having spent 3 days away from camp. Traditionally, New Year's Eve is spent in welcoming in the New Year, and I had decided to maintain the good tradition, by giving full rein to what Boechanatian prospenities I do possess.

Accordingly, at 4.30 this afternoon I adjourned to the canteen to start welcoming in the New Year. Rather an early start, true, but at 5 we left the canteen to have supper; which, unfortunately, we missed, so we made a good meal off tinned foods which we'd accumulated from recent parcels - salmon, fruit and milk - a most satisfying meal. That finished, we went over to bio, and my intention was that after bio I would get the party together in the canteen, and we'd have a session lasting till next year. But suddenly I felt the urge to write you my last letter of 1943, and so, even tho' I've nought to write of, here I am, so please bear with me, while I satisfy my urge.

All around there are sounds of merriment, and perhaps I'm a fool for not joining in, but I must take this opportunity of expressing one simple wish, a hope, a prayer; a prayer that is shared by all of us, namely, that the new year will bring to the world the much-looked-to peace, and that we will all be reunited before the new year has run its course. And I think I'll go and drink a toast to that.

So I'll end now. May all your prayers for the new year be fulfilled, keep the jolly old chin up and God Bless you.

Regards to all and Love to Dad, the Girls and Yourself, is my final message of the year 1943, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
2/1/44 No. 49.

Dear Mom,

As I've told Miriam in her letter, our mail is 48 hours late today, so, without mail from home, today didn't feel like Sunday. I wasn't going to write to you tonight, but if I didn't, today would seem still less like Sunday, so despite my lack of material, here I am.

Our 3 or 4 days away from camp was most pleasant. I like the life in the desert, on the move all the day, making our own meals, & brewing up for coffee few times a day, at every available moment. As a matter of fact, during the 3 days, we used only once the coffee with which we were issued - for the rest we drank Vico & Cocoa, & the latter was particularly good,. During 3 days we used almost  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. of cocoa between 3 of us, but we thoroughly enjoyed it. In a recent letter I said you should not send cocoa, but you can cancel that message - it was most welcome in the veld. My remarks about Milo, however, still hold good, for I found no use for it, but am still hanging on to what I've got.

Last night we went to bio to see "Moontide", which we thoroughly enjoyed, & after bio 10 of us got together & had a party - a supper-party, at which we consumed foods received in parcels. We had a good spread, with "open sandwiches" (as it were) of bread-and-salmon, bread-and-herrings, a course of meat, peas and beans, Xmas pudding, nuts & raisins, & coffee.

There's another issue of "The Sable" out, but I haven't got my copy yet. I'll be forwarding it on to you in due course

And that's about all I can manage now, so I'll end with regards to all, & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, & a Big Kiss for Liebe, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
4/1/44 No. 50

Dear Mom,

Well, the mail arrived today, 48 hours late, & if anything, (and if possible) it was all the more

welcome for its lateness. Many thanks for your most welcome letter Y; the rest of my mail, 3 letters, were from Gertrude (written while at camp), from Rose, & one written on behalf of Mr. Nunes by his stepdaughter, thanking me for my Xmas Greetings.

Rose's letter contained the excellent news that she had had a letter from Alec, written from Cairo, where he was spending a few days in transit to the Union. He had been flown to Cairo from Italy. Rose is so excited that she can scarcely think straight, & I don't blame her - she's been waiting a long time for that letter, & now that it's come I suppose she can hardly believe it's true. I suppose there'll be wedding-bells ringing out soon. I always said I'd be present at her wedding to pull faces at her, but it looks as if she'll have to manage without me.

Your letter also contained happy news, for I was beginning to worry about my "masterpiece" & about the certificates for the trees: about the former, because we've heard that a whole load of parcels destined for the Union were swiped by the Gypso's round about the end of October, which is about when I posted my Masterpiece, and such an incident is not beyond the realms of possibility in Egypt; about the certificates because I didn't transact that little business myself, but gave the money & the names & address to our Padre, Capt. Hickman, & asked him to buy the trees when next he visited Palestine, & I was afraid they might have gone astray without me there to look after them personally. Anyway, I'm glad they've all got home safely; I never mentioned them in my letter 'cos I wanted them to come as a surprise - I think they did!

I'm glad you liked the sunset! I've thought of one other use to which it may be put - and that is as an album-cover. A piece of backing can be stitched on to it, & it can be used as a cover for Miriam's first photograph album. That is, if Miriam has no objection to it. However, decide for yourself. As for the certificates, what I asked the Padre to get was 5 cents, one in the name of each of the girls. Is that what you received? And lastly, of course, my photo. I'm glad you liked that. Without outraging my own innate modesty, I don't mind admitting that I rather liked it myself.

Otherwise there's little to add to what I wrote on Sunday. I went to bio last night, but the bio broke down, so we played Table-Tennis instead. And today was as horrible a day as New Year's day - the wind & sand were worse than Maitland's worst & Woodstock's worst put together. To make matters worse, today was "blanket-day". (Blanket-day" happens twice a week; on those days we put all our blankets out for sunning & airing, instead of folding them as normally). Well, the sand piled up against the blankets, & by the time I hauled them in in the afternoon, they were completely covered by sand, & one could just make out their outline. And that's no exaggeration.

Well, that's all for now, & I'll probably write again within a day or two. Regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
5<sup>th</sup> January, 1944

My Dearest Gert,

Many thanks for your lovely letter which you wrote while you were still at camp, and which I received yesterday. I was very glad to get your letter, and I really enjoyed reading it. I'm glad you were enjoying yourself at camp. Did Mommy bring you the "gelt" you were waiting for? You must have kept your tent very clean to win all those ribbons, but I hope you didn't win all the prizes. After all, you mustn't be selfish - you must leave a prize or two for some of the other kids. We also clean up our tent every morning, & it's quite a job, because during the day the floor somehow gets littered with matches and cigarette-ends, and our clothes lie all over the place, & then in the morning we've got to rush like mad to pack all our clothes away & fold up our blankets & get to the parade-ground in time for parade. It's so cold nowadays that we never put up our flaps anymore, & most of

the time we close the door-flaps as well. Last night, after writing to Mom, I went to bio to see "The Pride of the Yankees". Our bioscope usually starts at half-past-six and ends at 8.30, but the other evening our machine broke down, so now we have to wait until the other bioscope finishes, & then we borrow their machine, so last night our bioscope (It's called the OLYMPIC; the other two bioscopes in camp are the EMPIRE and the COLOSEUM) only started at 9 o'clock, & by the time it finished at a quarter to twelve I was almost frozen stiff. Still, I enjoyed the show.

How are you enjoying the rest of your holiday at home? I suppose that by the time you receive this you'll be thinking of going back to school already. How'd you like the idea of being in Standard VII now - getting to be quite a big girl, hey? How did you get on in the Scholarship Exam?

I'm writing this in the games tent at the Y.M.C.A., and I'm writing and playing Table-Tennis alternately. I've just had a nice game with Jackie Walt.

I'm enclosing a few snaps taken round about Xmas time. I hope you all like them.

Has Miriam received the envelope & letter containing art-corners, and how does she like them?

Thanks to Sylvia for sending me her love, and tell her I'll write to her next week. And please write soon again.

Well, little sister, that's about all for now. Regards to all & Love to Mommy and Daddy, and Miriam, Edie, Sylvia & Liebe, Tons of Love & Kisses, Your Loving Brother, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
9-1-44 No. 51

Dear Mom,

Praises be that the mail was on time today, just by way of a change, and I received your letter, No. Z, which was ever welcome, and for which many thanks. I'm glad to hear that all at home are well, and I am too. I'm pleased to hear that Edie has been successful in the P.O. exam, and I hope she won't have to wait too long for an appointment. Mind you, if she should have to wait for any time at all, it'll be funny if she gets her appointment on the 1<sup>st</sup> April, because my original appointment in the P.O. was on that date in '38, and I think Miriam got hers on the same date 3 years later - looks like we have there the makings of another Kramer tradition. But I suspect that Edie will be appointed long before April 1<sup>st</sup> - she's a real renegade, and doesn't believe in family traditions; that's why I'm betting on her getting a first in matric, just to put Miriam and me to shame. As for Gertrude, well, I'm proud of her, and I'll bet you and Dad are thrilled too, not to mention Gertrude's own feelings - congratulate her on my behalf. Poor Liebe's the one I'm going to feel sorry for. By the time she goes to school, just look at the record she'll have to maintain, and the traditions she'll have to live up to. It makes me feel glad I was first of the line and not last; but I'm real proud of my sisters.

I'm glad you enjoyed my letter No. 44 (in four parts). You mentioned that one of the snaps, No. 2, got lost in transit. I wonder whether you really mean "snaps", or whether you meant "letter-card". If it was the latter, well, it will probably have turned up by now, but if it was indeed a snap, well, it's lost, and believe me, if it's the small snaps taken in Cairo to which you refer, then it's no loss at all.

For a change I have a few items of interest to write about. Taken in chronological order, the first is that on Friday afternoon I visited the dentist, and was "measured" for new dental plates - a partial upper and a partial lower. At the moment I'm sadly deficient in molars, and these proposed plates will make good the deficiency.

Secondly, my luck in the draw held good, for on Friday evening eight of us put our names into the hat to decide which two would have the privilege of going to Cairo to watch a rugger match on Saturday, and once again I was lucky, and my name was one of the two that came out. So on

Saturday we went to Cairo. We only had about an hour and a half free in Cairo, so I was unable to contact young Ozinsky, and then we had to meet our truck to go down to the rugger ground, and straight after the match we headed back to camp again. The match was played at the Gezviah Sporting Club, whose premises cover a large area, and in that area they have rugger and soccer fields, bowling greens, tennis-courts, a racing-track (horse-racing) and a swimming-bath and heaven alone knows what else. I seem to have been particularly lucky to get away from camp yesterday because, altho' the weather in general is pretty bad these days, the boys say that yesterday was the worst ever. In Cairo it was quite pleasant.

This morning I visited the Y.M. to see a certain magician who is visiting our camp. He holds the rank of Captain in the British Army, and he is the first magician ever to be commissioned by the British Army for the entertainment of overseas troops. He gave us a really good show. Then I bumped into a chap from P.E. who I haven't seen for over 3 years, ever since he joined the Army, so I spent the rest of the morning at the Y.M. talking to him.

And now that seems to be all for now. Regards to all the folk, and Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Field Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
12/1/44 No 52

Dear Mom,

Your letter ZA, which I received today, was most unexpected, but most welcome. I wasn't expecting any mail at all today, for the only regular letter that I receive on Wednesdays is from Rose, and I received a letter from her on Sunday, so I expected nothing today; I did, of course, kinda hope that there might be a stray letter or two, but when I got to my tent at lunch-time and found no less than six, you could have knocked me down with a steam-roller. There was your letter and Miriam's, one from Lil and another one from Rose, and two others. So you see that all-in-all I'm pretty well looked after.

I think the mental telepathy which exists between us is amazing. Your letter was written on the 31st, and judging by the fact that you had just had dinner, and were waiting to light the Sabbath candles, the time must have been about 7 p.m. At that time I was actually at bio, and while there I decided to write you a few lines when I returned to my tent, and as you know, at 8.30 p.m. that night I lay down and wrote to you. 'Samazing, isn't?!

I like the picture you drew for me of the family at home. I can just picture each one of you pursuing your individual pleasures and / or tasks. I can just imagine that the atmosphere isn't exactly conducive to concentrated thought, which is borne out by the spelling error you made in writing that Sylvia is "reading allowed". You should have told her that she's not aloud to read allowed - I'll be getting mighselph tighed up in a moughment. Enuff oph that!!

News from up here is very scarce. I'm still attending the old "painless extractor" - it's a pleasure to have him put in teeth instead of take them out. I was there again on Monday, and on Tuesday, and I have another appointment tomorrow. I think he's trying to get me fixed up as soon as possible.

Lily tells me that she's booking for 5<sup>th</sup> February, and that she's written to ask you if you can accommodate her friend Ada. This is where the walls stretch again, what?

I went to bio both last night and the night before. Monday night I saw "Torrid Zone", which I remember having seen in P.E. and which was quite good, and last night we saw a perfectly mad show called "The Mysterious Doctor".

And that's about all for now. I'm writing at the Y.M., and I'm going to answer another letter or two and then have a few games of T.T.

Regards to all and Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
23/1/44 No. 54

Dear Mom,

Well, here we are back in camp again, after a most enjoyable 7 days out in the desert. The only fly in the ointment was the weather - for 7 days the wind blew incessantly, & it was most unpleasant. Another unpleasant aspect was the return to camp, for we rode through the night & reached camp at about 3.30 a.m. We got to sleep at about 4, & reveille next morning (or should I say "that morning) was at 6.30. And so back to the routine of camp life. Mind you, we didn't do much all day Saturday, & in the morning it was an unequalled pleasure to be able to have a decent wash in what was comparatively a lot of water, & to shave a 3-day's growth of beard. And in the afternoon we had a shower, from which we emerged new men - and much thinner ones at that. Mind you, showers are all very well, & very hygiene, an' all that, but quite frankly I don't intend indulging in them too often at the moment - the water yesterday was like ice.

Today I was fortunate enough to be able to go to Cairo to watch a rugby match between our Divisional team and a team drawn from all other army units in Egypt - it was an excellent match, which our Div. team won 12-9, thereby maintaining their unbeaten record. We weren't able to have a proper lunch in Cairo, so we made the best of what was available at the ground; we didn't do too badly either, as 4 of us polished off 10 meat-rolls, 8 meat-pies, 8 doughnuts & 4 cheese-rolls. Then when we got back to camp we were too late for supper, so we made a meal of the rations that remained over from our last scheme. Incidentally, we're making ourselves very comfortable, our latest acquisition being a primus stove, which is almost essential on our schemes, & which is most useful in camp, where we can brew up coffee or cocoa whenever we wish; it also helps to take the chill off our shaving-water in the mornings.

Our mail didn't come out to us on Wednesday, but we received it when we got into camp Sat. morning instead. It made no difference to me, because there was no mail for me anyway. This morning we left for Cairo before the mail was in, so we found it awaiting us on our return. It was quite a fruitful mail for me - your letters B & C, & one from Aunty Beck. Incidentally I haven't received letter A from you - the last one before today was numbered Za, written 31<sup>st</sup> Dec, last, so unless you've made a mistake in your lettering, it would appear that one letter has gone astray. However, many thanks for today's two letters, which were most welcome & enjoyable. Thanks to Miriam & Sylvia too, & I'll be writing to them within a few days. As it is I'm once again snowed up with correspondence, & in the next few days I'll have to write conscientiously to clear up the accumulation.

On the way back from Cairo today, we saw a sunset as is usually drawn in pictures & words. Up till now the sunsets we've seen in the desert have been beautiful enough, with the sky a mass of colour, but they haven't been the real Egyptian sunset as we saw tonight. We were riding alongside the Nile, & in the sunset the dhows on the Nile were nicely silhouetted, & on the other side of the Nile was a forest of trees & palms; all in all, a pretty picture.

I don't think I've mentioned that within days of having my first impression for dental plates made, I received the plates. The top plates fit me very well, & now that I'm using them I realize that I had outgrown my old plate many moons back; the bottom plate gave me trouble, so I'm not using them, & I'll get them changed one of these days. I also forgot to mention that in the first day that I went along to the dentist, our regiment was given an opportunity of recording messages to the Union. The number of broadcasters was very limited; only one Surveyor was our quota and it fell to

the lot of Harold Hudson. We've already heard that those messages were broadcast in the Union on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> inst. I wonder if you heard them? While on that topic, you'll know in good time if ever I get a chance to broadcast, because you'll be notified officially by postcard of the date & time of the broadcast.

I'm glad to hear that Miriam Firer has done so well at her exams. I suppose the matric results aren't out yet? You'll be seeing the girls if you go up to Jhb - I saw them once while I was there. Incidentally, I'll be very disappointed if you, and better still, Dad & you, don't go up to Jhb. for a holiday - it's about time you had a holiday.

I'm afraid the computation of my Customs cheque is rather beyond me these days, but I suppose it's right.

I can carry your story about mental telepathy one stage further: your letter C, in which you mentioned the mental telepathy, was written on the 12<sup>th</sup>, & on that same night, in my letter no. 52, I wrote & told the same story about the mental telepathy. If it goes much further we'll soon be able to give up writing to one another, & simply communicate by telepathy instead.

I'm enclosing a couple of snaps taken up here recently. Unfortunately the spool wasn't a great success - two of the snaps had been of Dowson & I standing next to our display-stand in the canteen, & they didn't come out. A third one which was spoilt was a group of us. And of course the one taken in the Dead Sea is not much good. However, I hope you'll like them.

Well, time draws on, & it's now 10.15 already, so I'll have to end off. I'll be writing again soon. Regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
30/1/44 No. 55

Dear Mom,

I've let a whole week slip by since I last wrote to you yourself, but as I wrote one letter to Miriam during that week, it's not so bad. Actually I meant to pursue a policy of some strenuous letter-writing this past week, but somehow I just didn't get as far. When I enumerate all the letters I "intended" writing, it makes quite an imposing list - it's only a pity I didn't write them! For instance: I meant to write to you on Wednesday, but then I received a letter from Gertrude, so I thought I'd write to her instead; but as I had written to Miriam only the previous night, I decided to leave Gert's letter until Thursday, - I wrote to Lil instead. Thursday came - and went, and so did Friday, & likewise Saturday, & I still hadn't written to either you or Gert. Then I thought I'd spend all of today writing letters, but the best-laid plans of mice & men gang oft agley an' all that, (according to one Robert Burns, & who am I to dispute his wisdom) for this morning I was suddenly called upon to do some work, & after lunch I didn't feel like writing. So here I am now, determined to spend the evening writing as many letters as I can to Camden Road. Actually I received 5 letters today, which brings the total of people to whom I owe letters to about ten, excluding the family. This letter-writing is a racket - it's one of the biggest tasks in the army. Trouble is that I just don't be able to settle down to writing these days, & if the position doesn't improve soon I'll have to give up some of my correspondents before they give me up. We've spent a very quiet week. On Thursday night I was on guard, Friday night I went to a service by way of a change, & last night I was so mad at myself for my inability to settle down to letters that I went to bio to see "Holiday Inn", which I had seen twice before - I enjoyed it none-the-less. Today's been a pretty horrible day, with a terrific dust-storm in the afternoon, followed by some rain.

There were some more parcels in yesterday, & I received a parcel from Rose, a bundle of

Outspans from Aunty Beck, and two more Cape Arguses from you. As I had a letter from Aunty Beck this week, I'll have to write tonight. Today's 5 letters were the usual variety of C.T., Jhb., and P.E., & in addition I received by air-mail a balaclava cap from Aunty Lil.

I'm sorry to hear both from you & Gertrude that the children have been troubled by chicken-pox. I hope all are well by now. When you write about Liebe I get awful homesick for a sight of her - can't you possibly beg, borrow or steal a spool, & send me some snaps of the whole family. The next time I go to Cairo I'm going to comb the town for a spool to send home to you, but in the meantime see if you can't find one in C.T. Perhaps Lil will be able to get one in Jhb & bring it with her. Fancy Liebe asking "Is that for Myer"! I think it's cute beyond words - when is she going to start writing to me.

I'm glad to hear of Edie's success both in the Matric & Taalbond & of her appointment in the Post Office. As I prophesied some fortnight ago, she's outraged all traditions by starting on the 1<sup>st</sup> February instead of on April Fool's Day. I suppose you'll have Miriam & Edie talking to one another in Morse one of these days.

I noticed your endorsement on Gert's letter - many thanks, I'll look forward to the parcel you've sent off - it'll probably be here in four or five weeks' time. As for the Taglech you don't have to worry about the ants getting at them - even ants don't like the sea-trip. In any case, if we used to stand a table's legs in tins of water to prevent ants, how could an ant get aboard a ship?

I've had quite an interesting week this week actually, for I'm on an "aircraft recognition" course. They should be able to teach me quite a lot, for at moment an aeroplane's an aeroplane to me, & they all look the same. By the time the course is over I might know the difference between a fighter & a bomber.

And now that's about all for the nonce. I'm enclosing some snaps just to make up weight. Regards to all, & Love to Dad, the Girls, Aunty Lil & Yourself, Keep Well & Keep Writing, Your Loving Son, Myer.

P.S. You probably noticed that I spoke out of turn in my last letter, for it was handed back to me with the request that the offending sentence be erased, or the letter written over. So I took the line of least resistance & cut out the whole sentence. Love, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
30/1/44

My Dearest Gertrude,

Many thanks for your most welcome & enjoyable letter which arrived on Wednesday. As you admit, it's the first time you've ever completed a full letter-card, and it was a good effort - I only hope you'll continue writing like that.

Judging by your letter I indeed erred badly in addressing you as little sister. For one thing, as you point out, you're not so little in stature; and now that you've pointed it out, I seem to remember that last time I saw you you were as big or bigger than Edie. For another thing, your letter has "grown up" considerably; when I see some of the words & phrases you use, I realize the mistake I made in calling you "little". So I shan't do it again, & please accept my apologies.

Now that you're back at school after your holidays, how do you like Standard VII? What subjects are you taking now? - Maths, Latin, or short-hand and Typing. Now that Edie has left school I suppose the principal will be glad to have you in her place. Talking of studies, tell Mom that I had a reply from the Chartered Institute of Secretaries to my query about my Final Diploma, & they say that the Diploma's for the June '42 Exams haven't reached the Union yet, but when they do, my

diploma will be forwarded to Mom.

I'm glad you enjoyed your stay at camp. How's your boy-friend at S.A.C.S. getting on? I'm sorry you're having trouble with your swimming; perhaps I should send you a bit of the Dead Sea next time I go to Palestine - then you wouldn't have to swim - you could fall asleep in the water, & you'd still remain floating.

I'm sending along just a few more snaps. The one snap of the "Gyp" tram is quite interesting. I don't think I've ever told you about the Egyptian Tramway Co, so I'll tell you now. The officials of the Tramway Co. wear so much gold braid on their sleeves that they are easily mistaken for Admirals of the Navy, or some equally high position. On the trams themselves, the fares are reasonably cheap, and in addition, anybody can have a free ride if he stands outside. That's why you see on the snap so many "Gyp" standing outside - sometimes you see a tram with only a few people inside, but the outside is full-up, & there are even Gyp's on the roof. On the trams they have a conductor, but as none of the Gyp's trust one another, they have about 100 inspectors to check on each conductor - every few yards or so another inspector jumps on & you have to show your ticket again. By the time you get to the end of your journey, your ticket looks like a soup-or-tea-strainer, and lastly, the conductors don't use whistles, they use hooters - what a noise! Quite an exciting performance all in all.

Well, the boys all want to go to sleep, so I'll have to end now. Regards to all & Love to Dad, Mom, the sisters, & Aunt Lil and yourself, and please write soon, Tons of Love, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
6'2'44 No. 56

Dear Mom,

I'm fighting a terrific battle at the moment - mental, of course. I'm fighting against a tendency to commence this letter in the same way as I commenced my last one; that is, by telling you that it's a week since last I wrote, an' all that. But as I keep telling myself, you already know that I haven't written for a week, & that during that time I've written to both Gertrude & Edie, so why trouble to point out the obvious to you. Except, of course, that this little digression has helped to fill up half-a-letter card, which is considerably more than I could have hoped for when I started out, so that is sumpin' gained.

Seriously, news up here is so scarce that if there was some news to write about, well, that in itself would be something to write home about. My mail today was good, what there was of it; unfortunately there wasn't much of it - just one letter from Miriam to which I shall try to reply later. In it I learn that Cousin Dave has taken the first step on the holy road to matrimony, as it were - he hasn't taken quite so long to make up his mind this time - I must drop him a few words of congratulation.

I was hoping to go into Cairo for the day today, but it didn't come off. It's just as well, really, for we're going out on a scheme tomorrow, so this afternoon will have to be spent in doing a bit of organising. And while I remember, I shan't be writing to you, or to anyone else in Camden Road, for the duration of this scheme, so don't expect any letters for the next few days.

Our Vico-and-Nescafe-drinking has assumed giant proportions; in fact, we're becoming veritable Vico-addicts. The "Primus" is proving itself God's greatest gift to soldiers in the desert, for we "brew up" at every available moment, & our latest habit is to put on sufficient water in the morning to provide hot shaving-water and hot Vico. We light the Primus before going on roll-call, & by the time we get back to our tent the water is hot enough for shaving, & by the time we've shaved the rest of the water is ready boiling for Vico. That's organisation - we eliminate all wastage of time.

I went to bio last night to see "Son of Fury", which I rather enjoyed, despite the moon. That's about the only flaw in our open-air theather - the desert moon is so bright that one can hardly see what's happening on the screen.

The course I was on ended yesterday - it was nice while it lasted. We had lectures in the mornings only, leaving us free in the afternoons - in theory. In practice - well, you know the old saying - the Devil & the army finds work for idle hands, & our afternoons were usually filled up with one or other fatigue.

Which brings me to the end of my allotted space, which is quite an achievement. And I'll end now with regards to all and Ada, and Minka, and Love to Dad, the Girls, Aunt Lil & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
9/2/44 No. 57

Dear Mom,

Pardon me a moment while I put on my left glove. The very exercise of writing is keeping the blood in circulation in my right hand, but my left hand is frozen. (Do I hear murmurs of "your tiny hand is frozen"?) Ah! That's better. Now on with the show.

It's already 10 p.m., & time that all good S. Africans were abed. I've just finished letters to Rose & Lil, & I remembered that you'll probably be wondering how I come to write to Lil on Wednesday, after I'd warned you that I'd be out in the desert until Thursday. So here's the answer - the scheme was cancelled, so everything goes on as normal.

I've given Lil most of the news, & my only worry at the moment is that Lil may have left by the time her letter arrives, & then you'll miss the news. So if that happens, you have my permission, & Lil's too, I should imagine, to read her letter before posting it on to her.

I need hardly mention that I'm well & fit, as I hope this letter finds you all. We had a most enjoyable game of soccer this afternoon, which we lost 3-1, & don't tell anyone, but I scored one of the three goals against us. Anyway, as someone pointed out, I at least scored a goal, which was more than most of our chaps did.

I had a letter from a very happy & excited Rose today telling me the wonderful news of Alec's return.

Well, the other boys are already sawing wood, & one of them is even talking in his sleep, so I'll end off now, & I'll be writing again within a day or two.

Regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
27'2'44 No. 62

Dear Mom,

I had intended spending the afternoon doing a spot of intensive "Gyp" P.T., leaving my letter-writing to the evening, but the elements have changed my mind for me. The wind is blowing a mild sandstorm, and as it became more and more unbearable in my tent, I was driven to seek refuge in the writing-room at the Y.M. Here it is at least bearable! So here I am at work at my correspondence, instead of indulging in Gyp" P.T., my favourite indoor sport. (Gyp" P.T. is the technical name for reclining on one's bed, either asleep or battling to go to sleep - also commonly known as ironing

one's blankets.)

Thank Edie for her letter which I received this morning, & tell her that I'll be replying shortly. In the same mail I received letters from Rose, Aunty Beck, and Haia in Palestine. Haia has been thro' a bad winter, with both her brother & his wife not at all well, but they're better now.

Aunty Beck says she & Sam are O.K., & she says that with all your visitors in the house she hasn't heard from you for days, you haven't time to write - which statement I heartily endorse. Altho' I shouldn't be surprised if I hear from you on Wed., for Edie mentions that you "collared" an A.M.L.C. (short for airmail Letter-Card) which she had already addressed to me - so here's hopin! From Rose, of course, I learn the sad news that Alec has gone down with malaria, and they've had to postpone their wedding, which is very unfortunate. However, knowing malaria as I do, I don't doubt that he's well by now.

Since last I wrote to you, we spent quite an uneventful week. We were away from camp for three or four days during the week, which explains why I haven't written any letters since last Sunday. And which also explains why I haven't been to bio much this week. Monday night I was on guard, but I went to bio Friday night & last night. Friday night we saw a lot of tripe, altho' we did see an excellent short called "Battle of Britain"; it is one of a series of 7 shorts entitled "Why we fight". These "shorts" aren't really so short, for they run for anything between 30 and 45 minutes, & they're certainly the best short of their kind I've ever seen. Last night we were lucky enough to see a double-feature, & both shows were good - "ReUnion in France", a story of the underground movement, and a comedy-thriller called "Whistling in Dixie", with Red Skelton.

Otherwise there's just about nothing to write about, so I'll end now and go and brave the wind by standing in a queue for a "cup of tea and a bun".

Regards to all, & love to Dad, the girls & yourself, and please write soon and often, or else I'll tell Dad on you, Your Loving Son, Myer

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
2·3·44 No. 63

Dear Mom,

Letter-writing these days has become so difficult, owing to the scarcity of news, that I've decided to resort to the old practice of writing a few lines each day, so that at the end of a week I'll at least be able to post a full letter-card. This system worked pretty well some time ago, so there's no apparent reason why it shouldn't prove successful again.

We're spending rather a lazy week, for our officer is away at the moment. Actually this is an excellent opportunity to get my correspondence up-to-date, but somehow I'm just too lazy and the only letter I've written so far was the one I wrote to Gert this morning. My days aren't being altogether wasted, however, for I've been spanned in for an hour each morning, giving lectures on map-reading to a class of about 10 chaps.

Another useful thing that I've done this week was to make up the monthly accounts for our canteen. The only record kept by the canteen is a cash-book, and from that and from the invoices I had to prepare Trading and Profit and Loss accounts and a Balance Sheet; a job which, in the C.I.S. exam, would have to be done in about 10 minutes. But believe it or not it took me 3 hours to complete. Grr! It was horrible. I hadn't even thought of bookkeeping since I finished my exam, so that when I started on the job, I had to scratch deep down into the abysmal recesses of my grey matter to decide whom to debit and whom to credit, to decide whether a Dr. balance in the ledger represented an asset or a liability, and of course Discount Rec'd gave me no end of trouble. However, everything came right in the end, and I justified my admission to that noble profession of

secretaries.....I think.....I hope.

It was quite a coincidence that in the letter which I received from Haia on Sunday she asked when I was coming over to Palestine again, and she reminded me of my "promise" to spend Passover with them. In my reply I had to admit that, far from knowing when I could get leave again, I didn't even know the date of the Passover; next day a notice appeared in our orders that Passover is from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> April, and it went on to say that, providing that the exigencies of the Service permits, Jewish details may take leave for that period, if they are due for leave round about that time. So, with a bit of luck, I may yet spend the Passover in Palestine. You've no idea how I look forward to that, for I haven't been able to observe that festival for the last four years - three in the boarding-house, and last year at sea. Last year I was telling the Joburg folks that I'd spend Passover with them; this year I tell that to the Palestinians; next year P.G., I'll tell it to you.

As I told Gertrude, the weather is becoming quite warm again, and as from today we're allowed to wear summer-kit again. After months of seeing the boys in thick angora shirts, and thick serge battle-dress, it looks quite queer to see them once again in unfamiliar khaki shirt and shorts - not to mention the lily-white arms and knees. Hell, just think, I'll have to start washing my knees again.

I had a letter from Rose yesterday. Alec is getting on nicely, and would be up and about in a day or two. It seems Uncle Gerson is unable to visit for the wedding, for she says he's leaving within 4 days.

I played Table Tennis last night for the first time in about 2 months, and I did quite creditably too, at that. Tonight I'll probably go to bio, or maybe I'll go to an Ensa concert.

Well, I seem to have done so well on this card, that it's hardly worth keeping it over for tomorrow, so I'll end off now.

Regards to all, and Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
6/3/44 No. 64

Dear Mom,

Here I am again - and it's not a request for money. Many thanks for your most welcome letter which I received this morning; the mail was once again 24 hours late, but even if it had arrived yesterday I couldn't have written to you for I was on guard last night again.

News up here is scarce as ever. I went to Cairo on Sunday to watch rugby - our Div team once again played a team chosen from the rest of Egypt. We gave them a sad trouncing, the score being 27-3. And imagine my surprise, when, of all people, Archie Sieff tapped me on the shoulder. Apparently he's been up here some months - but gee, it was a surprise! He's with our Div.

I had a letter from Small Ozinsky today. As you know, he's in Italy, & he reckons he's enjoying himself immensely. He returned to me the negative of he & I which I sent him. We also sent him one print of that negative.

Otherwise, there's nought to write. I'm glad that all at home are well, & I'm fit & well too.

So I'll end now with regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

P.S. Excuse the brevity of the epistle, but, I don't know whether I've told you before, there's so little news now. Love, Myer.

P.P.S. Received a parcel from Aunty Sybil on Tuesday, as well as 3 Cape Argus, a Stand Easy, & a Reader's Digest from you, for which many thanks. Love Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
12-3-44 No. 67.

Dear Mom,

Just a few line to let you know that I'm keeping fit, & I hope all at home are well too. I'm still sitting around in hospital, taking my medicine - when last I wrote I said I'd still be here 6 days, taking 2 medicines 3 days each; that period has now been increased by 3 days, because between the taking of the two different types of pills, I must have 3 days rest. So I'll probably still be here the whole of this week.

Today's mail-day, but I haven't yet received my mail, for it has to come across from the regiment. Actually it doesn't take long to get here from the regiment, 'cos I'm only about 1/2 a mile from my old tent, as the crow flies. You see, I'm not at the old hospital, but instead I'm at what is known as a C.R.S. (Casualty Receiving Station.) As the name implies, all cases are brought here, & those who merit it are evacuated to hospital. Last time I spent only one night in the C.R.S. but this time I'm here all the time. About the only difference is that we have male-nurses here, corporals in the S.A.M.C.

I received Miriam's little note in her registered letter on Friday; much thanks for the money. I've an idea it's going to come in mighty useful for Pesach.

While I remember. On closer inspection I find that while the polony is in good condition, only about half the sausages were good - the other half was covered with green mold. However, what was good I ate and as the old nursery rhyme has it, "what was good was very, very good, but what was bad was rotten."

I had a letter from Rose on Friday too, in which she tells me that she was getting married on the 8<sup>th</sup> which also reminds me that today must be cousin Dave's big day as well. What sort of a wedding did he have, & where did he get married - in Maitland, or one of the other Shuls?

I had a midnight visitor last night. I awoke to a scratching & scraping & scuffling, & when I lit a match I found a cat busy upon some biltong it had scratched out of my locker. The amazing part was that in my locker I had that biltong (which Aunty Beck sent me) as well as the sausages & polony, & the biltong was less accessible than the other, & yet he managed to get at the biltong without touching anything else.

And that's the end of this bulletin. "That was the news, & this is M. Kramer writing it."

Regards to all, & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, & Keep Writing, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Field Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
13/3/44

My Dearest Liebe,

Unfortunately you're unable to read this letter, but as you will learn when you grow older and get to know your big brother better, little considerations like that don't worry me. I have the urge to write to you, so, the urge must be satisfied. This is the first letter I've ever written to you, but it won't be the last - I don't let anybody get off as easily as that. Even the fact that you don't reply won't stop me - as your big sisters will testify. (That's a horrible dig - pardon me!)

Now let's get down to brass tacks. Last year this time I was home on leave, which expired about a week before your birthday. In the general confusion which followed certain incidents on the train back to camp, I overlooked your birthday. A week later Mom picked me out very sadly on your

behalf for my neglect. So I'm taking no chances this year. It's impossible to time these letters exactly, but, better early than late. So here's wishing you very happy birthday, and many, many happy returns of the 26<sup>th</sup>. And I'll see that I don't forget your birthday in a hurry again. And here's hoping that I'll spend your next birthday at home with you.

And now, sister... (I refrain from saying Little Sister, 'cos the way you young ladies grow up these days, there's no knowing how one may give offence; I used those words to Gertrude some time ago, and I don't think she's ever forgiven me.).... that's about all for now.

Regards to all your friends, and Love to Mom and Dad, and your sisters, and tons of love and a special birthday kiss to you yourself. Your Loving Brother, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Field Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
13/3/44 No. 68

Dear Mom,

Many thanks for your letter F which I received today. It was most welcome. I'm not one given to idle flattery, but I must say that your letter was one of the best I've received for a long time. I like to feel that the writing of letters is an art, but unfortunately it's a very sadly neglected art. I derive a great deal of pleasure out of every letter I write, but unfortunately most people simply write out of a sense of duty or obligation, and the sooner they can finish the letter the better. So that when I receive a letter like yours, containing news and views from here, there and somewhere else, and over which you've obviously taken some pains, then I feel happy and full of the "joie de vivre". The war has done much to promote the noble art of letter-writing in some cases, as in the case of people who write to one another about once a month, and consequently try to make that letter worthwhile, but where letters are written twice weekly or more, they often tend to become very slap-dash. From our side of course, it's unavoidable, as news is scarce and restricted by censorship, and our time is not our own, but there's no excuse for our receiving slapdash letters - it's regrettable. So thanks once more.

And that, brethren, ends the sermon for this week.

I read with interest of all the social events of the times. I'm kept well in touch with Rose's arrangements, of course, and I knew that Dave was booked for the 12th, but Solly Galansky's marriage and the Basker Barmitzvah were news to me. I think I'll drop Basker a few lines, even tho' it is rather late - it depends on whether I can think of anything to write that will interest them. As for Dave, I wrote to congratulate him on his engagement, and I've not had a reply yet, so wish him all the best for me.

Your sister and my Aunt, Lily, is a so-and-so so-and-so, as I took the liberty of pointing out to her in my letter to Aunty Syb the other day. She hasn't written since before she left for C.T. Actually I owe Lil more than I can ever repay her, and I'm thankful to her more than she'll ever know. Apart from the regular monthly parcel which she's sent me all the time up here, I'll never forget that when we first arrived here, when mails were irregular and letters cause for great jubilation, she was the only one to guess that I'd left the country and the first to start using letter-cards, so that it was her letters that kept me going until the rest of the mail started rolling in 3 weeks later. Which reminds me, I must write to her today or tomorrow to say "Happy Birthday". Which reminds me further. You've passed no comment on the trinket case I sent her - she said she was taking it to C.T. with her to show to you. Furthermore, please, I say again, please make a point of letting me know the date of Aunty Beck's birthday, and if possible that of Uncle Sime's too.

About finance, I had a letter from Wolfe today and he says we've all got a 5% increase, which explains why my customs cheque jumped suddenly one month. He adds that they've also received

an increase in COL.A. but of course that doesn't apply to me. When you compare Miriam's "£13-odd" with Edie's salary, it looks incongruous. I suppose Miriam's is net, after deduction of pensions, while Edie doesn't pay pensions for the first year. Do you realise that Edie's salary is higher than what I started on. How's my P.O. account going these days? Has it got anything to show for itself - not that it's important. I've told you you're welcome to use all you need.

Hell, just look at how my writing has decreased in size as I've progressed. I started off in a quite a large hand, for fear that I might not have enough to write, and I don't seem to have done too badly. And that's about all for now.

Regards to all, and Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
16/3/44 No. 69

Dear Mom,

Here I am again. Just a few lines to let you know that I'm keeping well and fit, living a comfortably lazy life here, with the only caterpillar in the cream being the thought that I must leave here on Monday. It's always the same - just when I'm getting used to hospital life and beginning to enjoy it, they throw me out. I suppose all good things must come to an end.

How's everybody at home? Well and fit, I hope, and by the time you receive this I suppose you'll be quite busy with preparations for Pesach. I don't know just where and how I'll be spending Pesach, but I'm hoping for the best. However, wherever I am, I'll be with you in spirit - blimey, I can just taste your whadoyoucall'ems - "cannonballs" Uncle Sam used to call them.

When I say that I'm leading both a comfortable and a lazy life here, I don't mean maybe. During the day I lend the ward-orderly a hand occasionally, dishing out medicines, meals and doing an odd job or two, but apart from that I sit reading all day, listening to the radio. The radio does much to relieve the usual boredom of convalescence; it is scarcely switched off once between breakfast and lights-out, and by dint of switching from once station to another, we supply ourselves with music most of the 15 hours of the day. I've done a lot of reading, which is quite a change, for I do little of it in camp, and what little I do read in camp is confined to short articles rather than full-length books. I've read two good books during the last 3 days which I'd recommend to you or the girls, viz. "The Mortal Storm", by Phyllis Botheme, and "The Major", by Ralph Conner. My writing is rather spasmodic, for for 2 or 3 days at a time I don't put pen to paper and then suddenly I'll spend a whole afternoon writing 3 or 4 letters. I've been to bio the last two nights. Night-for-last I saw a very mediocre show called "Mr & Mrs Smith", but last night I saw Noel Coward's "In which we serve", which is a powerful and well-acted tale of the private lives of various members of the crew of a British destroyer.

I should have received my midweek mail today, but unfortunately the mail was 24 hours late, so I'll not receive it until tomorrow. It usually consists of only one letter, Rose's, but.....hope springs eternal, an' all that, and there's no knowing when stray letters will turn up.

Incidentally, I'm the oldest inhabitant here these days. There's definitely a patient-may-come-and-patients-may-go-but-I-go-on-forever touch about it. Quite a contrast to No. 5, where I was last time, for there the oldest inhabitant had been there some 4 months.

Well that's about all for now, so I'll end with regards to all and Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
19/3/44 No. 70

Dear Mom,

If I weren't so lazy I might walk across to the regiment & collect today's mail. But much as I want my letters, I just don't feel like walking across to the regt. - it's only 500 yards as the crow flies, but the road doesn't fly like a crow, & it's the best part of a mile by road. And as today's my last day in hospital, I'm making the most of my opportunities, & simply indulging my laziness. Anyway, I'll receive my mail tomorrow, & then it will be all the more welcome for the extra 24 hours I'll have waited for it - so you see, I'm quite a martyr to my laziness.

As I've hinted, I'll be leaving here tomorrow, but I shan't be going straight back to the regiment. The normal procedure is that when a man goes to hospital, his place in the regt. is filled by somebody out of the Reserve Pool, & when the man is discharged from hospital he goes to Reserve until a vacancy occurs for him in his regt. In my case it's slightly different, for my place in the regt. hasn't been filled, but has been kept open for me. So, as a matter of routine I'll go along to Reserve tomorrow, but I'll only spend a day or two there before rejoining the regt.

I went to bio both last night & the night before, but both shows weren't worth seeing - they weren't worth screening. After the show last night I dropped into the Y.M.C.A. & I've never talked as much as I spoke during the next 1½ hours. I was in hospital blues, & I kept bumping into one chap after another. The very first chap I bumped into was Dick Villiers, who used to live opposite us in Gwen Villa. Last time I saw him was when I was on embarkation leave & he was on ex-North leave. The first thing I said when I saw him last night was to remind him of his boast, when I saw him last year, that he'd never leave the Union again. We recalled the good old days in Camden Road, when I was a rising young Civil Servant, & he was a very keen peace-time soldier, with a passion for beating his drums from 5 a.m. to midnight. All of which seems hundreds of years ago; it belongs to the dim and distant past.

A strange encounter I had last night was with a chap whom I'd noticed once or twice at the Y.M., & who made me think of the Krisemans who used to visit us at Maitland many years ago. As I was walking to bio last night our paths crossed, & we both nodded hesitantly, & then stopped & talked. He remembered my name, said his was Saacks, & that we were at S.A.C.S. together. But I'm darned if I can remember him or place him. (What's another Saacks in my life.) He's got me puzzled.

Since last I wrote, I had letters from Rose & Lily & Haia on Friday. Rose's letter was written the day before her wedding, Lily's told me about her holiday & about you folks at home, & Haia's expecting me for Pesach. Personally I don't think I'll see Haia for Pesach, but there's no knowing - I'm hoping for the best. Lily tells me she gave Miriam a spool, but she was doubtful as to it's condition. Well, I sincerely hope that the spool is O.K., & I'm looking forward to some snaps of the family soon.

And that's about all for now, & I'll probably write again when I receive your letter tomorrow.  
Regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls, & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
21/3/44 No. 71.

Dear Mom,

Well, here we are in the Reserve Battery, where I arrived yester-morning. I took a walk across to see our Skipper yester-afternoon, to tell him that I'm out of hospital & in the Reserve, & he assured me that I'd come back to the Regt. at the first opportunity - so I'll either be going across this Thursday, or Thursday next. So I'm using the same old address, & please carry on addressing your letter to the regiment in the same old way. (You may find the above address crossed out & the correct Reserve address substituted, in a strange hand; don't let that influence you - the censor has his orders.)

Many thanks for your most welcome letter which I received yesterday. Unnumbered, it was written at the G.P.O. while waiting to meet Edie. I'm glad to hear that all at home are well, & I too am in the pink. On leaving hospital the medics recommended me for 72 hours excused duty, so I've got nothing to do and all day to do it in. Not quite the same as the convalescence I had last time, but I'm glad I didn't go to CON Depot this time. It would have been too much of a good thing.

When I went across to the regt. yesterday, I spent the afternoon & evening with the boys, & we went to bio. There was quite a bit of rejoicing in the regt. last night, for promotions have come through. Two of our chaps, Walker & Watling, received their second stripes. I'm glad Watling got his, he's a good chap. He's the oldest of us, a Civil Servant, & being a man with a wife & two kiddies he has a very sobering effect on our lives.

In a letter from Joburg yesterday I had a report of Rose's wedding. I believe there was a big crowd present, & Rose was an exquisite bride. Uncle Harry says my correspondent, "beamed benevolently on everything & everybody all evening."

Otherwise, there's nought else to write of, so I'll end with regards to all, & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

P.S. Does last night's date (20<sup>th</sup> March) mean anything to you? It marks exactly one year since I bade you "Au Reservoir" at Monument Stn. Please God it won't be another year before we're all back again. Love Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
26/3/44 No. 72

P.S. Today is Liebe's birthday. Sorry I'm not at her party. Say many happy returns to her for me. Love.

Dear Mom,

Much thanks to you for your most welcome letter G which I received today and to Miriam for her letter. Thanks also for your remittance of a fiver which I received on Wednesday; there's still no knowing whether I'll be able to go across to Palestine for Pesach, but I don't think I'll be able to get the leave. So it seems that I got the money from you under false pretences. However, it'll come in useful whenever I get some leave, for while I've got that money to exist on, I'll be able to accumulate a credit in my pay-book.

I'm sorry I haven't written all week, but it's due chiefly to laziness - a natural reaction after the

previous fortnight of prodigious letter-writing in C.R.S. I'm still in the Reserve, (only until this Wednesday, I hope) and am kept on the go by day, and by night the poorness of the lights in the bungalow drives me to bio's and concerts. I'm becoming quite a night-bird; I didn't get "home" one night this week before about 10.30, and my sense of touch is becoming highly developed thro' undressing and making up my bed in the dark.

On Wednesday night my 3 days of "excused duty" came to an end, and on Thursday I was on duty as a "runner" at the office - a messenger-boy. I barely sat down for two minutes at a time all day, and that night I felt more tired than I've felt for many a long day.

Tis strange that you mention Dave Bell, for I saw him at bio on Wednesday night. He was with Sakkie Kahn, but I couldn't get thro' to them to say hullo. However, I'll probably bump into Dave again. I've not seen Aaron, but now that I've got his address, I'll drop him a line, and perhaps we'll be able to establish contact.

I had a wonderful surprise on Friday night. I wandered slowly down to Shul, and when I arrived there I found Capt. Natas there. He officiated for part of the service. He's just back from Italy, and is assisting Major Potashnik at the moment. We were mutually pleased to see one another, and we walked down to the Oneg Shabbat together, and chatted a long time. Then he left me, and took charge of the fun and games, singing of songs, etc. When I left he asked me to come and visit him at his office, which I shall probably do. He asked me to send regards to you and Dad, and the girls. I remarked upon his "chazonoss", which is the same as it was 10 years ago, and I was very surprised when he reminded me that I was the first pupil he prepared for Kabolat Shabbat. Quite a distinction, I feel.

After unsuccessful attempts both on Friday and Saturday, we were luckier this morning, and managed to get three sets of tennis. There are 4 well-surfaced courts, and balls and racquets are provided. The balls are very sad, so we bought our own balls - secondhand, 4 for 12/-. Outrageous! But new balls are worth £10 per dozen up here now. I really enjoyed the tennis. The weather was very kind to us, for there wasn't a breath of wind, and about half an hour after we stopped playing, the wind and dust started.

Thanks for two Cape Arguses, two Blimeys and a Rockie which I received today.

Well that's all for now. I'm at the Y.M. and I've just been asked to play T.T., but I must write to Lil first, and probably Miriam. Regards to all, and Love to Dad, the Girls and Yourself, Keep Well, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
(continued)

upstairs to you. However, about 10 minutes before the service ended a voice in my ear said:

שְׁלֹךְ קָרְבָּן?

I turned to face a smartly-dressed man of about 35, clad in the habit of the west, & all I could think of saying was "בָּזְבָּזָה" (Pardon me!) So, in Hebrew, he asked me if I spoke Hebrew, & I said "a little, but slowly," so we continued in Hebrew & Aaron & I were invited to his place for Seder - my greatest wish had materialised - I was to know the pleasure of Sedering in the atmosphere of a private family. There were seven of us at table - he, two brothers, two sisters, Aaron & I. The Seder was very similar to our own. We went thro' the Agada in the usual way, up to the part where food was brought in. Then, unfortunately, we weren't able to complete the Agada, for I had a train to catch. There was rather a variety of languages at table - this family is Egyptian, but I understand

that the grandparents were Italian, Greek, Spanish & French - quite a mixture. They speak Italian & French chiefly, & probably the other two, & in addition one speaks English & Hebrew, another English only, while the girls speak a bit of Yiddish. So really we were all able to make ourselves understood, & were quite a merry gathering. While we were waiting to commence Seder, & while the food was being brought, Aaron & I answered hundreds of questions about every possible aspect of S.A. and of course we took the opportunity of eliciting certain things about the Egyptian Jews, chiefly the explanation of fezzes in Shool. We were well fed, in fact, couldn't manage all we were plied with, & had to be continually assuring them that we enjoyed the food, but, while the spirit was willing, the stomach couldn't absorb it all. Except in the case of one course - we tackled it, and, without being rude, asked what it was. We were told, but the name didn't mean a thing, so the one sister scurried away, & returned with the vegetable in the raw. All I can say of it was that it looked like a Protea bud, & when we had tasted it, we admitted that it didn't suit our unaccustomed palate - no offence was taken. At about 11.10 we had to excuse ourselves, & take a reluctant farewell of our hosts. Followed the train-journey home, & a 45 minute walk to camp, but it was well worth it - I had Sedered as I hadn't Sedered for 4 years. While walking home, I wondered what you were doing at the time; it was 12.45 Egyptian time, i.e. 10.45 S.A. time - you were probably busy singing either *אָחָד כִּי יְהוָה קָדְשָׁךְ* or *חֶדְרָה כִּי יְהוָה קָדְשָׁךְ* - I was still with you in spirit. If you, or Dad, would like to drop a few words of thanks of my behalf & your own, to my hosts, I think they'll be very thrilled - write in Yiddish, & the address is: Mr. Leon S.Gabbai, Sharia Bank, Misr No. 1, Cairo. Only a few words are necessary, & they'll appreciate it.

And that brings to an end my account of one Pesach which I'll never forget.

As for life in camp, I can add that I've been given promotion in the line of serving behind counters, for I'm now serving behind the bar-counter in the officers' mess. It's not a bad job; it's chief advantage is that I eat in the officers' kitchen, which means "good grub". It's chief disadvantage is late nights, for this is one pub that has no chucking-out time - the other night I was kept up until 2 a.m. Tonight the pub was empty by 11, & it's now 12.30, & time for me to be asleep. To alleviate the task slightly, John Bartleet & I take alternate days on the job, so we have one night off in two.

And that's about all for now. Regards to all, & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Keep Well, & Write Often, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
19·4·44 No. 78

Dear Mom,

Here I am again, with just a few lines to let you know that I'm still keeping well and fit, & hope to hear the same from you. News is actually very little, for I didn't have my usual Sunday letter from you this week. However, that is no fault of yours, as the mail is late, & we'll probably receive it tomorrow, so I'm looking forward to a letter from you.

I'm on my favourite pastime at the moment - guard duty. However, I'm not pounding a beat, but, being guard commander, am seated in the guard-room trying to keep awake, so I've decided to write a couple of letters as the best antidote to the sandman, and, at the same time, like the busy bee, improving each shining hour....or making hay while the sun shines....or - well, I'm sure there must be some proverb to suit the case but, damned if I know what it is.

We've been taking things very easy the last few days - our duties have been anything but onerous. We've been passing the time of day, & night, by playing cards. By day we play poker - half-penny per match, & 12 matches limit - a terrific gamble, & by night, or rather, in the evenings

we've been playing bridge. The idea is not to win or lose vast fortunes, but simply to amuse ourselves & pass the time. Therein we've succeeded.

Well, & that's about all the news I have for the nonce, so I'll end with regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Keep Well, Chins up & Keep Smiling, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
26·4·44 No. 79

Dear Mom,

Many thanks for your most welcome letter J which I received yesterday. I'm glad to hear that all at home are well and fit, as this letter leaves me. There was also a small surface-mail in yesterday, in which I received two newspapers and a Men Only, for which further thanks. Hell, my mail is rolling in jolly nicely now, in answer to all the letters I wrote while in hospital. The only trouble is that there aren't enough rolling out from me. I've just checked up and I find I owe no less than 16 letters - so it looks like there's some hefty work ahead of me in order to get up to date.

I had a letter from my Middelburg nurse yesterday, and she tells me she's back in civvy-street. Her dad died rather suddenly, and she was able to get her discharge. When she wrote she was still in C.T., but she was about to leave C.T. to go up to her mom in Jhb. I also had a nice long letter from Lil this week, as well as one from Rose, who is back in 18 St. Georges St. and busy settling down. Lil told me all about the wonderful time she had over the Easter weekend. I also had a letter from Haia today - she was disappointed that I couldn't make it for Pesach. Incidentally, I've given Aaron her address in case he ever goes over there; I told Haia in my last letter that he was up here, but she doesn't remember his name, but still remembers him when she sees him.

Aunty Beck and Sam seem to have come upon you quite by surprise - did they just come down for Pesach? I suppose they've gone back by now. I still owe Beck a letter.

I went to bio last night to see an old Fred Astaire-Ginger Rodgers show called "Shall we Dance" - it was quite good. I don't do much in the evening these days as I'm kept busy two nights out of every four on duty in the officers mess and in the gunners canteen.

Otherwise news from up here is very scarce, so I'll end now. Keep well, and keep writing. Regards to all and Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
1·5·44 No. 80

Dear Mom,

Many thanks for your most welcome letter no. K which I received today. I'm glad to hear you're all well & fit, & I too am in the pink.

I'm glad to hear that Dad's having a few weeks leave again. I can just imagine him spending it at home, fixing up things here, there & everywhere. I wish I was there to help him.

You mention Lakie & Dinkie coming up to the house. Dinkie didn't perhaps mention receiving a letter from me a month or so ago. I wrote to her one night, but maybe I didn't have the address correct, for I've not yet heard from her.

2/5/44

This letter was brought to a halt yesterday by my duties up in the mess, but I hope I can finish it here. The real trouble is that there's absolutely nothing to write about these days - everybody has

the same trouble - hundreds of letters to write, & nothing to write about.

We had a game of football today, in a high wind, & now, after a nice cold shower, I'm feeling like a million.

I'm looking forward to receiving the snaps out of Miriam's camera. I'm just filling up a spool of mine, & then I'll be able to send you some more snaps as well.

And that's about all for now. Regards to all the folks, & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
6/5/44 No. 81

Dear Mom,

Well here we are again with just a few lines to let you know that I'm still keeping well & fit, & hope to hear the same from you. We've just received Thursday's mail which was 48 hours late, & all I got was a letter from Rose - which was more than I expected, actually. I'm looking forward to hearing from you on Monday, but in the meantime I'm writing these few lines, as I haven't written to you all week. Incidentally, I have a strong suspicion that my last letter was rather long delayed in censorship, so you'll probably receive the two together.

I paid my compliments to the doctor yesterday, & he performed a small operation on me - the removal of a cyst. Shortly after I landed in Egypt, I developed this little growth just above the right hip. I didn't worry about it all the time, but last week I decided to have it cut, & arranged with the doctor accordingly. So yesterday it came out. A local anaesthetic enabled me to watch the doctor cut the flesh & probe about cutting all around the cyst. Now I've got two stitches in, & a plaster on. The operation hasn't worried me at all - actually when the anaesthetic wore off, I felt a slight pain, but only for a few minutes. It doesn't hamper me in any way, & I'm on full duty.

I attended a Service last night, & saw Dave Bell there. I hadn't seen him for about three weeks.

Well, & that's about all the news for now, so I'll end with regards to all and Love to Dad, the Girls and Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
9-5-44 No. 82

Dear Mom,

I wrote to you on Saturday night, but that has left me just about nothing to write about now. I know I've been complaining of lack of news for about a couple of months now, but it is definitely as bad as all that. The moment that some news breaks, as they say in Fleet Street, I'll be happy to have sumpin' to write about. This continual lack of news is wearing me down.

Many thanks for your most welcome letter L which I received last night; and thank Sylvia for her excellent contribution. I'm afraid I owe letters to all the girls but please ask them to forgive me. As you see, it's quite a battle to write one or two letters to you weekly (very weakly), & I couldn't possibly find something to write to the girls about.

I'm pleased to hear that all at home are well & fit, & I too am in the pink. I've still got my two stitches, but they don't worry or inconvenience me, for I played soccer on Sunday, & swam yesterday, & I don't even know they're there.

I'm glad Dad wrote to those people in Cairo - they'll appreciate it. I haven't seen them again, and, in answer to your query, I haven't seen Aaron again yet either. I saw, or rather, I see Jackie Walt quite often.

Otherwise there's nothing else to write about, so I'll end now with regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
10-5-44 No. 83

Dear Mom,

Yesterday afternoon, shortly after I'd written to you, the orders came out that we're to change our address from M.E.F. to C.M.F. & that we're allowed to write & say we're in Italy. You've probably had the news even by now, as I sit & write, over the air & in your papers, & I don't doubt that the news has rather worried you. Please try not to worry too much about me, Mom. I know you'll say it's stupid of me to say "Don't worry", 'cos you can't help worrying, but honestly, Mom, if I could tell you the full story, you'd know that I'm alright & that you've no cause for worry. That's the big pity, that I can't tell you the full story. However, some day this jolly old war will come to an end, & then I'll be back, & we'll all be happy together.

As you've probably seen from my letters of the last few weeks, the fact that we've not been able to mention our move to Italy has placed rather a strain on our writing. Now that the move has been made public, I'll be able to write to all the folks to whom I owe letters. I'm busy on quite a long letter to you telling you all about it, & I'll be posting it in a few days.

I saw the doctor this morning. He took out one stitch, & then said there was still a little gap, so he left the other stitch in for another two days.

And now I'll end, & you'll be hearing again within a few days. Regards to all, & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Chins up & Keep Smiling, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
No. 84

Dear Mom,

Here's an account of our voyage from Egypt to what is at present an unknown destination. At the moment we're not allowed to mention in our letters home that we are moving, & at no time will we be allowed to mention dates of embarkation & disembarkation etc. So this account will be kept absolutely free of dates, and by the time we're permitted to say where we are, this will probably have grown to some length. Well, to begin at the commencement. We left camp this afternoon, & thanks to the inefficiency of the Egyptian State Railways, we sat at the station until 11 pm waiting for the train which would take us to the port of embarkation. It's amazing how calmly & unexcitedly we treat everything these days. As soon as we arrived at the station, & found that there was a long wait ahead of us, base-balls came to light, somebody fished out a teniquoit net & rigged it up, piano-accordeons & guitars were brought out, & we were entertained all the while. Then came the train, & a miserable night spent in Gyppo 3<sup>rd</sup> class, in which I had about two hours sleep.

\* \*

Another day. The embarkation has gone off smoothly, & with a minimum of fuss, & we are on board the ship that will be our home for an indefinite period. We have been well received for a meal awaited us when we stepped on board, and, in strong contrast to the food we had coming up from S.A. to Egypt, we had today the best food I've had in the army. Our quarters are not too horribly overcrowded, & if the food continues as it does today, we'll be very happy. Rumours start floating around, about our destination, our length of voyage, etc, but they're very varied, & pay little

attention is paid to them. Rather than sleep down below on our troop-deck, we slept up on the open decks & had a wonderful night's sleep.

\* \* \*

The next two days are spent in port. Nothing to do, & all day to do it in. We, that is, John, Harold & I spend the time chiefly playing cards - a very small game of poker. We have the usual boat-drill, to acquaint us with what to do in the case of an emergency, & we have a lecture or two - it is impressed upon us that we are about to undertake a voyage into more dangerous waters than any of us have yet undertaken, but such is the attitude of the soldier, that it means as much to us as if we were catching a train from C.T. to Maitland. We are unmoved by the possibility of danger, of excitement, or anything else - it's all a part of the day's work. It seems pretty definite now that we're bound for Italy, but there's still no knowing. The food continues to be the best of our army-career, & our comfort is added to by the opening of the officers' dining-room to us from 8 - 10 p.m., where we can read, write, play cards, & where there is a piano; several chaps get together with their instruments, & we have a bit of music. We've got a foursome together, & we spend our evenings there playing bridge - in those congenial surroundings one escapes entirely from the army & becomes once again a gentleman; one forgets that one is at war, at sea, until you stumble out to the pitch darkness of the blackout, and then you step out into reality as you step over the countless sleeping bodies packed all over the deck.

\* \* \*

And then follows a period at sea. Having heard much of the tranquility of Musso's great inland sea, we looked forward to a very smooth voyage, but on the very first day out we were disillusioned. There was quite a swell, & the ship rolled, pitched & tossed, until about 70% of the chaps had given back to the sea all the food they'd consumed in the last three days. Having slept on deck the first night out, I awoke feeling O.K., & it was only when I went down below & waited ½ an hour for breakfast, that the motion of the ship affected me. So I went up on deck, & there felt O.K. again. Determined not to be sick, I went below again, & ate breakfast, & then, feeling slightly groggy, went up on deck. I walked around for about ½ an hour, trying to convince myself that I wasn't going to be sick, & then I slept for about an hour. And then the worst was past, for me. At lunch-time, I had a wonderful hunger, & consumed two men's portions. Of 16 men at my table, only 5 of us were on our legs & enjoying an appetite. So there was plenty to eat. I felt sorry for the boys, but it did look funny seeing the boys draped over the rails, others sitting or lying huddled up on the deck in their misery, all looking and no doubt feeling like death warmed up. I heard mutterings of "Let Musso have his (censored) sea", and "after the war I'm not going home by sea - I'll rather walk", and the funniest sight was a chap sitting reading a book called "Mare Nostrum". Yes, it wasn't anything like the usual picture that is painted of a cruise on the placid waters of the jolly old Med. That day however, was the worst, for the rest of the voyage the waters were very calm, & there was almost no movement in the ship. The one day in particular, the very day after all the seasickness, the waters were as smooth as a mirror, and there wasn't a cloud in the sky - a beautiful day. And so the voyage continued, & and we arrived at our destination without incident.

\* \* \*

Well, here we are in Italy. We disembarked & marched to a nearby farmer's field, & from there we came by truck to camp. The smell of the crushed grass in the field was sweet in our nostrils, & the journey from port to camp was a series of ejaculations of "what beautiful country". The whole country is beautifully green, like the country around Malmesbury or Paarl. A real sight for desert-sore eyes. At the villages thro' which we passed the populace turned out to shout "Cigarette, John", but we were more absorbed in the country spaces than in the villages or villagers. Then we arrived at camp, & found ourselves quite comfortable in bungalows, & we're sleeping in wooden beds arranged in two's, one on top of the other, like bunks. It's lovely to be able to stand at the door of the bungalow & gaze out upon green fields, hills & valleys. The road in front of the bungalow is

simply black soil, & the drop of rain we had on our first day soon turned it to dusty mud. Quite a novel experience.

The first night here was spent at the N.A.A.F.S., where one can get tea & buns. This night a band from the nearby village provided music, & they played damn well too. Their members included a lass who played the drums. Unfortunately there was a terrific crowd there, & we could scarcely get in.

23.4.44

Well, I went into the local village last night for the first time. There's a jolly fine NAAFI established there, & they have an excellent band; Italian girls serve behind the counter, & one gets the impression that they're very thrilled and amused at serving us. Further there is one bio, which is free to troops, but beyond that, the village is simply a lot of streets and alley-ways and houses, and lots of Italians, and beyond one or two places of interest, such as a cathedral or a church, there's nothing to be seen. John & I went in together, & we spent the few hours of daylight left to us in walking the streets & simply seeing the people. After dark we went to the Naafi, & at 9.25 caught our truck back to camp.

Conditions in the town were far from what I would have expected after reading accounts of the people starving in the streets. The streets were thronged, with men, women, children & Italian army personnel. The men & women, for the most part, are well-dressed, & look well-cared for. The dress was very much Western, & most of the women wore stockings, & I don't doubt that much of it was silk. The fact that yesterday was Sunday probably accounts for the streets being thronged with people in their Sunday best, for Harold went in on Saturday & he says he only saw two women in the whole town, & the men wore their usual attire, plus-fours. Those for whom I felt sorry are the hundreds of ragged children, who molest us all the way. As the Gypso's learn to say "Bakhshish, George", so two-year-old Itie's call "Hello John or Joe", followed by an appeal for either cigarettes or chocolate or army biscuits. For the most part these children are quite sturdy, but sores on their arms & legs reveal the lack of vitamins in their food. We saw a chap buy two trays of buns at Naafi to distribute to the kids, & they mobbed him before he could get down the stairs. In general, the place is very normal, and certainly doesn't look like a village of the vanquished.

\* \* \*

26<sup>th</sup> April

Well, here we are with a real winter's day at home; the skies were overcast all morning, & in the afternoon a steady rain set in. A constant light rain such as we know at home, & a wonderful change from Egypt. It's delightful to hear the patter of the rain on the roof & on the windows; it's the sort of day when you'd light a fire in the grate of the living-room, spread a blanket on the floor, & just lie & watch the fire. The rain turns the ground to mud under our feet, black sticky mud, which is soon carried into the bungalow on our boots, dirtying the floor, but after a year of dust & sun, even that is welcome. It reminds me of our last few weeks in the Union, when it rained for days on end, but we're luckier now, for we're living in bungalows, while there we were in tents.

\* \* \*

9.5.44

Well, it's many day since I sat down to add some lines to this letter. Very little has happened, really, & the days passed by without any change. Up till now, since about 2 or 3 days before we left Egypt, we've been keeping our identity a secret; we were wearing no div. Flashes, no red tabs, no artillery badges or buttons. Today, however, we've been told to put on our red tabs again, & we're hoping that within a day or two we'll be allowed to write & say we're in Italy.

We've been out on one or three trips during the last fortnight, doing convoy driving and road recce's. These trips have shown us a hell of a lot of the South of Italy, & we're enjoying the country very much. (The only thought that disturbs me is that while I'm driving all over the place enjoying the sights, in absolute comfort & safety, you're worrying yourself about me 'cos you probably think

that we're in the line). The first trip took us into the mountains, up hill & down dale, driving along beautiful passes, on excellent roads. All the towns in that part are perched on the top of the hills, & present a beautiful sight. The one town in particular looked like a picture out of a children's fairy-tale book; you know, the ogre's castle perched on top of the peak, with a village grown up around it. The other trip, on which we went yesterday, was around the Adriatic coast, all flat country. We passed through numerous towns, & dallied about an hour each in three of them. We also were able to have a short swim in the Adriatic; it had to be short, for the water was quite cold. The sea looked most uninviting, for it looked grey & very sombre, but we enjoyed the dip.

12.5.44

Well, I suppose I'd better get this letter finished & in the post, 'cos the longer I hang on to it the longer it becomes. I've just had my daily bath, & I think there's time to finish this off before I go to town to the usual Friday night service. We had rather a pleasant evening last night - Padre Hickman arranged a social evening at which the S.A.'s were guests of Jewish men in the various armies - there were British, American & Palestinians there, & we had a pleasant evening of songs & speeches. The Yanks, of course were complete with camera, & the flashlights were flashing all night. The social was actually held in a large hall which once was the headquarters of the Fascist party in that town. The occasion, of course, was Lag B'Omer. I met any number of my friends there, & actually spent the evening with Archie Sieff. I also saw & spoke to Barney Aronson, of Kensington.

Many thanks for your most welcome letter M which I received yesterday. I suppose you know now why my letter no. 77 took so long. However, I hope that my mail has been more regular since then.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
19.5.44 No. 87

Dear Mom,

Many thanks for your most welcome letter which I received today. It was actually a "bakshee" letter, for I had a letter from Miriam on Monday, & I didn't expect to hear from home again till next Monday. However, I ain't squealin'! The more the merrier. I'm glad that all at home are well, & I too am in the pink.

I was on duty in the officer's mess last night, & I managed to write two letters - to Lil & Rose. Now today I received another letter from Rose, & Uncle Harry filled up one of the flaps.

I hope my letters are coming thro' more regularly these days - I think you'll find that there will no longer be the delays in censorship that there used to be. Oh yes! I haven't yet mentioned that we've lost the officer whom we've had for the last year; he's gone down to the Union on compassionate leave.

Tonight I'll be going to the usual Friday night service in town - we have transport provided therefor. After Shul, I hope to get back to camp in time to go to bioscope to see "Sweater Girl". I went to bio on Wednesday night & saw Abbott & Costello performing in "Hit the Ice". At one stage I thought that my back & stomach would never stop hurting, the way I laughed. It really was a tonic.

How are Phil & Bess & the children keeping? Give them my love. Little Lois must be growing up into quite a little lady.

Have you heard that Rose's sister-in-law, Fanny, has given birth to a bonny daughter. I believe the Balkins are no end excited with their grand-child.

Otherwise there's nothing else to write about, so I'll end with regards to all & Love to Dad, the

Girls & Yourself, Keep Smiling, Your Loving Son, Myer.

P.S. Have just received a letter from Lil - it must have been mis-sorted this morning. Some seventh sense must have made me write to Lil & Rose last night. Love, Myer

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
19.5.44

Hail to thee, O Worthy Keeper of my Snaps,

For a long time now I've intended sending you these negatives for safe-keeping, as they rather tend to clutter up my baggage, & now at last I've managed to get round to it. You have already prints of all the negatives, except for 8 which are wrapped up separately; these were returned by the Gypo developer as "spoilt", but they look quite good, so it might be interesting to get the local chemist to have a shot at them. If they come out, please send me a copy.

I'm also enclosing 7 snaps which I've accumulated in dribs & drabs. Is there any place for them in my album?

Well, this short note should suit the purpose. There's no point in writing any news (assuming, for the purposes of this argument that there is some news), for I've just written a letter to Mom, & in any case this letter will take some time to reach you. So I'll end with regards to all & love to Mom & Dad, & the Sisters, & yourself, of course, Tons of Love, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
31.5.44 No. 89

Dear Mom,

Many thanks for your most welcome letters which I received yesterday; there were two, dated 15<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> inst. Thank Gertrude for the part she wrote in the one, & I really will try to write to her soon. When you wrote those letters you had already heard over the radio that the Div. was in Italy, but the fact that I made no mention of the move, and that my address remained M.E.F. confused you. Of course, you know now that I am here. I'm glad to hear that all at home are well & fit, as this epistle leaves me. Long walks in the evenings are making me feel fitter than I've felt for years. I'm cutting down on smokes & thus ridding myself of an infernal cough, and the sun has tanned my body as brown, or browner than, the proverbial berry. The proverbial fiddle is an age-racked invalid by comparison.

As you know now from a previous letter, I learnt of Beines' death in the Argus. I did write a few lines to Sadie, expressing sympathy but I had no idea, of course, that she had begotten a son subsequent to Beines' death. What a tragedy! In a letter from Rose yesterday, (I received two), she tells me that Natie & Sonia just can't get over their tragedy; they're still very cut-up.

I've had an opportunity recently of visiting a town which has really seen the war. It's a typical Italian village, situated on a little hillock, & surrounded by mountains, & the houses were built of stone, with typically narrow streets & little alleyways threading their way thro' the buildings. Well, what used to be a town is now just a shambles. Every house in the town has been hit, & no one house seems to have more than one wall standing. Before the war, the town's population was probably between 7 & 10 thousand; today there are about 250 people living in whatever houses are most habitable - cellars, & ground-floors of ruined homes. There are four shops in the town - all

barbers. It's hard to see how they're going to rebuild towns like these. Hell, I can just picture now what the cities of Germany must look like with the weight of bombs that's been dropped on them.

Otherwise, living in the fields & orchards, we're communing with the insect-life of nature & developing a friendly disposition towards them. Lizards, spiders, ticks, and the likes, are our friends. We have a pet spider in our bivvy. He, or she, as the case may be, wakes us at reveille, spends the day asleep on my pillow, & at night retires to his "possy" on the roof, in a convenient position to drop onto my nose next morning. He displays a mischievous turn of mind, which is to be deplored, for it manifests itself in such actions as coming down during the night & weaving a web over one's mouth. Moral: never sleep with your mouth open.

And that's about the lot for now. Keep well & keep writing. Regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

P.S. Talking of insects an all that, here's an amusing little anecdote. One of the boys was sitting writing a letter to his wife, when he heard a rustle in the grass, & felt something brush his leg. He looked up expecting to see a lizard, & saw instead a snake. So he upped & away, & subsequently concluded his letter with "Sorry, I've got to attend to a snake now, so I'll write again tomorrow". I hope the snake keeps out of my blankets. Love, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
3/6/44 No 90

Dear Mom

Just a few lines to let you know that I'm still keeping well and fit, and hope that all at home are well too.

The weather is really hot these days, almost too hot for comfort. When I awoke this morning, I put on all the clothes I could find, and a greatcoat and as the day has progressed, so I've peeled off garment after garment, until now I'm in a vest only, and I don't think that will stay on for long. Were it not for the fact that we had a shower or two of rain when first we arrived, I'd be inclined to disbelieve the stories of severe cold and of armies being bogged down by mud.

I was pleased to hear your stories about little Liebe in your last letter. Judging by them, and by the photos of her, she's certainly growing up these days. Does she still run to see if there are any letters from Myer.

Otherwise news from here is very scarce. We've been on the roads now for the last three days, travelling all day, and stopping at night. The day is long, and the convoy very slow, the roads are narrow, pitted and dusty, and all in all it's most unpleasant. Today hasn't been quite so bad, for we've travelled a lot on a macadamised road.

We've seen quite a bit of refugees streaming back from the battle areas. They come in two's and three's, old women, young children, and babies, and they carry with them on their backs or on their heads, all that they've managed to salvage from their ruined homes. They're a pitiful sight, but most pitiful of all is the sight of children standing around while we eat, mute appeal, in their eyes, but for the most part too afraid even to beg. They're really hungry, yet when you give them food, they only eat a morsel of it, and save the rest to carry home with them, to be shared by the family. The favourite thing, of course, is for children to carry babies with them, and make an appeal on behalf of the baby. While one might yet be able to resist the sight of a hungry-looking kid of say 10 years, no-one can resist giving to a child-in-arms. And, no doubt in reply to old Musso's appeal, or order, for larger families, there are many children.

We're expecting mail either today or tomorrow so until then I'll end off with regards to all, and

6.6.44.  
Via Flaminia, Rome,

INVASION DAY.



As we were passing thro' Rome, we stopped for a brew-up, & I took this photo.

Left to R. John Bartleet, Smidger Smith, Cronje (killed), John Veitch, Gerry, Rex & Harold.

Of all these, only John B & I are still with the regiment.

Love to Dad, the Girls and Yourself, Chins up and Keep Writing, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
10/6/44 No. 91

Dear Mom,

Many many thanks for your most welcome letter no. NI which I received today. As a matter of fact, when the mail arrived, there was nothing at all for me, & my morale sunk to abysmal depths. Then about 1/2 an hour later your letter turned up, so once again the flowers are blooming, the birds are singing, the sun is shining, and everything in the garden is just rosy - even the earthworms are having a wonderful time. From all of which you'll gather that I was kinda glad to hear that all at home are well and fit, & I myself am in the pink.

I usually refrain from any discussion of war news, for it's a topic best avoided, as one may easily overstep the censorship margin. These days, however, so much that is good is happening, that I can't help but comment on it. First of all, we were very jubilant over the news of the Invasion and for it's very favourable progress. Then came the startling & welcome news of Turkey's entry into the war on our side, & of their invasion of Greece - that however, is unconfirmed. There are further rumours circulating of the fall of Rotterdam to the Allied forces, of the destruction of 1000 Gerry tanks in France, of a landing of Parachutists at Stugart-on-Rhine, but little credence is to be paid to

them, particularly the last-mentioned. Oh yes! There's even a rumour that the Russians have launched a summer offensive in the east. However, be all that as it may, there's no getting away from the fact that old Fritz must be having much headaches these days, & of the type that are not responsive to Bacon's powders, or like patents. He doesn't seem to know just what to do in the west, he's on the run in Italy, and he can't feel very happy about the Russians.

We continue to live a good life these days. Our rations are excellent, & as we cook for ourselves, we eat well, particularly as we supplement the rations with self-dug new potatoes, & hand-picked green-peas.

I'm sorry I haven't written for a week, but we've been on the move all the time, & opportunity for writing was very limited. I'll try to write a bit more often in future, but please remember, no news is good news, as you yourself frequently remind me, & please don't worry about me.

I see a lot of Joe Faiveleowitz these days, as he's now attached to our regiment. Dave, of course, is in Germany.

I'm glad you enjoyed my letter no. 84, but you have me completely mystified when you say I mentioned some incidents or accidents in the course of duty. Oh yes, it must have been that day I went driving with the signallers - Oh, that was nothing.

Well, that's about the lot for this letter-card, so I'll end now with regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Chins up & Keep Smiling, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
12/6/44 No. 92

Dear Mom,

In my last letter I overlooked to thank you for your very good birthday wishes, so I'll make it for now. Thanks very much, and I join you in hoping that before my age-ometer clicks over another figure, I'll be back home with you all, with the war a thing of the past, and will be able to celebrate birthdays in real style, P.G.

I picked a bad day for my birthday yesterday, for it rained incessantly until about 4 p.m. That wouldn't have been quite so bad if we hadn't slipped the previous night. We have civvy's but it's too much trouble to put them up, so we simply sleep under a mosquito-net. Well, it started raining during the night on Saturday night, and the mosquito-net just wasn't sufficient shelter. So yesterday morning we were swimming in our beds. And we couldn't hang our blankets out to dry until the afternoon. Fortunately they dried very well. We took no chances last night, and erected our "Civvies", but, need I say it - it didn't rain. Today, however, is a wonderful day, and the sun is simply drying the water out of our bodies and clothes, quite visibly.

There were parcels in yesterday, but just by way of a change I drew a complete blank. Later, however, one Cape Argus came to light, which was very welcome, and for which many thanks. I see in it an article about a seven-day tour of Palestine, which is obviously the same as mine. The article, however, is not very good, and there's a better one in the "Sable", a copy of which I'm forwarding by surface-mail.

Lying here on the "lawn" (a field of grass, complete with weeds, stinging nettles, lizards and spiders), writing in the sunshine, is not, I find, conducive to good letter-writing for I'm too prone to roll over on my back and indulge in a spot of day-dreaming. However, I'll get this letter done eventually.

It's an amazing thing, but as soon as I'd posted my last letter to you, I bethought myself of various items which I might have mentioned; and now that I once again take up the pen, darned if I can think of one of them. I'll have to give up making mental notes, and jot them down instead.

Well, that's about the lot for now, so I'll terminate this brief epistle with regards to all, and Love to Dad, the Girls and Yourself, Keep Well and Writing, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
13/6/44

My Dearest Gert,

Well, here I am at last. (Did someone say "obviously!") If anyone were to tell me that it's gone three months since last I wrote to you, I'd call him or her, as the case may be, a prevaricator, for I can remember writing that letter to you as distinctly as if it were yesterday; and yet my records show clearly that it is indeed three months (and ten days, to be exact) since last I wrote. So I can only thank you most profusely for the letters I've received from you during that period, and apologise for the delay on my part. So please forgive me my waywardness and please keep writing often, for I delight in hearing from you.

In answer to your letters:-

I'm glad you like being with the boys. Tell me, do they still "punish" the boys by making them sit next to the girls? - and visa versa.

You all did well at school last term, & I suppose you've just finished another term. You have 3 weeks' holiday in June, don't you? How have you done this term? - Probably very well, if I know my sisters.

And Liebe seems to be growing into a big girl. Gee, I'd love to see her - can't she come up to me for a holiday? Yesterday after-lunch I fell asleep, as is my habit, & I dreamt about going home on 5 days' leave. Arriving home unexpectedly, the first to see me were you & Sylvia playing in the streets. My biggest surprise was when I saw Liebe, for she was greatly grown, but what surprised me most was the fact that she recognized me. And then I woke up.

Talking of snaps, I've got one spool which I've used, but the trouble is I can't get it developed and we're not allowed to send undeveloped spools home, because they must be censored. So it looks as if I'll have to stick to the spool till I get home.

I think I'll be able to read, talk & understand German very well by the time we get to Berlin. As we advance, we keep finding German newspapers; most of them are actually pamphlets which have been printed in England & dropped over German lines by bombs & shells, & they try to tell Hun the true news about how they're losing the war; but a few days ago we picked up some Gerry newspapers, of which we, and you too, had often heard much - they were the "Volkische Besbacher" and "Das Reich", the latter being Dr. Goebell's propaganda paper. It is rather significant that the Volkische Besbacher avoids the war in its headlines, but talks instead about "Schreklike Tage in Bombay." Gerald & I, he with a knowledge of German learnt at school, & I with my knowledge of Yiddish, are able to understand quite a lot of what the papers say.

Otherwise, my girl, there's very little to write about, so I'll end now with Regards to all & Love to Mom & Dad, & the Sisters & Yourself, Keep Smiling, & Write Often, Your Loving Brother, Myer.

P.S. There seems to be a rumour that Jan Smuts is in France, but we are very wary of rumours. Our motto now is "Believe nothing that you hear & only half of what you see." Love, Myer.

(Inscription on back of letter-card reads: "I certify on my honour that the contents of this letter refer to nothing but private and family matters. M. Kramer")

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
13/6/44

My Dearest Gert,

I know you'll think I'm barmy writing two letters to you on the same day, but when you hear the truth, you'll think I'm barmier yet.

When I started writing the last letter, my whole idea was to wish you Happy Birthday, & now, five minutes after I've sealed the letter, I suddenly remember that I didn't get round to wishing you. So rather than mutilate that letter by opening it, here's another letter.

It's your birthday on the 25<sup>th</sup>, so here's wishing you a very Happy Birthday & very Many Happy Returns of the Day, & may we be together for the next, P.G.

And that's all for now. More love to all, Your Loving Brother, Myer.

(Inscription on back of letter-card reads: "I certify on my honour that the contents of this letter refer to nothing but private and family matters. M. Kramer")

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F  
16/6/44 No. 93

Dear Mom,

Many thanks for your most welcome letter O, which I received last night. I'm glad to hear that all at home are well, & I too am in the pink. I also had a letter from Lil this morning, & all in Joburg are well too - Minka has had all her teeth out. I receive your letter after dark last night, & at first I was worried about how to read it without showing a light, but I solved that by "blacking myself out" under a blanket.

I had a letter from Rose two days ago, & she & Uncle Harry, Natie & Phil sent me a most generous birthday present. Yes, my family certainly are good to me, but you needn't fear that they're spoiling me; I'm thankful for everything, & always will be.

You've no doubt heard from the B.B.C. that we went thro' Rome the day after it fell. It was quite an exciting trip, & the excitement was further increased by the news of the invasion. The fact that we were on the way to Rome didn't mean a thing in our lives, but when we arrived in the city & found the populace lining the streets & according us the welcome as of liberators, their excitement definitely communicated itself to me. They cheered, clapped hands, shouted "Bravo Americano" (rather annoying, they didn't know we were Springboks) & threw flowers at us. One little urchin jumped onto our jeep, & I had the devil's-own-job putting him off without risking his life and limb. By the time we got to the other side of town, our jeep looked like a mobile garden, & my helmet was a glory of flowers. We stopped for a few minutes just on the out-skirts of Rome, & I took a snap, & obtained the name & address of an Italian lass wearing my helmet, with the other boys forming a back-ground. Subsequently, wherever we go, we receive the same welcome. We pass thro' towns just a few hours after it's fallen to our troops, & the natives are definitely friendly; they stand in the streets with small kegs, bottles & glasses of vino, & hand it to us as we drive thro'. My chief complaint is that the Italians make chiefly dry wine, whereas I prefer sweet wine, so I don't indulge myself as much as I'd perhaps like to. One thing I must admit, that is that as we progress North, so the girls become more & more beautiful - and they were beautiful in the South. Rome in particular contains a real bevy of beautys.

It seems that of all the rumours we heard last week, only the one of Smuts' visit to France was true. True, the Russians have subsequently launched an attack in the North, which must be making Gerry scratch still harder. Pity the rumour about Turkey wasn't true - then he would have troubles. Well, I guess we're managing pretty well without the Turks. & the war shouldn't be long now. And then it'll be "O for 'omeward-bound".

The weather is keeping beautiful, & I only wear a shirt in the evenings. Yesterday afternoon it came on to rain suddenly, & rained hard for about 30 minutes, but then it cleared up & the evening was beautiful.

One good thing about Italy is that there's no need to go unwashed for days at a time as we did in the desert. Wherever we stop for the night, there's always a stream nearby, a stream of clean, clear, cold water. Yesterday I had two baths during the day in the space of an hour. The first was out of a well by a deserted house - I simply poured bucketful after bucketful over me; the second place was in a stream, where it was deep enough to swim.

I see a lot of Steve Kirsten these days, altho' I haven't had many words with him. He's wearing a crown again these days.

Well, that's about all for now, so I'll end with regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Chins up, Your Loving Son, Myer.

(Inscription on back of letter-card reads: "I certify on my honour that the contents of this letter refer to nothing but private and family matters. M. Kramer")

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F  
23/6/44 No. 94

Dear Mom,

Time marches on, yea verily, & here a whole week has slipped by since last I wrote. Mail isn't too regular these days, and I haven't had a letter from you since last I wrote; however, I'm expecting letters either today or tomorrow. Meanwhile, I hope that all at home are well & fit, & I too am in the pink.

We haven't had at all good weather for letter-writing this week. That may sound strange, but actually it's true. I started a certain letter last Saturday, & I'd got half-way when it started to rain, & it rained intermittently for four days. Well, when everything is wet & miserable, & one's only refuge is a bivvy where one can scarce move, there's little incentive to writing. So now that the weather has cleared again, the writing-pads can be brought out of storage, & I'll be able to complete that letter started last Saturday.

We saw a beautiful sight yester-morning. It had rained the previous night, & at 5 a.m. I was awakened & told to be ready to go forward. Well, I didn't feel at all happy about being roused at that hour, & having to pack in a hurry kit which was all wet & muddy. We were parked in a valley, & there was a heavy mist about. Away on our left, there was a town half-way up the mountain, & shortly after we got up, the mist over the town cleared, & the sun was shining on the town; a beautiful picture, just the sun-lit town shining out of the morning mist - like something out of the old Arabian nights. Later, as we travelled out of the valley into the mountains, we rose out of the mist, & while we were travelling in bright sunshine, we could see the mist still thick down in the valley - a beautiful white sea of mist.

Last night we were well away with some Ities, & my language is improving with leaps & bounds. These chaps hung around our camp during the afternoon. We spoke to them, learnt all their past

(they are patriot partisans at the moment) & kept giving them cigarettes. You won't believe it, but the one chap was ultimately quite drunk from smoking CTC's, for each time that one of us wanted a smoke, we gave him one, so he smoked continuously. Then we got down to brass tacks - where could we get some vino? He regretted that his own house, & the houses of the two friends with him had been blown to smithereens, & whatever vino had escaped the bombs had been carried away by the Gerries. However, he said, he had a friend down in the valley who had vino, but he couldn't bring it to us - we'd have to go to that friend's house. Jack, Smithy & I accompanied these chaps, & we walked to the house. We had thought that the walk would take 10 minutes, but it took us 45 mins, & towards the end I began to wonder whether we'd ever reach it - any minute I expected to see a handful of Gerries lying in wait around a corner. Nothing untoward happened, we reached the house, & were welcomed in. A table was set for us, & we had a glass of vino with brown bread & whiteish cheese, both very tasty. The three of us were the centre of attraction, & within an hour there were about a dozen Ities in the room, & another half-a-dozen peering in thro' the windows. All very interested & friendly. We kept offering smokes, & they kept pulling eggs out of their pockets & laying them on the table before me. (The Germans usually carry away or destroy all livestock, fowls etc when they retreat, but these Ities have learned to hide their stuff very well. When we first arrived here, there was almost no sign of life, but now the country around us is alive with sheep, cattle, fowls, ducks, etc.) Our conversation covered a wide range of topics, & we learnt that our companion had fought in Russia, France, Italy, Sicily & Africa. These families in the one house have brothers, sons, & so on prisoners in S. Africa. We told them there were as many Ities in S.A. as there were in Italy, & they thought that very funny. Then one of them had an inspiration, & they broke up four eggs & made an omelette for the three of us. We asked them all to partake of the omelette, but they wouldn't hear of it, so the three of us did ourselves proud. We felt really good, with a white tablecloth, clean crockery & cutlery, & drinking vino out of clean glasses. Have you ever wondered how an animal in the zoo feels when a crowd stands around watching it eat? I can tell you for that's how we felt last night. They kept pressing us to more vino, & we told them if we had another drop we'd simply fall asleep, so they said that was all right, & they offered us a bed for the night. That, however, we declined with thanks. Then, a good time having been had by all, & darkness beginning to fall, we made our apologies to the best of our ability, & with promises to return on the morrow,

(Inscription on back of letter-card reads: "I certify on my honour that the contents of this letter refer to nothing but private and family matters. M. Kramer")

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
26/7/44 No. 100

Dear Mom,

Many thanks for your most welcome letter no. S. received yesterday. At the same time I received a letter from Aunty Beck, who had just returned to Calvinia, & one from Gertrude while she was at Mulders' Vlei. I'm happy to know that all at home are well, & I too am in the pink.

Things are still going very much as usual - nothing very exciting to report. I had a nasty experience yester-morning, for I was present when my best pal, Gerry Evans, had a bit of an accident with his car. It tumbled over a 10 foot cliff, & he emerged with his left arm broken in two places, both between his elbow & wrist, & his left toes bruised & perhaps fractured. We fixed him up & sent him to hospital, but I was feeling very sad. Actually one might say that Gerry was lucky that he wasn't even more seriously hurt, but that is of small consolation to his Mom, to whom I

wrote yesterday telling her all the details, so that she shouldn't worry too much, as the official notification probably told her no more than that he was injured. How do you feel about phoning Gerry's Mom, telling her that you've heard from me about Gerry's accident, expressing sympathy & trying to assure her that Gerry's injuries are not serious, and that it is only a matter of time before he is as good as new again - and by then we all hope to be home again, Please God, with the war but a nightmarish memory. It should be about 3 or 4 months, the doctor said, before Gerry's arm is O.K. Mrs. Evans' address is: 2 Selbourne Mansions, Sunny Cove, Fish Hoek. She's definitely on the phone, so if you don't find her number in the book, get it from the G.P.O. I'm sure she'll appreciate your phone-call.

Isn't the news from Germany good these days? Actually all the reports are rather hazy & fogged, but it seems quite clear that there's been a crisis, & that things in Germany are beginning to crack. We don't want to become over-optimistic, but we can only hope that it won't be long now, P.G. As for the Russians, I'm looking forward to the day they cross over onto German soil. I was interested to see that Ponevesh, in Lithuania, has been taken by the Russians.

Thank Sylvia for her contribution to your letter, & tell her I'll write soon. I'll also reply to Gert as soon as possible.

And that's about all for now, so, until next time, regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Chins up, Your Loving Son, Myer.

P.S. As you know, the King is visiting the troops in Italy at the moment. A certain %age of our chaps have been sent down the line to see him - very lucky. I'm sorry I wasn't one of them. Dat's all, love, Myer

(Inscription on back of letter-card reads: "I certify on my honour that the contents of this letter refer to nothing but private and family matters. M. Kramer")

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
30/7/44 No. 101

Dear Mom,

Well, here I am again keeping well & fit, T.G., & I hope to hear the same from you, P.G. I haven't much to write about, but rather than keep you waiting a full week between letters, I'll make a point of dropping you what one might call a mid-mail letter - I'm sure you won't mind its brevity.

We've come across some ripe mealie-lands for a change, & we're having a wonderful time. We eat them all day, by simply roasting them in coals. Occasionally, we boil some, just be way of variety. We've also found some ripe tomatoes, which makes a big difference to the meals. Yesterday was my turn at playing cook, & we had a good supper - fried bully, fried onions, fried tomatoes, boiled potatoes, with mealies for desert - not at all the usual bully & biscuits meal. The biggest difficulty in preparing our meals is that we have only one wood fire & a limited number of pots & pans, so when you try to prepare a varied meal it's a battle to keep everything warm. However, I'm learning - I can even make a creditable plate of porridge. I can see you won't have to worry about a Sixa when I get home, Please God.

Believe it or not, but in the midst of war, we went to bio last night to see Abbott & Costello in "Who Done It". The show was held in a hall - an outhouse of a villa with a terrific tower, with embattlements on top. Three sessions were shown, at 3, 6, & 9 p.m. Being cook, I went to the 9 p.m. session. Our guns were just outside the hall, & every now & then you'd hear their roar as they fired. But for the most part, for 2 hours one could forget that there was a war on.

The reason for the pencilled effort is that I'm sitting by the side of a road, where our convoy has halted, & taking advantage of the shade provided by the wall of a house, as the sun is extremely hot. A friendly Itie has just brought us a basketful of nice ripe pears, which are good to the taste, & of which we are partaking generously.

I had letters from both Rose & Lil yesterday, to which I have yet to reply. They are all well, T.G.

Now we've travelled on another couple of hundred yards & stopped again, & a woman has come running out of a house with a trayful of baked apples - and they do taste good. I do believe it's the first baked apple I've had in five years.

I wonder whether yesterday's date had any significance for you. Actually, it marked the completion of two years service. Awk! I've been in the army a long time, what?

Well, I don't seem to have done so badly after all. And as there's no more news, I'll end with regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Chins up, Your Loving Son, Myer.

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No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
2/8/44

My Dearest Gert,

Many thanks for your most welcome letter which I received last Sunday. Your letters are becoming better and better - practice makes perfect, they say, and that certainly applies to the ability to express one's thoughts in writing; the more you write, the more you're able to write, and the better. So you see, the more you write to me, the more it benefits you, so - you do want to benefit yourself, don't you? (In an aside: "That's as good a line as any I've shot for many moons".) Seriously tho', I'm glad that you don't always wait for letters from me before writing, 'cos then I wouldn't hear from you half often enough.

And what goes for writing, goes for reading too. The more you write to me, the more letters you'll receive in reply, and the better you'll be able to decipher my own particular brand of hieroglyphics. Not, of course, that it is really desirable to be able to decipher what passes as my handwriting, for you'll probably never come across another quite as bad, but none-the-less....to sum up, you see there's a lot to be gained by writing to me often; and in addition, there's the wealth of enjoyment I get out of your letters. So take this lesson to heart, and go to it. H'mm! Methinks your big sisters might do well to read this letter.

I'm glad you're liking the new subjects you're now learning at school. How does it feel to be the only girl in the class? I'm sure you won't come top of the class now, because boys are always cleverer than girls - if they aren't, then they know how to "crib" better.

I was quite surprised to learn that you've taken over the Saturday morning job. How do you like it?

I'm looking forward to that parcel you speak of, and it should be here soon, for we haven't had parcels for over a month. We received "glory bags" from Gifts & Comforts today, & I was very pleased to find a mirror in mine. My old mirror is so bad that I could scarcely see whose face I was shaving in the morning. I also received a very nice pair of knitted socks. Do you still do much knitting for Gifts & Comforts?

Tell Edie that I'll probably be writing to her at the end of the week. Thank her for her letter which I received on Sunday.

Otherwise, dear sister, there's very little to add. I'm keeping well & fit, the weather is getting

warm again, and winter clothes are being discarded in favour of light summer khaki.

Sorry I can't fill this card, but I've done my best.

Regards to all & Love to Dad, Mom & the Sisters. Be good & Write Soon, Tons of love & Kisses, Your Loving Brother, Myer.

P.S. An extra-special big kiss for Liebe.

P.P.S. Dear Mom,

This will be a bit early, but nonetheless, here's wishing you a Happy Birthday and Many Many Happy Returns of the 16<sup>th</sup>. P.G. next year we'll all be together for your birthday as we were last year. So, Many Happy Returns.

All my Love & Kisses, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
5/8/44 No. 103

Dear Mom,

Just a few lines to let you know that I'm keeping well & fit, T.G., & hope to hear the same from you.

We had a spot of rain yesterday, just by way of a change, & unfortunately my writing set got slightly wet. Mind you, I was still fortunate, for it was the bottom & not the top that got wet, otherwise all my cards & stamps would have been spoiled. As it is, there's no damage done.

I received two parcels two days ago, from my aunts Becky & Lily. Very nice they were too. I received them at about 8 in the evening, so I just opened them to see what they contained, & then went to bed leaving all the tins & packages littered on the bonnet of the jeep. So imagine how I felt when I was awoken at 4.30 in the morning & told to pack up & get on the road. My first thoughts were of the parcel - I just chucked everything back into the canvas as best I could, & hurled it into the back of the jeep, & on my way.

I also had a letter from Rose yesterday, which I want to answer now, but damned if I know what to write about. News is so darned scarce up here just now.

So that's about all for now, & I'll write again when I hear from you on Tuesday, P.G.

Regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

Dear Sylvia,

Just now three little children (two girls & a boy aged about 13, 10 & 6) came along begging for bread. I gave them some, & they thanked me & went away. Then I remembered that I had much sweets, so I called them back & asked them if they wanted some "caramella". It's probably so long since they heard the word that they've forgotten what it means, for even when I gave them each a handful they sort of looked at the sweets & then at me & then back at the sweets. Then the little girl, about your age, had an inspiration; she took a bite at a sweet & then jumped sky-high with joy, & they went scampering off very happy. It's so nice to see children happy, & I always feel so sorry for these children who have known the terrors of war in & near their homes. I know now what a blessing it is that a war has never been fought on S.A. soil, & I feel that whatever we go thro' up here is worthwhile if our homes, our mothers & sisters, or wives & children, are spared what these women & children have gone thro'.

Tons of love, & Kisses, Your Loving Brother, Myer.

(Inscription on back of letter-card reads: "I certify on my honour that the contents of this letter refer to nothing but private and family matters. M. Kramer")

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
11/8/44 No. 104.

Dear Mom,

Friday is usually my day for what I call my mid-mail letter, but, owing to unusual circumstances this week, I skipped on Tuesday's letter, so this is my regular weekly letter - slightly late, but please pardon me. The trouble was that the mail didn't come in on Tuesday, as it usually does. If they had said that the mail would be 3 days late, then I'd have written a few lines on Tuesday, but they said it would be in on Wed. so I decided to wait until Wed before I wrote; Wed. they said Thurs, & Thurs it became Friday. So your mail is in at last & here am I answering it.

Many thanks for your most welcome letter dated 24<sup>th</sup> ult. I'm glad to hear that all at home are well, & I too am in the pink T.G. I don't know what news you have of us in your newspapers these days, but from what I've seen of old newspapers, they're usually allowed to tell you far more than we ourselves may, so I informed, and not worrying

We're enjoying a with nothing to do & all that is, beyond maintaining instruments & our kit. of buttons, stripes, flashes clothes.

A special Thanksgiving for the Jewish Members of be there - I have a lot to be

So Liebe is wanting to have that mad party; tell now. P.G. & then she can red.

You know, Mom, you natural jokes, whether F'rinstance you say, very cold, & my feet are comment that it must be pen between the toes in



August 1944 Rome

suppose you're well-about me at the moment. succession of lazy days, day to do it in - nothing, our vehicles, our There is much sewing-on etc. & much washing of

Service has been arranged the Div. tonight & I shall thankful for.

know when we're going to her I hope it won't be long help me paint the house

make the most wonderful intentional or otherwise. "Pardon the scrawl as it is freezing." I can only very difficult holding the cold weather.

Otherwise, Mom, there's very little else to write about, so I'll end now with regards to all, & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Chins up, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
17/8/44 No. 106B

Dear Mom,

Once again the mail is late (seems to be becoming a habit), but this time I'm not waiting for the

mail to get in, but writing notwithstanding. (Altho' I don't mind laying 10 to 1 that the minute that I've posted this letter, the mail will be given out). But, you may say, if you're not waiting for the mail, why didn't you write on Tuesday as usual, instead of leaving it till Thursday. To which, by way of explanation, I make reply that I was fortunate enough to get three days; leave from Sunday to Tuesday, & also fortunate enough to be able to get to Rome for my leave.

I had a wonderful three days there. I found accommodation with a real decent, better-class family, & was made to feel absolutely at home. The Romans of course, are by no means overfed; they have their rations, & a black-market flourishes but very expensive. So I gave them my own rations & ate with them - they supplemented my rations with unlimited (unrationed) vegetable & fruit, so I really enjoyed it. Everything is expensive in Rome; peaches not half as good as those we've been picking for ourselves in the country, cost sixpence each in the city.) What a pleasure it was to sleep on a soft couch, between persil-white sheets; to eat off a snow-white tablecloth, with shining cutlery, & glasses positively scintillating like rich gems; waited upon by the whole family (ma, pa, & 3 children) to such an extent that it was embarrassing; my every wish was anticipated - as the germ of the desire for a drink of water began to form in my mind, so the ice-cold water was already being poured into the glass; they couldn't do enough for me; and what's more, they way things materialized there I suspect them of black magic, or of possessing an Aladdin's lamp - it was Sunday; I asked if it might be possible to get a spot of vino - the son was out of the house in a dash, & back in a minute with the desired vino; I told them I'd like to buy some material - within two minutes there were about 8 rolls of material on the table - ranging from linen to georgette to cotton. (I intended sending you some material, but the prices were so exorbitant that I felt sure that you can get the stuff cheaper than that at home, & I'm not very experienced in cloths - a piece of floral silk, 4 metres long (i.e. 4 yards 1 foot) would cost £7. I might still have bought it, but I didn't know what quantities are needed for dresses, so I thought maybe better I cut it out, & ask your advice first. So if you let me know whether you can get materials at home or not, approx. prices & lengths, I might be able to do better next time). I spent a very pleasant evening at home with them - the father speaks a spot of English (more than I speak Itie) as he works in an insurance firm; the son of 15 studies Greek, Latin & English at school, so I could talk to him too; the daughter of 14 is an accomplished pianist, & entertained us all evening. They live in a delightfully big modern flat, with no end of rooms, & a beautiful bathroom with, as the papers would put it, all modern conveniences. All in all, everything was wonderfully clean, & I really enjoyed my short stay.

Rome itself is a wonderful place, & pretty well untouched by war, which was also a delightful change. Everybody is well-dressed; the girls in the street, in their daily work-a-day dress, look like a fashion parade. And as I said when I passed thro' Rome & only caught a glimpse of them, every one of them is beautiful. We did the usual quick organised tour of Rome, visiting such places of world renown as the Pantheon, the Colosseum, various ancient Forums, the Monument to Victor Em. II & the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, a marvellous building all in white with various gilded bronze statues, & most impressive of all, the Church of St. Peter in the Vatican City. Just think - for about an hour I was actually in neutral territory, in fact, in a neutral country. The St. Peter's Church is a place beyond description. When I tell you that it is 650 feet long, about 300 wide & 300 high to the ceiling, that gives you no idea of its magnitude. The dome itself is 150 feet diam. at the ceiling & 150 feet high, so that the top of the dome is 450 feet above the ground. The church has a capacity of 70,000 people - quite a crowd, what! But more than being a church, it impresses one as a national museum and art-gallery. The best artists, sculptors, painters, architects that Italy has produced, have spent their lives in the Church. Huge statues of all the Popes, of the saints, of Angels, beautiful paintings of incidents in scripture, amazing construction of walls, pillars, altars, canopies, dome, the whole roof decorated with mosaics, all have to be seen to be believed. The original paintings on the walls have been removed, & are in the Pope's private museum, & their place has been taken by duplicates done in mosaic. Well, I've seen mosaics before today, but

nothing like that can compare with these. Imagine a painting about 10 x 8 ft. made up of little pieces of coloured stone about 3 ins. Square each - each mosaic must have taken years & years - and such perfect detail, depth & perspective. In a mosaic of Christ being baptised, you see his feet below the water, slightly distorted as they would be, with ripples in the water above them - absolutely unbelievable. There was a statue of an angel, the angel of all Religion, & I was interested to see Hebrew words on the bands around her head & waist - on her head "שְׁמַרְךָ" & I don't remember the other two. She was guarded by two lions - one awake, & one asleep with one eye open, & they were so lifelike that if one put one's hand into their mouth, one could almost feel the movement of the tongue. There's a statue in black marble of St. Peter sitting on a chair - his right foot is extended, for at certain times of the year the Romans kiss that foot. And believe it or not, in the course of hundreds of years, that foot has been worn quite smooth - the clefts between the toes, etc, have vanished completely. I could go back & spend hours wandering around the place, just marvelling at it all. Near St. Peter's there is an ancient synagogue, on the bank of the Tiber, but I didn't get a chance to visit that. If, however, I should ever get the chance to visit Rome again, that will be my first port of call.

When I wrote last week I forgot to mention that I saw an Ensa show one day, presenting Will Fiffe in person. Hell, he was amusing, the old chap. But the rest of his cast wasn't too hot; they had a Russian who had been held captive by the Tedeschi in Italy for 4 years & liberated ultimately: he was a marvellous baritone & received a thunderous welcome from the boys - he sang "The Volga Boatman" in Russian, "O Sole Mio", in Itie, & something-or-other in English.

I saw Willie Levenstein, of the same crowd as Asher B. the other day. (He is related to the Kawalsky's from P.E.) He has grown quite fat in action, & says I have too. Perhaps he's right - I certainly lived & ate well enough.

What do you think of the latest invasion in the South of France? And of the progress in the North? And in Russia? And Italy? All very heartening, I think. Hope to see you soon.

And that's all for now. Regards to all, & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Chins up, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F  
29/8/44 No. 109

Dear Mom,

Many thanks for your most welcome letter numbered U which I received today. I'm pleased to hear that all at home are well, T.G., & I too am in the pink, T.G. I heard from Gerry yesterday - it's rather disappointing, for they've had to re-break his arm & re-set it, as it wasn't growing straight. His toes, he says, are also progressing horribly slowly, & he feels that the month he's been in hospital has been almost wasted. However, I hope he starts healing well now.

I'm afraid you're going to be very disappointed in this letter - I just can't think of anything to write about. Harold has just come in & I've told him that you ask why I never mention him - he says the only thing worth mentioning about him is that he's "had" this war even more than I have - but there I disagree with him. A funny thing happened the other day. He showed me two snaps he had just received of his 3-year-old daughter as flower-girl at what he said was her first wedding. I asked him if his wife was on the snap, & he said "No, she's been to a wedding before." Then later I came along, & he was still looking at the snaps, so I took the one, & in one corner was a group of about six people, very indistinct. I pointed to one, said "Here's your wife!" & when he looked at where I was pointing he saw that I was right. I had recognized her before he had, believe it or not. (I met her at Badplaats, way back). Harold, incidentally, got his second stripe recently.

Otherwise, Mom, there's not else to write of, so I'll end with regards to all, & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Chins up, Your Loving Son, Myer.

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No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
12/9/44 No. 111

Dear Mom,

Many thanks for your most welcome letter No. 111 which I received today. Thanks also to Gert for her letter, to which I really will try to reply within a day or two. I'm pleased to hear that all at home are well, and I too am in the pink, T.G. I had a letter from Gerry today, and he says he's making steady progress.

I'm very disappointed that my letter No. 106 (in two parts) should have been so messed around in the post. I don't ask much of the Post Office (being a Government "worker" myself), but when I write a letter in two parts, I do expect them to deliver parts I and II, or A and B, together, or at least A before B. But B before A! - dammit, sir, an' all that, it's just not cricket. However, I do hope that by now you've received 106A and know all about my Rome leave.

As usual (or shouldn't I put it that way?! - no offence meant) your tip about sending a card to the M.B. Hebrew Cong. was a little bit late, for I've already sent them greetings. Moreover, I was able to send them a printed card, despite the short ration. I hope it gets them, it was addressed thus: "M.B. Heb. Cong., Maitland." - that should end up at Shul.

I don't know what we'll be doing for Rosh Hashona and Yom Kippur. Subject to the exigencies of the service, we will be granted "excused duty" on those days to allow us to attend any services that have been arranged, but as yet I've not heard anything from the Padre.

I'm very intrigued and interested in this tall, dark and handsome woman who's about to enter my life. The little bit you told me about her has whetted my appetite for more - on your judgement and recommendation I'm prepared to rely for all. So tell Miriam to tell her, or tell her yourself if you like, that if she doesn't write to me within three days of receipt of this letter, introducing herself formally, I shall withdraw my ambassador and cut off all diplomatic relations - tell her I'm not a man to be trifled with, and she must treat my threat with due respect, or else!! At the same time, you might let me know her name and address. Oh yes! And tell Miriam it all depends on her - if she's not satisfied with the exchange, then it's no go.

And that, Mom, is about all for now, so, until next time, regards to all and Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Chins up, Your Loving Son, Myer.

(Inscription on back of letter-card reads: "I certify on my honour that the contents of this letter refer to nothing but private and family matters. M. Kramer")

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
16/9/44 No. 112

Dear Mom,

Many thanks for your most welcome letter no. X received today. It was a most delightful

surprise to receive a "baksheesh" letter at the end of the week. I understand there is now a daily airmail service to and from the Union, so we never know when to expect letters these days. I had letters today from Rose & Wolfe, oh, & another parcel from Lil yesterday.

I'm pleased to know that all at home are well & fit, & I too am in the pink T.G. and with the wonderful flow of news from all over the world, we're also optimistic, & hoping that it won't be long now before our dreams of re-union, the dreams we've been dreaming since our embarkation leave expired on the 20<sup>th</sup> March '43, will be realised, P.G.

I can just imagine what a time of excitement it is at home now, with all the preparations for Rosh Hashona. Here there is no preparation at all - a soldier is always prepared for whatever comes along - I'll probably get about 10 minutes' notice that there's a service at such & such a place, & that the truck is leaving immediately. There are services on in Rome, but I'm afraid it's a bit out of my province. Never mind, next year P.G. I'll be participating in the Rosh Hashona services at home.

I saw Steve Kirsten in the field the other day, & we had a long chat together. I was brewing up at the time, so he had a cup of tea with me. As he said, these meetings have the advantage of providing an extra paragraph in our letters home.

Glad you liked my latest photo - it's a long time since I had my likeness took. The sideboard must look like a display of millinery, in the attempt to keep up with all our various head-dresses. How does my new (unnamed) girl-friend like my latest snap?

I was able to buy myself a new writing-case recently, so I've polished up & sent home my old one. It's rather a nice souvenir, as it was a gift from the Board of Deputies to us in the desert in 1943. I should have sent it home forthwith, but I needed it. It's become slightly dirty, but still in good shape.

I decided to send greetings to all the family after-all, so I simply used these A.M.L.C. & endorsed them suitably inside. Now, two days before Yom-tof, I get issued with a dozen printed cards, better even than the one I sent home. It's too late to send them out, & in any case, I've no one to send them to, but I'm sending one to you as a souvenir.

And that, dear folks, is all for now, so I'll end with regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

(Inscription on back of letter-card reads: "I certify on my honour that the contents of this letter refer to nothing but private and family matters. M. Kramer")

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
21-9-44 No. 113

Dear Mom,

Just a few lines to let you know that I'm still keeping well and fit T.G. and I hope to hear the same from you. I haven't received my usual weekly letter, but the mail seems to be slightly late, and I shouldn't be surprised if your letter turns up just after I've finished writing this one - that's usually the case.

Well, I suppose the excitement of Rosh Hashona is over now, at home, and you're looking forward to Yom Kippur - altho' by the time you read this even Yom Kippur will be behind your back. My Rosh Hashona was very quiet - I got Monday off, and went to an organised service, where the predominating section of the congregation were Yanks, with a Yank chazon officiating. He was really excellent, and a pleasure to listen to. Most of the boys got both days off, but in my case the "exigencies of the service" just did not permit, and I had to work the second day. However, I'm quite confident that I'll get the day off for Yom Kippur.

I met an old school-mate in town on Rosh Hashona. He was Sammy Ginsberg, whom I haven't seen since we left school. The world's a small place, for he sat next to me at the table in the club where we were eating lunch. I recognised him, but he didn't recognise me - when I told him my name he said it was my own fault for hiding behind a big moustache.

I'm receiving an amazing flow of parcels - four in three days; two from Lil, one from Leah and one from Aunty Beck. My cupboard is well stocked now, and I mustn't forget to write to everyone soon.

Otherwise, folks, there's little else to write about. Just think, if I'd written in my usual big hand I might have filled this card. So I'll end now with regards to all and Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Chins up, Your Loving Son, Myer.

P.S. I've just remembered one or two little anecdotes.

In contrast to the story I've just told you about meeting Sammy Ginsberg, here's the story of another schoolpal I met some three weeks ago. This chap was not at S.A.C.S. but at M.P.S. with me, which means I haven't seen him for 12 years. But in his case, I didn't recognise him - he recognized me. He came up, called me Kramer, and had me absolutely stumped. Even when he told me his name I couldn't place him, but I tried to be as tactful as possible. (Sargent is his name). I thought he might have been in Jack's class, and mistaken me for Jack, but as we spoke it was quite evident from the names he mentioned that we were in the same class, which only goes to show!

I don't think I've ever mentioned that the second-in-command of our regiment, a Major, is the brother of the chap with whom I worked in customs and who joined up with me. They're the dead-split of each other, and I'm only afraid that some day I'll forget myself and start slapping him on the back and calling him Gordon.

Remember the story I told you about Harold Hudson, how I recognized his wife on the photo. Well, here's the laugh. He wrote to her, told her I'd recognized her, and went on to say that after I recognized her, he recognized the mouth, the nose, etc. In reply she tells him that she's not on the photo, so he gets the horse-laugh, and I'm no longer popular.

I see Gerry's name has figured in the most recent roll of honour. Immediately above his name is that of Bob Burns - the three of us always came down on leave together. Remember me telling you that the two of them ran away from home together to join up. Bob caught some shell-splinters in the legs, but is not serious - he'll probably be back with us one of these days. One of these days, P.G., you'll come to meet the three of us disembarking from our ship at C.T., home for good. That's all for now. All my Love and Kisses, Myer.

(Inscription on back of letter-card reads: "I certify on my honour that the contents of this letter refer to nothing but private and family matters. M. Kramer")

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
24/9/44

My Dearest Gert,

Many thanks for your most welcome letter received today. The mail was a bit late this week, so your letter took a bit longer than usual. However, I ain't grumbling. I had an excellent mail for a change - a total of 9 epistles. The whole family was represented, with letters from you, Rose, Lil, Becky, two from my girl-friend in Scotland, one from my pal with whom I originally joined up, &, in addition, a Rosh Hashona greeting card from Rose & a Rosh Hashona telegram from Aunty Beck. Not a bad haul.

I received the parcel which Leah sent while you were at her place. It arrived in very good condition, and was most enjoyable. I haven't written to thank her yet, for I've not had much time for letters these last few days, but I'll write as soon as I can. Talking of parcels, I don't think I've ever commented on the one parcel I received a month ago which had my address "embroidered" on it in string. It was a very good piece of work. I've also been receiving quite a few Arguses lately, including one which included two Film Funs, for which many thanks.

When you ask me to ask my "penfriend" to find a correspondent for you, do you mean my Scottish lass or my Palestinian. If the latter you're out of luck, for I no longer write to her.

If you smell anything funny about this letter, think nothing of it - it's just the mosquito oil we use - the mosquitoes thrive on it.

I've often wondered what has happened to all the letters I've written in the past so many, too-many months, & now I'm pleased to know that they are in your capable hands. They'll be interesting to re-read when all this is over, but as for writing books, I'll leave that to someone else. For me, I want to forget the war as soon as possible or even sooner.

I've just remembered that tomorrow is Sylvia's birthday. I've got no champagne here, but I'm drinking her health with a glass of Martini & Rossi's best Italian vermouth.

Otherwise, mia cara, there isn't anything else to write about just now, so I'll end with regards to all & Love to Mom & Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Yours, Con Amore, Myer.

(Inscription on back of letter-card reads: "I certify on my honour that the contents of this letter refer to nothing but private and family matters. M. Kramer")

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
28-9-44 No. 114

Dear Mom,

Many thanks for your most welcome letter No. Y received today. I'm pleased to hear that all at home are well, and I too am in the pink T.G. When I say "in the pink", I must make a small qualification - my right eye looks as if I'd got the worst of an argument with a professional prize-fighter which only goes to show how deceptive looks can be, for, far from having had an argument with a prize-fighter, my argument was with one of those little things called "bees". It was a fight to the finish, and I emerged victorious, but only after the bee had deposited his sting on my cheekbone just below the right eye. It happened on Monday afternoon, but didn't swell up until Tuesday morning, and even then it didn't look too bad. But Wed. morning I awoke looking like a chinaman. So I went to the Doc, and all yesterday I applied hot poultices, and the doc applied some ammonia. When I awoke this morning, the swelling below the eye had gone down, but the top eye-lid had gone up. After a poultice or two, however, it has improved, and by tomorrow it should be back to normal. But it did look funny for two days - there was just a narrow slit of eye, with much puffiness all round - even the Colonel laughed.

I almost got the day off for Yom Kippur, but didn't quite make it. On Tues. morning I was told that arrangements were being made for transport, but then I went out on a survey, and when I got back to RHQ at 4 p.m., I was told that the truck had left one of the batteries, 13 miles away, at 3.30. So I resigned myself to Yom Kippur in camp, and set about making an early supper. So at 5 another chap turns up and tells me that he's just seen the officer in charge of the party, and that he's waiting for us. So we had a mad dash in the jeep to the point where he'd seen the officer, but when we got there he'd gone. Then this chap added that he'd seen the officer at 4, so I could hardly expect him to wait until 6. So I ate a tin of cold bully, and then set off back to camp, where we arrived in the dark,

and I fasted on a tin of bully. I managed to get yesterday off, and I fasted quite well, and what's more, didn't smoke either. The chaps went out on a survey after lunch, so at about 3 I started supper going, and when they got back it was all ready, and I broke the fast at about 5. I made quite a meal, for I was really hungry - fried bully, with boiled spuds, green beans and cabbage. My **סידור** comes in very handy these days - I use it almost every day, and when possible, I read the whole **פֿשְׁרִיבַּת שְׁחָרִית** on Sat. mornings. Yesterday I read the **שְׁחָרִית**, and the **מִזְבֵּחַ שְׁחָרִית** for **שְׁמַנְיָה עֲשֵׂר**. I know whole parts of the weekly services by heart now, but what I'm most proud of is that I know the whole **שְׁמַנְיָה עֲשֵׂר לְזָהָל** by heart. No mean accomplishment.

Winter is setting in, the weather is turning cold, and it's been raining for about 36 hours. John and I went out on a job this morning, and we spent about 3 hours in the rain, sliding up mountain-sides and then sliding down again. With the aid of a greatcoat and a waterproof, I managed to keep dry above the waist, but by the time we returned to camp, I had six inches of water inside my boots and to think that I put on clean socks this morning. Fortunately we're living in a house, so we were able to get into dry clothes and stay dry.

Well, and that's about all for now, so I'll end with regards to all and Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

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No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
14-10-44

My Dearest E D,

Many thanks for your most welcome ..... pardon me, I seem to have got you mixed up with someone else I know; force of habit, an' all that, you know - I've become so accustomed to thanking people for letters, & apologising for my delay in replying, that my pen seems to be getting into a bit of a rut. So, in your case, as I don't owe you a letter, (- this week's headlines!!-) I'll use my alternative Introductory Paragraph (remember the headings you learnt at school?); namely, "Well, here I am at last! Aren't you glad to hear from me?!"

And so how's the working-lady doing these days? Bearing up, I trust, under the strain. **Dien et mon Droit!** You're growing up very fast these days, my love. Unless my memory serves me false, you will, by the time of reading this, either be fast approaching, or have just passed the 18<sup>th</sup> year-stone, as it were. Quite a lidy, what? Anyway, while we're on the subject, here's wishing you a Very Happy Birthday, & Many Many Happy Returns of the 31<sup>st</sup> inst., and P.G., may we celebrate your next one together - where shall we go for the mammoth celebration? Just say the word and it's yours.

The enclosed bit of paper marked with the trade-mark of the Reserve Bank, or some other similarly near-destitute organisation, is a wee present (note the influence of my Scotch gal-friend) from me to thee, to dispose of as thou deemest fit. What I told Sylv holds good here too - I'd have liked to buy you sumpin' in Rome, but, quite apart from prices there being ridiculously excruciating, I do feel that I have forced upon you all quite sufficient brooches, medals, & knick-knacks which, for all I know, match neither your hats or your shoes, are absolutely unsuitable, & have proved white elephants, so I thought I'd give you the choice of buying whatever you fancied yourself. Not that I imagine that 20 shillings goes very far in these troublous days, but there you are.

Hold everything! I am about to explode the greatest myth of my, & probably your, childhood. I am about to reveal the true facts of how we have been mis-guided, misinformed & mis-led on a subject of utmost importance, one which has had a telling effect on the formation of our character. I make clear now, & place on record, that we have been grossly misled by such otherwise reliable publications as "Comic Cuts", "Film Fun", & numerable other personalities of the literary world. And the subject, in one word, is "chest-nuts". I have always thought that chestnuts were thrown onto a blazing fire, & left there until they ejected themselves by popping off with a resounding crack like the crack of demon, hurtling out of the fire at the same time as if jet-propelled. Well, that's all wrong. I've been eating chestnuts for a week now, so I consider myself quite an authority on the subject. Chestnuts grow on trees, &, in obeisance to the law of gravity, (and any other law in force at the time), they fall to the ground in due course. They are encased in an outer cover which has as many points as the proverbial porcupine, but is the size & shape of a sea anemone, which takes us back to Nature Study. These outer cases are best not handled by hand - a deft kick with the heel of a boot soon delivers the goods in a most expedient manner. These chestnuts are now ready for consumption, which is of four kinds - raw and roasted; roasted itself falls into three kinds, viz 1) under-done; 2) correctly done; 3) burnt to a cinder; class no. 2 is a myth - it just can't be done. Occasionally they make a slight cracking noise, which might easily be confused with the crackling of wood, but, despite all my coaxing, they refuse to jump out of the fire. So that when finally, at great risk to life & limb, one finally rescues the shrivelled-up product from the blaze, it is beyond all mortal aid, & unfit for human consumption. So, after many futile heroic attempts, I have abandoned all ideas of ever savouring roasted chestnuts, & have resorted to boiling them instead. They make good eating - taste something like spuds. At an Itie "casa" the other night I had the pleasure of watching chestnuts being roasted, & I enjoyed the product, but then the Ities displayed no little patience, & much skill. However, enough about chestnuts - I only eat them three times a day, anyway - boiled!

To come back to earth, to real hard-boiled facts! How are my snaps getting on with the chemist, or vice-versa! The negs. were very good, & I'm looking forward to seeing the snaps soon. Incidentally, a few snaps of the family out of Miriam's camera would not come amiss. How 'bout, huh?!

Do you still write to & hear from Julian? Give him my regards, & apologise for me. I received a letter from him the very day that we were forming up on the parade ground in Egypt, preparatory to marching to the port of embarkation, & I've never yet replied to him. Tell him I admit I'm a stinker, but mebbe I write one of these days.

How's the job going these days? The 31<sup>st</sup> marks the completion of six years service for me - the greatest significance of the completion of six years service, in my case, is that it qualifies me for Associate Membership of the Institute of Secretaries. Visualise me (or in the words of George Formby, "imagine me") with my signboard outside the house - "M. Kramer, A.C.I.S." Speaking of George Formby's "imagine me" makes me think of the Siegfried line, & of course, the Gothic Line. Remind me to tell you some day how I breached the Gothic Line, unaided & lone-handed - of course, I was backed up by a stiffening of S.A.'n, British & American troops.

It may now be revealed that the services I attended for the New Year were held in FIRENZE (Florence), the flower city of Italy. I can't tell you a hell of a lot about the place, 'cos the service took most of the day. However, in the annals of Florence they can now record "M Kramer passed thro' here".

And that, me luv, is sufficient trash for the nonce. Regards to all & sundry, & love to Dad, Mom, & the other sisters, & once again, Happy Birthday & Many Happy Returns. Tons of Love & Kisses, Your Loving Brother, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F  
17-10-44 No. 117

Dear Mom,

Many thanks for your most welcome letter no. A2 received day-'for-yester. Sorry I couldn't answer sooner, but I've been tied up with my war effort. I also received Miriam's letter yesterday, containing the snaps, & I'll reply to her either today or tomorrow. The snaps are very nice, & I was really glad to receive them, altho' I'm disappointed that you & Gert do not appear on them. However, I hope that that shortage will be made good soon. Liebe certainly does look quite a lady - I like the coy manner in which she is sitting on the lawn with Sylvia - leaning back with one leg crossed over the other, & clasping that leg. Sylvia also looks very nice, & I've just been comparing her with some old snaps - a snap of Gerty taken 3 years ago for instance. Well, I don't know, but I think I'll still be able to know one from the other when I get back. Of course, if you were to send me an old snap of Sylvia & say it was Liebe, I'd believe you, for I think that Liebe looks very much like Sylvia used to. Of course Miriam & Edie look like two young ladies whom I've never met - as indeed I haven't, really. Dad looks very well - he's getting younger every snap I see of him.

After five or six days of clear weather, the rain has started again today, & it looks as if it's come to stay too.

We haven't played cards for some time now, for I've been going visiting instead. The last time we played I won 17/6 - made up for the 15/- I'd lost the previous night. We're living in a little mountain village at the moment, made up of about a dozen houses. The last two nights Steve (one of the English chaps attached to us), John & I have been taking our gramophone to one of the houses, & dancing. It was very funny; all our records are Italian, & when we brought the gramophone, the people of the house produced more records, including Ti-pi-tin, Saint Louis Blues, Washington Post. Unfortunately all our records are opera's & operetta's, but they saved the situation by producing about 3 danceable records. The first night there were only the three daughters of the house there, but last night they made quite an affair of it, & there were half-a-dozen or more of the village belles. There's no knowing what tonight will bring. Anyway, we're having damn good fun, even if the room is only big enough for two couples at a time.

You'll be sorry to hear that Harold has left us again. He's developed a spot of hernia, & has gone to hospital for an operation; however, we'll probably see him again in a month or two. Now old Rex has had a bit on an accident - nothing at all serious, fortunately - just a petrol burn.

Those snaps of mine are a bit disappointing - I don't know whether it's the paper on which they're printed, or what. Anyway, they're not too bad. I'll be sending them back to you one of these days, & when the surface-mail lot arrive I'll sell them to the boys, & make a spot of spare cash.

I'm sorry I haven't been acknowledging the Arguses recently, but I have been getting them, & they're always very welcome.

Strange that you mention the amount of the cheque from Customs, for only the other night, when I mentioned in Edie's letter that 6 years of service ends on the 31<sup>st</sup>, I decided to work out, as well as possible from memory, how much you're receiving at present, & how much you should receive in November; & I was only a penny out in my estimation of the present cheque - I made it £3-7-10 not bad, what? From the 1<sup>st</sup> of November my salary rises to £250 p.a. plus this 5% they're paying extra, so you should receive £5-18-8 monthly from Customs. Hell, my salary is now about £22 a month, - I'm coming on slowly. Have you ever found out what the 5% is in aid of? Do Miriam & Edie also get it? What I can't understand is that Rex, who is a senior clerk in the Civil Service (Native Affairs), seems to know nothing about it, & we usually look to him to know everything.

And that seems to be about all for now, so I'll end with regards to all, & Love to Dad, all the girls & Yourself, Tons of Love & Chins Up, Your Loving Son, Myer.

(Inscription on back of letter-card reads: "I certify on my honour that the contents of this letter refer to nothing but private and family matters. M. Kramer")

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
30/10/44 No. 119

Dear Mom,

Many thanks for your most welcome letter marked BB received on Saturday. I'm pleased to hear that all at home are well, and bearing up under the strain, & I too am in the pink, T.G. We're still sloshing thro' rain and mud, but, like London, we can take it.

Well, our little interlude of dancing every night has ended, & altho' at the time we were getting tired of it, now we're beginning to miss it sadly. Anyway, we wound up with a very grand show on the last night. As it happened, our last night there coincided with one of our chaps' birthday. Well, we had a pretty good collection and variety of liquor, & we proceeded to imbibe in approved fashion. At about 9 I decided I'd had my measure, & that it was time to go to the dance. Well, I was in a good condition, that merry state in which I knew what I was doing & saying, but prepared to do & say anything. These other chaps, however, had really had it, & they performed in a big way. At first the old people of the house were very amused at their condition & activities, but when I saw that their amusement was turning to annoyance, I managed to get the boys away before any feelings were hurt. What fun I had putting them all to bed. Then, at 10 o'clock, not yet having had enough, I decided to go & do some more visiting. I walked into one house, sat down at the fire, & started eating chestnuts & talking - I was speaking like an Itie, & stayed there until midnight, & then decided I'd go to bed. It was great fun.

Next morning we left. Leaving old "Mama Mia" in whose house we'd been cooking, was quite touching. The old lady had grown quite used to us, & fond of us, & when I shook her hand & said Goodbye, she shook me by kissing my hand & bursting into tears. It was very touching - I didn't know what to do.

I received Miriam's registered airmail containing my snaps, for which countless thanks.

I heard that Steve Kirsten had been wounded the day after it happened. I knew that it had been a very slight wound, & guessed that he had probably remained on duty, but I didn't write about it, 'cos we're not strictly allowed to. I suppose I'll be bumping into him one of these days again.

Well, it looks as if I've been rather optimistic in using this small handwriting, 'cos if I'd written bigger I might have filled this card, but now I can't find anything else, to write about. I'm just wondering if we can't arrange to celebrate Edie's birthday tomorrow in some suitable manner. Unfortunately there's no hope of dancing here.

Well, that's about all for now, so I'll end with regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Tons of Love & Kisses, Your Loving Son, Myer.

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No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
2/11/44 No. 120

Dear Mom,

Here I am again, fit and well, T.G., but not in the best of spirits. I had a letter from Gert and Miriam jointly today, for which I thank them muchly, and I'll be replying one of these days, or sooner or later, and I'm pleased to here that all at home are well too.

And now, I must warn you not to take any notice of what I write in this letter - more likely than not I'll tear it up when I've finished, but the point is that today is just one of those days when I feel I've had it. It's hard to explain. I pride myself upon being able to control my temper, and on being of such a temperament that I just couldn't worry about anything, but today, after a series of incidents, I feel like throwing things at the first person who gets in my way, which is rather stupid of me, isn't it? Particularly stupid, in fact, in view of the fact that I'm rather enjoying life at the moment, - 'cos John and I are doing a special duty which entails our sleeping away from the regiment, and the two of us, in a deserted out of the way Itie house, are very happy in our work, with no officers and sergeants to keep worrying us. We're in touch with R.H.Q. by 'phone, and we return to R.H.Q. every morning after breakfast, and come back to the job and about 4 p.m. So in that respect we're very happy. Once again we're cooking with an Itie, his wife and family and they also can't do enough for us. They've got a 4-year old son, who is quite the most beautiful child I've ever seen, bar none. Honestly, he looks like an oil painting. He's got a full broad face, big brown eyes, curly hair, and looks like a doll.

There's another reason why I should be happy and celebrating today. I don't usually write about army personnel, and I don't think I've ever told you about our officer, but it's like this. This skipper of ours is a permanent force chap. He was our officer in the desert, and we positively hated him, for he treated us as if we were pigs. Then when we came into action, we had the luckiest break of our lives, for he went to the Union on the recruiting drive. So for two months we were perfectly happy under a lieutenant who took his place. Then the skipper returned and we've put up with him again for two months. And today we learnt that he's leaving us permanently, which is the best war news I've ever heard. He's going tomorrow morning, and I hope he's gone by the time I get back to R.H.Q. as I don't mind if I never see him again. Perhaps that sounds harsh, but, I never condemn anybody, but I've had him.

And yet, an incident or two has frayed my nerves, and I feel mad. However, it's passing now, and I'm feeling better already. A good supper, which John and I will start preparing just now, will fix me properly.

I had a letter from Gerry today - he's expecting to go back to the Union. He'll be looking you up as soon as he's up and about. I myself think that he'll go to some hospital or other in the Union first, so if you like you can find out from Mrs Evans what happens to him, and perhaps you'll be able to visit him.

And that, Mom, is all for now and I want to drop Gerry a line quickly. I feel better now, that I've told somebody how I feel, 'cos I don't like to let John see that I'm in a foul mood. I'll be writing again soon, in the meantime, regards to all and Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Chins up, Your Loving Son, Myer.

(Inscription on back of letter-card reads: "I certify on my honour that the contents of this letter refer to nothing but private and family matters. M. Kramer")

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
7·11·44 No. 121

Dear Mom,

Here's your son again, in the best of health (T.G.) and spirits. By me today the sun is shining, the birds are singing, the snails are joyfully crawling from one flower to another, and everything in the garden is lovely. Many thanks for your letter No. CC received today - I'm glad that all at home are well too. I also had letters from Miriam, Wolfe and an old lady-love from P.E., who is now in the army and expecting to be with me any day now.

I'm glad that you take the fact that I'm living in a house at its face-value. It was only yesterday that I was talking about it. You see, this job John and I are on we've got a room in a house, where we work and sleep but we cook with an Itie family in the house next-door. This family is man and wife, two children (of 8 and 4 years) and the man's mother. Well, yester-morning the old lady was saying that she feels sorry for me because I'm away from home and mother, but she said I must make myself at home, and consider myself one of the family. And then I said I wished my mother could see me at the moment, sitting comfortably beside the fire, preparing our food, playing with the children, etc., for I said that you always think of us as living amidst a hail of bullets, flying metal, etc. in open fields with no shelter from the elements. Then the woman said it's alright while we're in Italy, we can always find a foster-mother, but what are we going to do in Germany - which is a possibility I refuse to envisage. I can see there are going to be some more embarrassing moments when we leave this house. I must remember to get a snap of Merino (the little boy) and myself - he's a lovely kid, and we play some wonderful games together on the kitchen floor.

With the departure old Stopie (our old skipper) - hip, hip, hooray, John and I have now got permission to remain here all the time, and we return to R.H.Q. every second day for rations, mail, etc. We've just got back from such a trip now. The other evening we were told to have the evening off, so we spent it next door with the Ities, and had a musical evening. They really enjoyed the music - I picture myself as a minstrel-boy, 1944 version.

When you speak about showering good things upon these people, you must realise they have a slightly different idea of what constitutes good things, a bar of soap, a cup of salt, a spot of coffee, these are the things that they prize above all else, and for which they are ever thankful.

We're rejoicing today in our third consecutive day of continuous sunshine. It's really lovely - but the nights are still very cold. As I said before, I'm touching wood that I've not caught a cold yet, as all the boys have been down with colds one after the other.

I heard from Gerry the other day that he's going back to the Union for further operation - but wait, I told you all this in my last letter.

The mood is upon me today, and I want to write about a thousand letters - however, if I get first three or four of them done, I'll be very happy.

Well, Mom dear, that seems to be about all for now, so I'll end with regards to all and love to Dad, the girls and yourself, Chins up and Keep Smiling, Your Loving Son, Myer.

(Inscription on back of letter-card reads: "I certify on my honour that the contents of this letter refer to nothing but private and family matters. M. Kramer")

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
14·11·44 No. 122

Dear Mom,

Sorry I've not written for a full week, but time flies so fast these days that before I look around the week has passed. However, I did write to Sylvia during that week, so it's not as if you've been without news of me altogether. Anyway, you'll be pleased to hear that I'm still keeping well & fit, T.G., & hope to hear the same of all at home.

Otherwise there's no real news up here. We've had over a full week of sunshine now, but the mornings are very cold, the other morning when I poured the water out of the can into the basin for my wash & shave, there was ice in the water, so I decided that that was the end of my using cold water for the duration of winter. But this morning it was warmer, so I still used cold water. One of these days I'll need a pick to break the ice. The snow's not far off either - it hasn't reached us yet, but it's quite thick only a few miles away. This morning we had a lucky break - we heard that a certain regiment had fitted itself out with a hot showers, so a couple of us went across & chanced our arms, & got away with it - it was lovely - the first real bath in a month.

We've heard from Harold - he's in a Con. Camp now, doing well, & it's only a matter of time before he's completely healed. Gerry, I presume, is by now on his way home.

John Veitch, with whom I've been sharing the jeep ever since we're in action, has now left us - he's been transferred. When we came into action we named the jeep "Germy Jo", made up of Gerry's name, mine & John's, so now the "Ger Jo" has gone, leaving "my" only.

I slipped back to the little village where we used to dance, the other day, & received a tumultuous welcome - the whole village turned out - all ten of them. They wanted to know why I hadn't brought the gramophone, & were all for our staying the night. The old lady never stopped repeating "Bravo Mario". Then yesterday I took a walk over to the house where we lived last week. Incidentally, when we left there last week, there were some tense moments when we said goodbye. When we walked in yesterday they were overjoyed to see us, & thought we'd come for the day, not just for an hour or two. They immediately set about making us their celebrated "fried dough", which tastes quite good.

And that, folks, is all for now, so I'll end now with regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Tons of Love & Kisses, Your Loving Son, Myer.

P.S. I heard from Rose yesterday - they're all well. I also had a parcel earlier this week. I dropped a line to Cousin Jane in America the other day - maybe I'll hear from her soon. Love, Chins up, Myer.

(Inscription on back of letter-card reads: "I certify on my honour that the contents of this letter refer to nothing but private and family matters. M. Kramer")

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt.S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
17·11·44 No. 123

Dear Mom,

I knew it! The moment I posted letter no. 122 to you, your letter no DD turned up. So I've waited two days before replying to it. Pardon the illegibility, but my fingers are quite frozen, &

won't respond to what my mind tells it. Many thanks for your letter. I'm glad to hear that all at home are well, & I too am fit & well, T.G.

After my hot shower the other day I felt I was developing a cold in the throat & chest, so I went to the Doc, who gave me some cough mixture. In addition I managed to get some Condy's Crystals, & after one day of treatment I fount I'd killed the cold. So all's well once again.

The parcel-post is behaving very well these days. The normal thing is for half-a-dozen parcels to turn up in one post, & then no more for months. But lately they've been coming one at a time & well timed. The latest is from Aunty Beck, which arrived just when I was finishing Rose's. I must write to Aunty Beck.

Well, Mom, that seems to be about all there is to write about at the moment, so I'll end with regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Chins up, Your Loving Son, Myer.

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No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt.S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F  
22·11·44 No. 124

Dear Mom,

It's quite like old times, these days - the mail position, I mean! A few months ago my mail had dropped off sadly, but of late it has started improving again, until today I find myself receiving three or four letters in every mail. I've had quite a day today; answered about 5 or 6 letters - it's months since I wrote as many as that all in one day.

I even had a letter from Cousin David yesterday - he tells me of the removal of his appendix, but otherwise he's all right. I had letters from Gerry & Harold today, the usual soldiers' letters. Gerry is still waiting for a ship, while Harold is convalescing in a British Con. Depot, & doing his best to get a transfer to a S. Africen one.

Two or three days ago I received the letter from Sylvia & Miriam, & today your letter no EE, for which many thanks. I'll be writing to the girls again one of these days. I'm pleased to hear that all at home are well, & I too am in the pink, T.G.

Don't worry about what I wrote about restlessness. When this war is over, we'll all just have to adapt ourselves to our stations in life, & the sooner we adapt ourselves the better. I think we'll have had all the roaming around we'll ever want, & the sooner we're able to settle down to a nice quiet peaceful life, & forget all about the war, the better too. I'm still thinking of that transfer to Customs, Cape Town.

You're right about Dessie Lurie - it was his barmitzvah I went to. So he's engaged! And Maxie too! Well, well, I'm certainly being left behind, what! You should see me worrying!!

I think you've made a mistake when you say you hope the war will be over before we reach the Apennines! I'm sure you mean the Alps - we're old inhabitants of the Apennines - feel as if we've been in them all our lives. No, we've had no winter sports yet - the snow hasn't quite caught up with us yet. Still, I ain't squealing.

Otherwise, Mom, there's nothing else to write about, so I'll end with regards to all, & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Chins up, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt.S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F  
26/11/44

My Dearest Gert,

Hullo, my girl, how are you keeping? - Remember me? - I'm your big bad brother (wot smokes who hasn't written to you for months & months and .....months, oh, well, for some weeks, anyway. Thanks ever so much for your letter received, let's see, yes, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> inst. Taken me a long time to reply, hasn't it - well, you know what it is, they say there's a war on, an' all that.

Now let's see what I can tell you about, that you don't already know. Unfortunately (in this one respect) it hasn't snowed yet at our place, so I can't describe to you the thrill of building snowmen, or of throwing snowballs at the colonel; I could use my imagination, but then, it's facts we want, isn't it? So I'll have to think of sumpin else.

Don't think I've taken leave of my senses when you catch sight of the enclosed Xmas Card. I'm enclosing it purely as a matter of interest, for your war records - it's not a bad card. Tell Dad I've sent Mr Nunes a card, but as I didn't know his address, I sent it c/o Bacon Factory. It's funny! Every year I make a careful note of his address, & every year I can't find it - I don't know what to do about it! It's a chronic disease of mine.

How are things going at school? I suppose you're looking forward to your six weeks vac. Are you still going to Calvina for your hols? You know my memory gets worse & worse I'm just trying to think what class you'll be in next year; J.C., not so? My, but you are coming on. Next thing I know you'll be working too - I must be getting old.

I trust that all at home are fit & well, as this letters leaves me, T.G..

And so, my girl, that's about all for now. Keep Writing, as often as you like - the more the merrier. Tell the other girls I'll be writing one of these days.

Regards to all, & Love to Mom & Dad, Miriam, Edie, Sylvia, Liebe & Yourself, Love & Kisses, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
29·11·44 No. 125.

Dear Mom,

Many many thanks for your most welcome letter FF received yesterday. I'm pleased to hear that all at home are well, & I too am in the pink, T.G. I'm feeling very refreshed at the moment, for I've just had a delicious bath, not too hot, such as might put one in danger of a cold, but just tepid. Moreover, it wasn't ordinary water, it was some sort of mineral bath. It's the first real bath since July, when we were living at those sulphur-baths, & it was most enjoyed. However, we had to travel about 5 miles to get it, so I shan't be repeating that too often.

So you received those parcels of mine. Hope you liked them. That writing-case is rather nice, isn't it - I mean the one we received for Rosh Hashona last year.. I should have sent it home as a souvenir sooner, but I needed it, so I used it until I could buy another. The one I sent home stood up to over a year of very rough ususage - the one I bought to replace it already looks like a chewed-up rag after only 2 months of use.

I'm surprised that George Green remembers me - good oath! I was only a nipper when he used to come to our place with Sam.

Well, I didn't know that Joe Faiveleowitz had been wounded up here. I've seen him on quite a

few occasions; the last time I saw him was just after we'd come into the line. Have you been to see him yet. What happened to him - was he badly hurt. Give him my regards.

One of the British chaps attached to us is in need of a watch. They're absolutely unobtainable in England, so he asked me if I'd ask you to buy him one. He's prepared to pay up to 10 guineas for it, as long as it's a good one. He wants one of those water-proof, dust-proof etc. type. You should be able to get a wristlet watch of that kind, any decent make or shape, for 10 guineas. Try to get one as soon as you can, pay for it, & send it up by registered airmail. When you let us know the price, he'll pay me & I'll send it down to you, including the postage. I think we can accommodate him, what do you say.

Otherwise, there's nought else to write of, so I'll end with regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls and Yourself, Tons of Love & Kisses, Your Loving Son, Myer.

(Inscription on back of letter-card reads: "I certify on my honour that the contents of this letter refer to nothing but private and family matters. M. Kramer")

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F  
18·12·44 No. 128

Dear Mom,

Well, here we are again, back at the old grind again, with shoulder to the wheel and nose to the grindstone, after a short period of leave, which passed all too quickly.

We went to Florence, and I really enjoyed my holiday there. I shan't talk about the trip there and back in the back of a 3-tonner, for that almost spoiled the leave. Contrary to my usual custom when on leave, I didn't do the usual round of sights in Florence. I'm tired of seeing sights & listening to guides - all the sights I want to see now are those in Camden Road - and you needn't give me a guide either.

Florence itself is a great city, a city of tall buildings, & great and numerous squares; the city is divided in two by the Arno, which is today spanned by Bailey bridges in place of the old & artistic bridges which Gerry blew. The only bridge left standing is the famous old Ponte Vecchio; this bridge is built up on both sides with shops, & when you walk across it, you might be in any shopping-street, but you certainly don't know you're on a bridge. Gerry left that standing, but he carried out ruthless destruction of property at both ends of it, making such a mess that they're still trying to clean it up. The people of Florence are well-dressed even now, and apart from certain inconveniences & shortages of certain commodities, for them the war is over; the shops are crammed full of almost everything (except food, of course), and prices are outrageous - I still can't believe that I paid 500 lire (£1·5/-) for a normal 3/6<sup>d</sup> pipe.

I went in & looked around the Cathedral, "Saint Maria di Fiori", the third largest in the world. It's exterior is magnificent & imposing, but inside it gives one the impression of being unfinished. It dates back many centuries & is full of wonderful sculptures in bronze and in marble, but very plain nonetheless.

. We were staying at a rest house South of the Arno; the rest-house is well organized, good meals, served to us, and a pub attached, & the only thing was that they didn't have beds - the boys had to sleep on the floor. The house is very big, & once was the home of Elizabeth Barrett Browning; more recently it was occupied by some German Baron or other. Anyway, I decided that the house, for all it's comforts, was a bit too far from the centre of town, and, moreover, when I go on leave I like to try to get away completely from the army atmosphere, so I took a room in town, & used to go to the rest-house, by duty-bus, for lunch & dinner. I stayed with a very pleasant couple, they were

very clean, & the woman had a most delightful giggle. They couldn't do enough for us, & we even had a couple of meals with them. It was delightful getting into bed, climbing between cold white sheets, & sleeping undisturbed by the snores and comings-and-goings of countless other chaps - when I go on leave I believe in doing things in style and making it a real change.

The first night with these people, I was sitting in the room with them listening to the usual stories of what Gerry used to do, when the husband mentioned that his wife actually had to stay in hiding for a whole year, as the father was an "Ebrao", which is Italian for Jewish. Delighted at finding a kindred spirit, I told and heard their story. Jewish, but married a tho' Jewish, married this All her brothers, sisters camps, but she managed her if she knew any she used to be able to started reciting נאשׁ to hear the words, even had quite a bit of stuff upon them beef, M & V., etc., for which they enough, and wanted to managed to dissuade woman fought back the for us. She had had her, and when they left them go, but at least they place behind the lines. returning to the front, worried that I felt sorry that we were going to the south of Italy. And here's the climax - when we left, I asked her name, and it's none other than "Racheli", the Itie equivalent of yours.

On our last night there the officer in charge of our rest house organized a dance. There were 14 A.T.S. girls, 7 S.A. nurses, and about half-a-dozen Italian girls who spoke perfect English. It was good fun, and good to be able to talk to a woman in English again. I attached myself to an A.T.S., and as the evening progressed, I decided from her features and her build that if she wasn't a Jewess then I'm Scotch. So I didn't say anything, but when she told me her name was "Hanah" I told her that mine was "Myer", and started to shoot a mad line that it originated from an old Hebrew word meaning "he who causes to shine", and I got no further than the word Hebrew when she said "Landsman", and I'd found another kindred spirit. She was a nice kid, and I must drop her a line. Incidentally, she was able to wish me "Good Yom-Tov". That had me beat, so she explained that it was Chanukah.

So all in all, I had a most successful holiday. And that's about all for now. It's 9 p.m. and there's coffee on the go, so I'll go and partake. Regards to all and Love to Dad, the Girls and Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.



December 1944. Florence

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
20/12/44 No. 129

Dear Mom,

Many thanks for your most welcome letter no GG received today. I'm pleased to hear that all at home are well & fit, & I too am in the pink, T.G. I also waited, for a change, for ten days without receiving letters from you or the girls, & it was only last night that I was saying that if there was no letter from you today, I'd "moan" about it. So I was very happy when your letter turned up.

I suppose Uncle Harry is in C.T. already. Rose tells me she's expecting to go down either on the 2<sup>nd</sup> or the 9<sup>th</sup> February. I'll see if I can get some leave so that I can be there at the same time (pardon the chuckles & mirth!)

I had a letter from your daughter-in-law Ida on Monday, & replied forthwith. She told me that she had cracked up & left the G.P.O., & that Miriam had spent the day with her the previous day.

I had a most pleasant surprise today - Postal Orders to the value of two guineas and a sixpence from my old cricket club in P.E. Damn fine of them, isn't it. Every year they put on some sort of show to raise funds for their absent members, & they always remember me - I only played for them for two seasons, so it's nice to know I've not been forgotten.

My old flame, Grace, from P.E. has arrived in Italy now, but she's stationed more than a couple of hundred miles from me, so I'm not likely to be seeing her in a hurry.

Thanks very much the photographs. I'm not sure whether you'll have kept a set for yourself or not, but just to play safe I'll send you an autographed set soon.

And that, dear folks, is about all for now, so I'll end with regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Tons of Love & Kisses, Your Loving Son, Myer.

(Inscription on back of letter-card reads: "I certify on my honour that the contents of this letter refer to nothing but private and family matters. M. Kramer")

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
23/12/44 No. 130

Dear Mom,

Just a few lines to let you know I'm still keeping well & fit, T.G., & hope all at home are well too. Our post didn't turn up yesterday, but it should be in tomorrow, with a big Xmas mail & with parcels too. So we're looking forward to it.

We awoke this morning to a light fall of snow. It snowed lightly all day, & we went for a walk this afternoon - there wasn't much snow on the ground then, but the ground was absolutely frozen. Up till now our road was a pool of mud, but today there's no mud - it's frozen hard. Then tonight it came on to snow a bit harder, & now there's quite a few inches on the ground. In the moonlight, the white world looks very pretty. It's a white Xmas all right.

I've just written to Aunts Beck & Lil, and, as it's too early to go to bed, I thought I'd write these few lines. Now, as there's no more to write about, I'll end with regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Chins up, Your Loving Son, Myer.

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No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
5·1·45 No. 133

Dear Mom,

Thanks muchly for your most welcome letter no. II received yesterday. I'm pleased to hear that all at home are well & fit, & I too am in the pink, T.G. There's just one point in your letter I must query - it concerns the watch I asked about. I don't know whom you asked about it, but I fail to see how it can be classed as export, & prohibited. As far as I know, and as far as I can reason, there's nothing to stop anybody sending presents to their sons in the army. Anyway, you should be able to find out all about it.

Snow is no longer something to write home about - it's become commonplace. We've had quite a bit of snow lately, the novelty has worn off, & it's a bit of a nuisance - it makes things difficult, driving, for instance.

I've just had another two parcels from my very good aunts Lily & Becky - just a minit! I mentioned those in my last letter - anyway, the point is that the parcels have been coming in so well that I've got my work cut out replying & thanking people for them. My mail is in rather a sad state once again - there's an Itie house I visit almost every night, with the result that my correspondence is neglected. Still, we pass very pleasant evenings at that place - they're very nice people.

Otherwise, Mom, there's little else to write about, so I'll end now with regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Chins up, Your Loving Son, Myer.

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No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
11·1·45 No. 134

Dear Mom,

Well, my correspondence has now reached a new low - looks like there's a conspiracy at work against me - everybody seems to have stopped writing. Every second day the post bloke still turns up with wonderful regularity, but me I draw a blank. For a week now I've had no letters - probably it's a judgment upon me for having written so little this last fortnight.

How's everybody at home? Fit & well, I trust, as this letter leaves me, T.G. The winter up here is cold, and I don't mean maybe. Fortunately my blood seems thicker than most, & I don't suffer half as badly as some of the chaps. I'm also lucky that my skin heals well, for quite a few boys have had this trouble that in this cold weather the slightest cut or sore turns infectious & festers, producing ugly scars. My hands heal very nicely. I believe the weather is pretty hot at home now - there seems to have been a bit of a heat wave - at Komati poort temperatures of 120° were recorded. Think of us up here - last night at nine-ish the temp. was 10 below zero (Centigrade) - that's about 18° Fahrenheit - which is cold in any language. And that's no exception - even during the day, with the sun shining, the thermometer seldom rises above freezing-point. But we're well-equipped - warm vests, jerkins, both leather and woollen, big kapok-coats, gloves, mittens, winter-caps with flaps that cover the ears, etc. We wear all our clothes by day, & put them all on our bed by night.

The boys are enjoying some wonderful winter-sports at the moment, but I've not yet been able to get myself a pair of skis. I've got a pair on order now, so soon I'll be able to take a couple of spills

myself too. Still, it seems to be good fun.

Otherwise, Mom, there seems to be nothing else to write about, so I'll end with regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

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No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F  
17·1·45 No. 136

Dear Mom,

Well, your son feels a new man today. The birds are singing the flowers are blooming & everything in the garden is lovely! Why the transformation, the sudden metamorphosis?! None other than the receipt today of your letter no JJ, & a letter from Gertrude. Also your snaps raised my morale a million - I think they're wonderful. You & Dad look good, (even if you refuse to smile for the dickie-bird), & judging by the "glamour" study of Gertrude, (& by her letter), I'm quite sure I won't recognize her. Liebe looks lovely, & as for Sylvia I just can't decide whether she's black from sunburn or whether there's a shadow over her face - I think it must be the latter. Anyway, the snaps were a lovely surprise, & I only wish they'd arrived sooner - I'm sorry if I sounded nasty in my last letter, but I'm afraid the strain of no news from home begins to tell. Oh yes! My eldest kid sister will be disappointed if I don't mention her in dispatches. I think she looks good - tell her to remind me to date her for a dance someday. And to complete the commentary, tell Alma I ask if anybody's ever told her how beautiful she is. So much for the snaps - the more the merrier. I'm not sure whether I told you that I had a snap taken in Florence, but it came out so "lously", that I'm not keen on distributing it. However, maybe I'll send it home in a moment of weakness.

We've had a wonderful day's fun today. My skis aren't ready yet, but our two Italian slaves made us a sleigh, & we had lots of fun tearing down the hillside - and walking up again. It's amazing the speed one attains on the way down - and the tumbles one has to take in the process. Still, it was good fun. Tomorrow I should get my skis, & then we can have yet more fun.

Yesterday John & I went down to that little village where we lived a little while back, where our little old lady cried when we left. The old lady was so happy to see us again - we got a great welcome from the whole village.

The kitchen is very quiet tonight - comparatively quiet anyway. There's only one spinning wheel on the go, & only twelve of us in the kitchen (and 3 kids). Johns' busy on his mouth-organ. Today's been a holiday for the Ites - the feast of St. Antony, the Patron saint of animals. The Ites have dozens of saints, & dozen of holidays for them - it's quite a racket.

Yesterday was quite a busy day for them - in the morning they killed a 400-pound pig, which they now proceed to conserve, & it probably lasts them a full year. That's the way it's done in this country. Nothing is wasted. They collect the blood, & stir it until it's cool, so that it doesn't congeal. Then they eat it fried. Seems disgusting to me.

And that's about all for now, so I'll end with regards to all, & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Chins up, Your Loving Son, Myer.

(Inscription on back of letter-card reads: "I certify on my honour that the contents of this letter refer to nothing but private and family matters. M. Kramer")

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F  
18·1·45

My Dearest Gertrude,

I'm afraid the sounds & sights that surround me are by no means conducive to letter-writing; I can scarce hear myself think - in fact, I'm not sure who's writing this letter - the handwriting look likes mine, so it must be me writing. The inevitable spinning-machines are whirring 120 revs to the minute, people are talking loudly to make themselves heard above the noise of the machines, & Ian is grinding out some tunes on a mouth organ, to the accompaniment of those of the boys who are harmonising - in discord. Occasionally I too lend my melodious voice to the brawl - then there's so much noise I can't hear my pen scratch. However, I'm prepared to give it a go.

Many thanks for you two letters received on the 26<sup>th</sup> ult & yesterday resp.. I don't want you to get swollen headed, but I must give you credit for your letters - you write well and the impression that your letter gives of a grown up young lady is amply born out by your "glamour" photograph. Now I'm looking forward to the other snaps you wrote of, so don't keep me waiting too long.

So you're still faithful to your old boy-friend Freddy! Nice work! The old school-tie an' all that. Yes, it would be very interesting to see the Magazine occasionally. Two of my signaller friends are from Bishops & Rondebosh Boys High respectively, & we have much fun & arguments about the old days of the triangular contests.

We made ourselves a new sleigh today - a super-huper-high-speed-model - today's model is to yesterday's one what the Spitfire is to the old Ford "Tin-Lizzy". I came shooting down the hillside today, completely out of control, & landed up at the colonel's feet. He laughed hilariously at my sudden and ungraceful stop, but when I proffered him the sleigh & suggested that he give it a go, he laughed & shook his head. I still didn't get my skis today - they've been promised for tomorrow - I'm beginning to think tomorrow never comes.

I think I've made the same "strategic" error as you - I commenced by writing too small (also bad grammar, but I've left school - I need no longer worry about grammar). Well, I've been at this letter two hours now, & it's almost ten o'clock - time all good soldiers (who me? - yes you!) were in bed - that let's me out.

Well, my love, the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak, so I'll have to end now. Before I forget, pardon my scrawl - it's the only handwriting I know.

Regards to all, Love to Mom & Dad, the Sisters & Yourself, Tons of Love & Kisses, Your Loving Brother, Myer.

(Inscription on back of letter-card reads: "I certify on my honour that the contents of this letter refer to nothing but private and family matters. M. Kramer")

No. 329491(V)  
L/Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
19·1·45 No. 137

Dear Mom,

Many thanks for your most welcome letter KK received today. That's the way I like the mail to roll in - one letter every two days, rather than every two weeks. I'm glad to hear that all at home are well - I too am in the pink, T.G.

This morning we awoke to a howling wind that took me back to the old days of the south-easter of C.T. and P.E. With the wind came rain, and a bit of a thaw set in, so that the roads and paths have turned to quagmires. Our toboggan-run has turned soft too, so there was no fun and games today. However, during the afternoon the wind stopped, and the sun came out, so, if there's a freeze-up tonight the toboggan-experts will be performing in a big way tomorrow. If only we could find some other way to come to a nice gently stop at the end of the run - at the moment the only way we can stop is by baleing off the toboggan - or by running into a convenient snow-bank or tree - like Aunty Beck's early attempt at driving the old Rover - remember Zadie's car?

Tonight the boys have got the cards out, and a game of bridge is in progress. At the same time, the inevitable machines are in progress, but worst of all is old Eric (one of the new chaps) shouting above the noise of the machines, teaching the Ities English. That's the worst of the lot.

I don't know if I mentioned that Rex Watling has also left us now - he went to hospital with an appendix. Our party has been split up now - all that remains of the dozen of us who started off together in Potch and Barberton as surveyors, are John Bartleet, Ian and myself - the last of the Mohicans. I've just heard from Gordon Miskin that our ex-sergeant, Alan Warren, is now a 2/Lieut in Pretoria.

I'll see what I can do about coinciding my leave with Rose's - if it's not this year, then it'll be next year, P.G. I'll go and speak to the General in the morning.

I don't want to blow my own trumpet, but this is the third letter home in three nights. Not bad going, what?! Trouble is, even tho' I'm staying at home every night now, the atmosphere is not very conducive to letter-writing, and I don't seem to be able to do more than one a night, and that takes me all night. Still, I'm making up slowly for lost time.

Otherwise, there's little else to write of now, so I'll end with regards to all and Love to Dad, the Girls and Yourself, Chins up, Your Loving Son, Myer.

(Inscription on back of letter-card reads: "I certify on my honour that the contents of this letter refer to nothing but private and family matters. M. Kramer")

No. 329491(V)  
Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
29-145 No. 139

Dear Mom,

Many thanks for your most welcome letter no. LL received today. I'm pleased to hear that all at home are well, & I too am in the pink, T.G.

Yesterday I went across-country again to visit my old Itie friends - we went on a tobogganing picnic. We had a run over 300 yards long, & it was good fun. After the recent snow & subsequent freeze-up, the snow, or ice, is hard & fast, & if you come off the toboggan, you slide on your back for 20 or 30 yards before stopping. It's probably rough on one's clothes, but I've got a good man paying my accounts, so he can worry.

We've got a new Jewish Div Padre now, who took over from Padre Hickman. He is Padre Ernst, a fine chap, who came up today to meet the boys - he got us all gathered together at one of the batteries. He'll be holding a service on Sunday afternoon, in a nearby village. I'll attend if possible.

I had a letter from Aunty Beck two days ago, & one from Rose today. They're all well, & of course Rose will be in C.T. by the time you get this. Beck mentions that she too may be coming to C.T. one of these days. I also had a letter from Wolfe today; his brother Sammy, who travelled up on the same ship from S.A. to Egypt, is already back home - he has been recalled by the Service. Wolfe says that the Service is already calling back chaps in order of their enlistment, so that when

demob. really begins there'll be so many men less to worry about.

I've not heard from Gerry, Harold or Rex for some time. Did I tell you that John Veitch, who was transferred from us, has also got his second stripe - it seems catchy.

Otherwise there seems to be little else to write of, so I'll end now with regards to all, & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Chins up, Your Loving Son, Myer.

(Inscription on back of letter-card reads: "I certify on my honour that the contents of this letter refer to nothing but private and family matters. M. Kramer")

No. 329491(V)  
Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
2/2/45 No. 140

Dear Mom,

Here's the kind of letter you became accustomed to receiving at one time, but which I've not had to write for a long time now. To come down to brass tacks, I need money. I had the opportunity of going on leave in two days' time, but had to turn it down, as I haven't the necessary boodle. Do you think my P.O. account will stand a with-drawal of £10. If so, please do the necessary, & send it up as soon as possible, as I'd hate to slip up on my leave.

Now that's no way at all to start a letter, is it? I'm ashamed of myself; I haven't even been subtle, & led up to the subject. I think fighting this war I've forgotten how to be subtle. Subtly (the spelling may or may not be correct - another thing I've forgotten in the army) gets one nowhere in this army; the direct approach is the thing.

Anyway, how's everybody keeping? Today's been a sad day - very little mail in general, & none at all for me in particular. However, the last few mail-days have treated me well, & I'm well behind with my mail, so I can't grumble. Anyway, I'm catching up on my mail now - this is my fourth letter today, & as my duties as guard-commander require me to be awake until mid-night tonight, I should get some more letters done then.

I had a good parcel-post yesterday. Parcels from Lil, Rose, & Wolfe, & in addition a parcel from Lil containing a jersey & a pair of socks. Rose had given her the jersey to send to me. It's polo-neck, with a zip - real "civvy" version - am I proud of it?! Then there were some Arguses or Argi, as the case may be, from you, & a parcel of books from ex-nurse Gillman, my old nurse from Middelburg hospital. She & I still correspond regularly; apart from the family & my pen-friend in Scotland, she's the only one lass who's kept writing to me all this time. She's a good kid.

Iris, an old pal of mine in Joburg, tells me she's just come back from leave in C.T. & she bumped into Gerry one day on Wynberg station. I take it he's an outpatient at one of the mil. hosp. I've not heard from him for two months - I take a jagged view of him. Meanwhile a packet of 1000 cigs sent by his mom has turned up here; it's addressed to me on behalf of the L/Bdrs. of R.H.Q., to be shared between them. The irony of it is that I no longer qualify for a share - it's a hard world.

And that, dear Mom, is all for now, so I'll end with regards to all, & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Chins up, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
9/2/45

My Dearest Mom & Dad,



A little birdie whispers that it's your silver wedding anniversary this month. Unfortunately, this little birdie spoke very indistinctly, so I didn't hear exactly what date. But still, whether a bit early, late, or right on time, here's heartiest congratulations on the occasion, and, by the Grace of God, may we all be together for your Golden Anniversary. I'm really sorry I'm absent for the Silver celebration, but we'll make up for it when I get back.

May God continue to bless you with good health and a long life, Your Ever Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
18/2/45 No. 144

Dear Mom,

Many thanks for your most welcome letter no. OO received today. With it I received a letter containing snaps from Miriam; on Wednesday I received a letter from Edie, so all in all, I'm not doing badly. That historic letter of mine, no 135, certainly has born fruit - what I now feel bad about is that the boot is now on the other foot, for I've now not written for a week. However, please forgive me; I've been rather unsettled during that period, but now I'm back to normal.

I'm glad to hear that all at home are well; I too am in the pink, T.G.

Those snaps I received today knocked me cold. The first ones I saw were those of Gertrude. I looked at the first one, & thought "Well, maybe this is Gert" (it was the one taken in our garden), but I couldn't be sure. So I read the back, and, yes, it was Gert. Then I looked at the one of herself at Muizenberg & I thought, "Well, this one I definitely don't recognize. They can't tell me this is also Gert." But apparently it was. Well, I just don't know. I can honestly say I don't recognise her on those three snaps. Edie & Miriam look good too, but they at least I can recognize. All in all, the snaps are very good, & I was very happy to receive them.

The weather round these parts has turned good these days - we even turned out in shorts yesterday - very white around the knees. We're beginning to find a bit of greens again, & we're enjoying it no end. We've had quite a bit of spinach & cauliflower these last few days.

I didn't know that Steve Kirsten had gone home, but I've just asked another of the chaps here, & he tells me he knows all about it.

Otherwise there seems to be little else to write of now, so I'll end with regards to all, & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Chins up, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
23·2·45 No. 145

Dear Mom,

Well, I'm afraid I've got to start off with excuses again, but this time I've got a real "bonzo"

excuse - it's absolutely water-tight. You know how suddenly things happen in the army. On Monday morning I was rudely awakened at 8.45 a.m. (fancy rousing a man at that time of the morning!!) and told that if I wanted to go on leave, I had to be ready by 10 a.m. Well, I was out of bed as if I'd been bitten, & by shortly after 10 we were on our way, & we've just come back.

I spent a very enjoyable leave in Florence. Once again I went with John Gouws, but this time we spent rather a quieter leave than last time. We didn't live "out" this time, but lived at the regimental rest-house. However, we did go & look up the Jewish lady with whom we lived last time. She's a most vivacious character, & all but clapped her hands in child-like ecstasy at seeing us again. We used to go into town by duty-bus after each meal, & be picked up in time for each meal. We used to go into town after supper, & be picked up at 10 p.m. John & I hit the opera in a big way this time. We went every afternoon and saw "Tosca", "Aida", & "Madame Butterfly". The shows were presented by two good companies; in each case the artistes were really excellent. The scenery and settings leave one stunned. As for the music, of course, there's nothing that I can write about that hasn't been written by better authorities than myself. I tramped Florence flat trying to buy the books of each of the opera's, but I couldn't find one - it seems they're printed in Milan, so I'll have to wait till we get to Milan to buy them.

We had a most successful dance at the rest-house last night. I haven't enjoyed a dance like that for ages. Apart from that, we went to bio one night & saw "It Happened Tomorrow". Otherwise our leave there was uneventful, but we enjoyed ourselves immensely.

I'm enclosing the snap arrived. How do you like moustache. It kept me winter, but when I got to decided to cut it off, next morning. The result photograph.

I think the best part of getting back to camp awaiting me. Thanks very welcome letter no. today. I'm sorry Miriam suitable for a present; if going to Florence, I'd see if I could buy you, I still think prices are However, I do hope something suitable.

I received another which I thank her ever so behind with my hope to be able to write to her soon. I don't think she should get a swollen head if I tell her she writes a very good letter - she gives me good competition. (Now who's showing a swollen head.)

I had a letter from Lil today from her South Coast resort. She said she had written to you from there too.

Believe it or not, but this letter has taken me 2½ hours so far. I'm writing in the kitchen, & all the boys have been here, & we've had so many stories to tell one another that one would have imagined we hadn't seen one another for 4 years, instead of 4 days. Now that they've all gone to bed, I can think of no more to write, so I'll follow suit.

Kindest regards to all, & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Chins up, Your Loving Son, Myer.



I had taken as soon as I my "Appenine" warm during the severe Florence & civilisation, I which I did first thing will be evident in my next

my whole leave was today & finding 4 letters much for your very (unnumbered) received couldn't find anything I'd known that I was have waited perhaps to something there; mind far too high there. you've bought yourself

letter from Edie today, for much. I'm really far correspondence now, but I

No. 329491(V)  
Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F  
27·2·45 No. 146

Dear Mom,

Many thanks for your most welcome letter no. 146 received day-for-yester. Very pleased to hear that all at home are well, & I too am in the pink, T.G. What a mail I had that day - quite like old times! No less than 8 letter-cards, which included two from Wolfie, two from Miriam, one from you, one from Lil, from Rose, & from Essie, my old nurse from M'burg - apart from the family she's the only girl who still loves me, despite everything. Anyway, I can't grumble about my sisters now - they've simply snowed me under with letters; if only I could reply letter for letter. Thank Miriam very much for her letter.

I had a letter from Gerry yesterday, written a day or two after his op. He said it was quite successful, & that his arm too was out of plaster, & mending well.

Heaven alone knows why I've been writing so small. I haven't much to write of, & at that rate I wouldn't even fill a page.

Roses's letter to me was from Mulders Vlei, & Leah added a few lines to the letter. Lil's of course was from the seaside.

We had a bit of a party last night. It was a bit difficult to find something to celebrate. We could think of nobody who was having a birthday, so, next best thing, I remembered that yesterday Liebe was 3 years 11 months old. Johny Bartleet, Johny Gouws & myself finally went to bed at 2.30 a.m., after having cooked ourselves a real "tops" midnight-meal-a-la-Italiano:- Vienna sausages and fried eggs. Definitely a good time had by all.

The house we're living in now is the home of a very pleasant couple & their daughter. Their son and son-in-law were carried away by the Germans. The old lady has a hell of a job playing mother to nine big ugly helpless surveyors. We can't do a thing for ourselves; we start off by trying to make a meal, & next thing we know we're watching her cook. She does all our cooking, washing up, cleans up our rooms & all. She washes & mends our clothes too. Two days ago she told me to change my shirt as it was dirty & torn. I explained that I'm doing a lot of work on & under the jeep these days, & I didn't want to change the shirt. This morning the daughter said the same thing, & the old lady said "I told you so yesterday", & next thing I knew I was standing in my vest. I asked her how we could pay her for all the washing she does for us, but she says that she does it for a pastime. She says she used to sit all day looking for work, thinking of her sons & feeling miserable. Now, she says, the days fly past pleasantly, & she has less time to feel sorry for herself. So everybody's happy.

And that, Mom, seems to be about all for now. Regards to all, & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Chins up, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F  
28·2·45 No. 147

Dear Mom,

Just a few lines to let you know that I'm still keeping well & fit, T.G. & to thank you for the Postal Orders which arrived today. I was expecting to be called all sorts of a mug, so your letter didn't shake me.

The mail is very good these days; there seems to be mail every day, & I usually manage to click

at least one; trouble is that my writing's not so good, & I don't write half as much as I should. I've slipped up most badly with Rose, two whom I've not written for over a fortnight. I really must get a letter to her done tonight.

Well, Mom, I'm afraid this is a flop - I just can't possibly find anything else to write of, so I'll end now with love to all, & all my love to Dad, the Gals & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt.  
S.A.A. U.D.F. C.M.F.  
20/3/45 No. 152

Dear Mom,

There's not much to write about, beyond the fact that I'm still keeping well and fit, T.G. and hope to hear the same from you. We had a game of soccer today, the first after many months, and I'm not even feeling stiff yet. What's more, we're playing another game tomorrow, so that'll wear off any stiffness that may creep up on me overnight.

Here's some news that will make you think! I'm going to Florence on Friday on 4 days' leave again. Not doing too badly, what?!? I'm glad that I'll be able to see something of old Grace, and I'll be able to take her to our dance on the last night. What fun that'll be!

I don't want to wax sentimental, Mom, but I thought I'd remind you that I haven't forgotten that tonight is exactly two years since I said cheerio at Monument Station. I pray to God that before another year is past, we'll all be together in Camden Road.

I feel horrible about not having wished Liebe a happy birthday, and many happy returns, and for not having sent her a present. As far as the first part goes, I meant to write her a letter, like last year, but I'm afraid I never got as far; as for the present, I must own that my financial status is practically non-existent - I must soon declare myself insolvent. However, better late than never, so tell Liebe that that terrible big brother of hers hasn't forgotten her, and says "Happy Birthday, and many happy returns of the 26<sup>th</sup> March, and give her a huge kiss for me.

And that, gentlemen, concludes the business on tonight's agenda.

Regards to all, and Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

P.S. I'll probably write again before going on leave, but if you don't hear from me for a week, you'll know the reason why. Love, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
22·3·45 No. 153

My Dear Mom,

Many thanks for your most welcome letter no. WW received today. Pleased to hear that all at home are well & fit, T.G., & I too am in the pink, T.G. Thank Gertrude for her letter received today too. She really writes very well. I promise that when I get back from leave I'll get stuck-in to catching up with all the correspondence I owe my sisters - I take a very dim view of myself for not having written to them for so long.

Glad you appreciated my "mountain moustache". It served its purpose - kept my head warm during winter.

So you've joined the glasses brigade! Mine have become almost white elephants - I scarcely use them these days.

I translated into Italian & read to the old lady the part of your letter about the Itie people & how you feel about my having this family to put me right sometimes. She was very pleased & said she only hoped I was still here when the war ends. Actually, I think you misunderstood what I wrote about that "dirty & torn" shirt - that's not army life! I thought I'd explained that it was a shirt that I kept specially for crawling around under the jeep.

Well, tomorrow I go to Florence, so you'll be hearing from me in a week's time. In the meantime, regards to all, & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Chins up, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F  
8/4/45 No. 156

Dear Mom,

Many thanks for your most welcome letter of the 22<sup>nd</sup> ult. received yesterday. Pleased to hear that all at home are well & fit, T.G.; what happened to Edie's German measles? Weren't they? I myself am in the pink for which all praises be!

All our mail from home is full of the same stories - namely that the Div. is on its way home. I suppose that by now those rumours have died a natural death. It's a pity they weren't true, but still, the way the war is moving these days, it shouldn't be long now. I had a letter from Lil the other day; she'd been to a fortune-teller who told her she'd be seeing me soon. So one can but hope.

I also saw that "Sakkie" Katzenellenbogen had been released, & I hear from Wolfie that he's already made a trip to Palestine while he was in the M.E. awaiting a ship or plane or sumpin'. I see they've now announced the further release of another 4000 P.O.W.'s by the Russians.

While in Florence I bumped into a chappie Anstey (originally Antorsorsky) of Bellville. He was actually at school with Jack, but I knew him too. It was a surprise seeing him. He left University in June to come up to the Div.

We've advanced our clocks one hour again, so we have long long days. It's now light from sixish in the morning until after eight at night. We still eat at six, so by the time I go to bed I'm usually hungry again.

My correspondence is in a ghastly condition. This is exactly the second letter I've written this month, & they've both been to you. I had a letter from Gert & Liebe yesterday, for which I thank her muchly. Tell the girls I've now got as far as addressing four lettercards to the four of them - all that remains now is to write the letters - only a matter of months now.

Well, & that seems to be about all for now. I must try to get off letters to Rose & Lil. I don't know how often I've sat down to write to cousin Jane in U.S.A., but I've just not got as far.

Regards to all, & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Chins up, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F  
16/4/45 No. 158

Dear Mom,

Many thanks for your most welcome letter of the 29<sup>th</sup> March received two days ago. I'm pleased to hear that all at home are well & fit, & too am in the pink, T.G. You don't have to worry about what's going to happen when the war in Europe ends - I've forgotten how to sign my name on dotted lines.

I had a very interesting encounter today. I'd been up a hillside doing a survey, & on the way

down I encountered another chap going up. I'd notice him earlier, & thought he looked familiar, but I hadn't spoken to him. So when he crossed my path a second time, I stopped him & asked him his name, & my guess had been right - he was Arthur Crooks, who lived in Maitland about 12 years ago, & went to school with me. You must remember his people. He tells me he was wounded just before Florence, & has only just come out of hospital, after seven months. Another old M.P.S. school-pal whom I meet occasionally is Walter Schietekat.

Remember I told you that Harold Hudson went to hospital with hernia, & that his operation was successful & he was now back in Reserves. Well, in a letter from him two days ago, he tells me that the hernia has recurred, & he's got to go under the knife again. Not very pleasant.

Today is exactly two years since I went on board the ship that took me to Egypt. I can still visualize the outline of that Union port receding in the distance. Let's hope that we'll soon see Table Mountain hoving (or heaving) into sight.

Otherwise, there's nought else to write of. I'm tired, & must get to bed.

Regards to all, & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Chins up, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Field Regt. S.A.A.  
21/4/45 No. 159

Dear Mom,

Many thanks for your most welcome letter no. A1 (third series) received day-for-yesterday. Sorry I didn't reply immediately, but we've been kinda busy. I suppose you know more about it all than I can tell you - myself I'd like to see what the papers are writing these days - it should be quite interesting.

I'm glad you liked the photo of Johnie & myself - I myself wasn't thrilled with it, but then who am I to judge.

So I see the service has paid you my back pay since Oct. 1<sup>st</sup> last. I'm surprised my promotion hasn't figured in the cheque yet, but then these things usually take a long time. One of these days you'll get an increase in military allotment, & a corresponding decrease in the Civil Service cheque.

I didn't know Barney Seidle got married. Whom did he marry? It came as a terrific surprise to me.

On the question of money, I borrowed £10 for my last leave. However, don't worry about sending me any money, as I've still got some of that money to carry on with, & I hope to be able to repay my debts out of my paybook. Don't worry! When I need money I won't be shy to ask for it.

Otherwise, Mom, there's little else to write of, so I'll close now with regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Chins up & Trust to God, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F  
15/5/44 No.

Dear Mom,

Many thanks for your most welcome letter no. C, received yesterday. I'm pleased to hear that all at home are well & fit, & I too am in the pink, T.G. In your letter you apologize for not having written to me for two weeks, & the same almost holds good for me. However, I've written to four of my sisters during the last week or two, so you'll have heard all about me.

I've been sitting in the jeep all morning cursing my lack of foresight in not having brought letter-

cards with me, & now, at about 3 p.m., after 4 hours of trying to read or sleep & fighting a losing battle against flies, I found this writing-pad under the passengers seat. So pardon the scrawl, as I'm writing on the steering-wheel, & have no support for my wrist.

Last Saturday John & I deserted our pub, & went on a day trip to Como, on Lake Como, in the Alps. In peace-time Lake Como is the Italian Riviera, & is the holiday resort of millionaires - it is only about 5 miles off the Swiss-Italian border. Set in between the rugged Alpine heights, the scenery is quite the most impressive I've seen in this country or any other.

A day in Como was almost like a day in any town at home. Nothing was out of bounds; we could walk along, have a cold drink at a restaurant, go into a café for lunch. As you've probably guessed, John & I spent most of our time there rowing on the lake. We even persuaded two Italian signorinas to join us, so during the morning we had pleasant company on the lake. It was quite like old times.

When we returned to camp in the evening we heard the wonderful news that our regt was moving to that area. But first there was another job to be done - a grand march-past of the Div. on Monday afternoon, when Mr Sturrock would take the salute. So on Sunday morning we drove out to the race-track on which the march-past was to take place, took up our positions, & starting polishing our vehicles till they shone. And then we just sat & waited. When you see photo's or films of that review, just think of the 36 hours previous spent in just waiting - sitting around, doing nothing, scared to breathe too near the jeep in case we blew some dust onto it. So that's how parades go.

Then came, at long last, the march past, & from there we drove straight out to our new "possie" on Lake Como. Our billet is right on the Lake - we fall out of bed into the water.

Unfortunately, I haven't been able to make the most of it, 'cos both today & yesterday I've been out with the Adjutant, but in the evenings I take a late swim, & go rowing for an hour or two.

Yesterday I brought the Adjutant down from the Lake to the position we had just evacuated. He had some business to attend to, & so did I, so I dropped him & went off to do one or two errands for two officers, & the buying of booze for my pub. The one errand took me to a photographer's, where I was served by such a lovely lass that I spent about two hours there, ending up finally behind the counter interpreting for her with all the soldiers who came in. The next errand took me to Milan. Now Milan is strictly out of bounds & off limits, but, knowing that I had good backing behind me, I chanced my arm, got into the town, drove around & found the place I was looking for, & finally got out too, without being molested



May '45. Boating on Lake Como



John & I at sea

by anybody. Then I went & bought my liquor, & got back to Adj. at 3 p.m. So all in all, I had quite a good day.

Now today I again brought the Adj. down here, but the difference is that today I had no business to do, & the Adj. expected to finish his by mid-day. So when I dropped him at 9.15, I chanced my arm with him & said I had to go into a nearby town to do some more buying, & would pick him up at 11. So I went & spent another hour with my photographer-girl-friend, & came back at 11. And I've sat twiddling my thumbs ever since. Now I'm looking forward to getting back to the Lake for my evening swim and row.

So much for my activities.

As far as pursuing the war in other theatres is concerned, you can settle yourself & count me out. As you know, by the last oath we signed, we can actually be sent anywhere, but if they want me to go anywhere else now, they'll have to send me - I'm not volunteering. As you know, quite apart from the probability of sending men to the Far East, a lot of men are required to assist administratively in the demobilisation itself. Well, there are no doubt lots of chaps in whose interests it is to stay in the army as long as possible. So those are the chaps who will assist in the demobbing. Well, in order to let those chaps identify themselves, they have printed a form headed "Application for Extended Service". I have not applied, as it is in my interests to get back into Civvies as soon as possible. So that should settle all your doubts on that subject.

I saw Dick de Villiers at the parade on Sunday, & he too is in a hurry to get home. He has this advantage over me, that he is in 'A' group, while I am only in 'G'. However, as the Afrikaans has it, "agter-os kom ook in die kraal".

Otherwise, there seems to be nothing else to write of now. I'm hoping to get away back to camp in a few minutes, & from there I might find something else to write of. In the meantime, regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls, & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
20/5/44

the G-men in about 3 or 4 months' time. I'm pretty certain that we'll all celebrate Sylvia's birthday together. I gave a letter to one of the A's who left day-for-yester, so perhaps he'll come & look you up.

And that, kid, is about all for now.

Oh yes! Thank Mom for letters C, & D. received yesterday. I'll be writing again shortly.  
Love to Mom, Dad & all the Girls, Yours, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
30/5/44 No. 164

My Dearest Mom,

Well, here's your loving son again, after an erring lapse of ten days. Sorry I've not written for so long, but it's been pressure not so much of work as of amusements & entertainments. Anyway, you'll know I'm keeping well & fit, T.G. & with the end of the war, all our worries are over.

We're no longer at the Lake. We moved some days ago, & we're now in a decent-sized town near Milan again. Actually, I'm kept pretty busy all day organizing with the pub one thing &

another, but it's no fatigue, & the days don't pass but literally fly by very pleasantly. At nights John Bartleet & I are on duty in the pub from 5 to 10 p.m., but we take alternate nights off, and in addition we're able to go out after 10; so we're quite well organised.

We're living in a large villa in this town, & it's quite a good period of rehabilitation you might almost call it. We're getting used to electric light, running water, the privacy of the bathroom and lavatory - even getting used to pulling the chain once more. At first it felt horribly strange to go to the lavatory & have nobody to talk to.

We can walk out almost any time we like, & it's quite like old times being able to go at will into restaurants, cafes & bioscopes. The young lady who owns & runs the distillery at which I buy is a very capable woman & rather a sweet character, & it was good fun being able to phone her last night. You see, our villa is on the "civvy" phone, apart from our army lines, so I phoned her last night for a chat. That was really like old times. My Italian of course is now almost word-perfect. Not only have I a good vocabulary, but my grammar & pronunciation don't leave much to be desired. So much so, that I often start a line to the Ites that I was born in Sicily, went to S.A. at an early age, & then they say, "Yes, that's why you speak so well. You can see there's Italian blood in you."

John B. & I went into Milan the other day on duty. We went in my jeep, the original "Germy Jo", & it let me down for the first time in a year. As we stopped outside the cathedral in Milan, the clutch gave in. So there we sat. We went to the Post Office & tried to book a trunk-call to the regiment, but at that stage our villa wasn't connected up on the civvy line yet, so it was no soap. So I spent 4 hours on the streets, & finally got fixed up by some pals of mine, mechanics, who just happened to be in Milan on day-leave. In the meantime, picture the scene. The jeep broken down on the main square of Milan. As luck would have it, that afternoon there was a service on for the mass burial of some Partisans who had been killed, so the square was thronged. And there was I, under the jeep, just my legs protruding; then I'd come out, full of dust, street-dirt, oil, black all over, work above the jeep, then under again. Then when the coffins went past, & people wanted a better view, they flooded the jeep. They stood on the engine, the wind-screen, everything. I tried to control them, but as I chased one the next one appeared. In any case, what man can have the heart to keep chasing away beautiful women. I give up.

I'm enclosing some snaps from Lake Como. They came out quite well. There'll be more following. I'm also enclosing some dating back from June last year to December.

And that's about all for now. Regards to all, & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

P.S. Is Dad laying-in a supply of liquor for my return celebrations. Tell Dad we'll be able to have a wonderful time indulging in his old sport of making his friends drunk. Love, Myer.



Mandello, May '45.

John Bartleet, John Gous, our hostess & myself



*This was taken at the fun-fair. They have a stall where for threepence you get a gun & 3 pellets. If you hit the bull, a camera automatically takes a shot of you. So there you see me in my war-paint, with John looking on.*

May 45

No. 329491(V)  
Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F  
5/6/45 No. 165

Dear Mom,

Here's your son again, and this letter comes to you from the reception-desk of the "Albergo Grande" at Tremezzo on Lake Como. No, wait a minute, that's a bit of an abrupt introduction. Let's tell you how it all happened, slowly & in good order.

When I wrote to you on the 30<sup>th</sup>, I think I told you that I was expecting to go to Milan for the day on the 31<sup>st</sup>, & to Mandello (on Lake Como) for six days' leave from the 1<sup>st</sup>. Well, I went to Milan, & spent a very good day there. I saw the Cathedral, within & without, & it's an unbelievable piece of work. The interior is almost completely in marble, doors of bronze weighing tons & tons & worth millions. There is a sculpture of the Saint of Martyrdom - it's the figure of a man with his skin removed & every muscle & sinew exposed - what a piece of work. Then we went to the cemetery - it's not an ordinary cemetery. On almost every grave, a monument, not a tombstone, has been erected. There's no chance of those people getting up & walking away.

I returned from Milan at 9, & was greeted with a message that I was wanted in the Orderly Room. Well, I thought nothing of that, for I supposed they wanted me to draw pay for my leave. Instead of which I was told: "Pack your kit, be ready to move tomorrow morning at 0830, you're going to help in the establishment & management of an Officers' leave hotel at Tremezzo." Well, I was shaken. At that stage I'd not even heard of Tremezzo; I didn't know whether to be pleased or not, but before I could even think of turning it down, the clerk continued. "You haven't much choice, as the Colonel has recommended you personally." So that was that!

Well, next day I was taken to the hotel, & found that there were about 8 of us in the same position, drawn from all the Arty. Regts. The officer in charge of us gave us the dope. The hotel had to be ready as a Rest Hotel for Div. Officers by the 4<sup>th</sup>. We are here in a supervisory & managing role. The hotel proprietor is here, & all his staff of waiters, stewards, chefs, etc, about 50 in all. It's a large hotel, very frequented by all nationalities in peace time, & in a lovely part of the world. It has over a hundred bedrooms, & a capacity of 150 guests.

Well, by yesterday we had done all the necessary organisation to change the hotel from one which was good enough to one which is the best, & by yesterday the officers started arriving on leave. At the moment I'm assistant bookkeeper, and share in the duties at the reception-desk. Although we've been on the lake five days, I've not yet had a swim or a rowing-boat, but in a few days' time, when we get settled down & functioning smoothly, I hope to get at least one day in 3 off duty, which is quite sufficient considering that I'll probably be here until my turn comes to catch a ship or 'plane home.

In the meantime, imagine the life we're living. We're living in the hotel, two in a room. The room is well-furnished, wardrobes built in, dressing-tables, wash-basin with hot & cold water laid on. The only complaint I can think of is that while each bed has two mattresses, only one mattresses on each bed is a Vi-Spring. We eat in a "staff" dining-room, served by two waitresses. Our clothes are laundered by the hotel laundry, at no cost. It's all rather unbelievable - I'm sure I'll wake up & find it's all a dream. I'm going even one step nearer to civvy-street now, by having the iron horse-shoes removed from my boots, & rubber heels replaced.

Thank Miriam very much for her Victory letter. Now she'll understand why I had to dash off such a hurried note to her the other day. The only thing we're uncertain about at the hotel is mail. We'll be able to get letters away regularly enough, but we don't know how regularly mail will be forwarded from our various regiments.

I'm enclosing some more snaps. For the most part they speak for themselves. I still have three spools in the process of being developed, & I'm hoping to get them soon.

And that seems to be about all for now, so I'll end with regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
15/6/45

My Dearest Gert,

I really did mean to write to you a couple of days ago, but somehow, what with one thing & another, I just didn't ever get as far. Even this evening, for example, when I'm on duty from 6 pm to 11 pm, I took out this card at 6 to start writing to you, & now it's already 10.30, & I've only just started.

Today was marked by the receipt of the first mail in a fortnight. I received three letters, but unfortunately none from home; they were from Cousin Rose, my friend Ida Borok, & my girl-friend in Scotland. However, I'm quite satisfied that now that letters have started arriving at the hotel, they'll be arriving more regularly in future.

Now that we're becoming settled-down here, & the hotel is running smoothly, my duties have resolved themselves into 5 hours daily at the reception-desk. There are three of us, & we work three shifts daily from 8 am to 1pm, then 1-6, and 6-11, alternating daily. During our off-hours, there is occasionally the little odd job to be done, but that doesn't last long, & these last two or three days I've done a good amount of swimming, rowing, motor-boating, and aquaplaning. In addition, three of us have started taking an early-morning swim at 0630 hours. At the moment we're putting on a brave face, & pretending that we like it, but it does make one feel good, & we'll soon get used to it. We have a quick dip, & then hurry back to our rooms, where I climb into the still-warm bed & enjoy five minutes of "thawing-out", aided by the cup of early-morning coffee which is delivered at 7 o'clock.

About one mile from the hotel is the Divisional "School of Religion". Chaps of the various denominations are sent there "on course" for 5 or 6 days, during which they have services,

discussions & debates etc. The Jewish course started on Tuesday & ends tomorrow. I've seen the Padre & one or two of the boys, but I wasn't able to go Shul tonight. However, I've been able to fix it so that I'm free tomorrow morning, so I'll be able to go to Shul.

Now, while space still permits, let's get down to brass tacks. Here's wishing you a very Happy Birthday, & Many many happy Returns of the 25<sup>th</sup>, & P.G., may we spend the next one together. You're growing into a big girl now; I still have trouble trying to reconcile those photographs you sent me from Muizenberg with my sister Gerty whom I know. I'm sure you're pulling a fast one on me.

And that, my love, is all for now. Keep well, Love to Mom & Dad & the other girls, Your Loving Brother, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
5/7/45 No. 169

My Dearest Mom,

Many thanks for your most welcome letter of the 13<sup>th</sup> June received day-'for-yester. It took some time to reach me 'cos it had chased me to Tremezzo & then back here. I'm pleased to hear that all at home are well, & I too am in the pink, T.G. I've settled down to my job, & it's not half as bad as I thought it would be. I envisaged being tied up in office all day every day, but it's not as bad as all that. In fact, it's quite reminiscent of my old days in the Service, & probably good training for my rehabilitation.

Last Saturday afternoon, at the last moment, I heard of an officer going to Mandello, so I asked for a lift & got it. So Hector and I spent the week-end with our friends, the Bianchi's. On Saturday night we danced, & at 1 a.m., when the moon came out, we swam, & then continued dancing until 2.30 a.m. Sunday morning. We slept most of the morning, & in the pm., we danced & then swam, & at 6 p.m. we left for camp. A most pleasant week-end.

Our friends, the Bianchi's, work & live in Milan during the week, & only go to Mandello for week-ends. On Saturday night I met two very nice girls at their place who also live in Milan during the week, so on Tuesday night I went to Milan & took them dancing, & had a very enjoyable evening. Tomorrow night Andrew & I are taking the whole crowd, the Bianchi's & these girls, to bio in Milan.

The evacuation of the boys homeward bound is going very nicely. As far as the Gunners go, chaps in E & F categories are on their way already; with N.C.O.'s, however, we've only just finished the B's & started on C, & there's a hell of a lot of N.C.O.'s in that category. So that I'm still expecting that it'll be two months before they get to G group N.C.O.'s, and then, as I've been absorbed into the office, they'll probably tell me I've got to hang on a while. But that won't mean more than an extra week or two. So we must just have patience.

Thank the girls for their letters received on Monday. They were very welcome, & I'll reply, in my usual manner, "shortly"; as a matter of fact, I've already addressed an envelope to Edie, so she should hear from me in the next month or two.

After experiencing Milan trams, you'll never hear me squealing about crowded buses, trams or trains at home. What an experience! It's like the old comedies when you see people getting onto the tram at every stop, & nobody getting off, until you start wondering where everybody gets to. When you decide that a tram is full, then only do the Milanese start getting in. Cyril told me the other day that the tram was so crowded, & he was standing, that he had to stand on one foot, as there wasn't place to put his other foot, & I laughed, but after my own experiences on Tuesday, I saw that

he wasn't joking.

I'm enclosing some snaps taken in Leguano prior to my going to Tremezzo, & a spool taken in Tremezzo. I received another four spools today in a parcel from Lil.

And that seems to be about all for now, so I'll end with regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.



Myself, Ian, Hektor, John B. & John G at a café  
in Leguano



Ivan Famin, myself & Cyril D'Hotman on Lake  
Maggiore. The island known as "Isola Bella" in the  
background

(This letter was typed)

My Dearest Ethel,

Many thanks, my sweetest, for your most gratifying letter of the something-or-other ultimo received an indefinite time ago. (Corrigenda: Delete the word "Gratifying" above and substitute "welcome" Close brackets. It really was gratifying to know that my attempts and efforts in the direction of composing blank verse which could be set to music were not wasted, and that there is still somebody in this world who appreciates, or is at least kind enough to pretend to appreciate, not only my own particular brand of humour, but also my own particular peculiar twist of the mind. Actually, of course, in all modesty, I must admit that that song of mine was pretty hot stuff, and was bound to receive due recognition sooner or later --- just as well it was sooner, 'cos now the whole unpleasant incident can be forgotten --- whether it can ever be forgiven is quite another panful of fried potatoes.

In my last series of letters to my sisters, you were the last recipient; this series, however, commences with you; all of which only goes to prove sump'n or other. And which should be some consolation to you for having had to wait so long last time.

I must admit that I like your style of letters - reminds me of the way I used to write too before I had any sense. Sorry - that's really a horrible crack against one whose letters I enjoy so greatly and

to whose letters I look forward so avidly (a good word for this time of day). Moreover it is a crack which is definitely not in the best Kramer tradition. So consider it absolutely unsaid!

I don't know what your reactions are to typed letters. Myself I don't mind whether letters are written, typed or even printed in blood; the acid test to me is whether the outside of the letter bears my name and address. However, during the course of my extensive travels I have found that typed letters are one of those things to which one is expected to have reactions. So, being a fair-minded sort of a so-and-so, I'm feeling it incumbent upon me to give you this unequalled opportunity of having a reaction! Go to it!

Before I forget, the answer to your proposal about publishing extracts from my letters about Palestine is definitely No! please don't think I'm being hard about it, but I feel that those were written two years ago, and they reflected only my personal sentiments.

While on the subject of going out with me when "The war's over", I hereby place on record the fact that I will definitely be taking my sisters out in a big way, if only because I can't think of anybody else I could take out, --- not in preference to my sisters anyway. I'm afraid I've never been a keen dancer, nor a very good one, but lots of people have been able to put up with me, so you'll have to grin and bear it too. As a matter of fact I'm expecting you and Miriam and Gertrude to teach me some of the finer points of dancing; any tips that Sylvia and Liebe wish to give me will be most welcome too.

So you're on leave from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sept.: well I'll see what I can do about getting home in time for that. The drafts are going off very well at the moment, but it must perforce still be some time before they get down to NCO's of "G" group. The gunners of "G" group have started moving already, but the first NCO's of "C" group only left a day or two ago, and "C" group NCO's are quite numerous. However I'm not despondent, and I do think (yes - sometimes) that two months should see me safely back in the family circle. I must admit that I occasionally have my qualms of how much use I'm going to be to our social life, and how I'm going to fit back into the general scheme of things, 'cos really, my dear, you wouldn't believe it, but I'm, quite sure that I've forgotten how to play rummy. Which ranks amongst the cat-as-trophies of our time!

This army is treating me very roughly now. Just fancy, my dear, that I was'nt able to get away for the week-end this week. What's more, according to the Duty Roster I'm on duty next Saturday night but I've overcome that by taking the place of the chap who should have been on tonight, so that he can take my duty next Saturday, and then I hope to be able to get away for the week-end. On Friday night Andrew and I took our friends from Mandello and my girl-friends from Milan to a Review, which was quite good. This lass from Milan whom I met in Mandello last week-end is rather a nice kid - I took her dancing on Tuesday night and slept over at her place; she woke me at 5 am next morning and I took the first train back to camp, being back by 6.30; on Friday night, however, her Mom and Dad had already left for Mandello and she was alone in the house, so I couldn't sleep over (what would the neighbours say) but came home with the leave truck.

And that is about all for now, so I'll end with regards to all and love to Mom, Dad and the other girls. Write again soon. Tons of Love, Your Loving Brother, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
22/7/45 No. 171

Dear Mom,

Many thanks for your most welcome letter No. GG received this week. I'm glad to hear that all at home are well, and I too am in the pink, T.G. All I can think of at the moment is how pleasant it will be to arrive home for the coolness of a S.A.'n summer, for at the moment it's hell up here. I've

never known such heat - it's absolutely impossible. I take a daily siesta from 1.30 to 3.30 p.m., "trying" to sleep naked under a mosquito-net ('cos the flies also drive one mad) and when I get up at 3.30, the blankets are literally wet. Simply sitting in office writing, makes the perspiration bead off. The only way to keep cool is to get into the lake, and stay there.

I'm still enjoying my stay at Baveno. We dance just about every night - in fact, I'm beginning to get a bit tired of dancing. At the one place, where they have a decent hall and a decent orchestra, it's too hot, and the only alternative is the Lido, open-air, which is much fresher, but music supplied by gramophone. Still, we make the most of it.

Hell, Mom, if you only knew how I dream of coming home soon. Three times in the last ten days I've dreamt of being at home. There I was trying on all my old sports-jackets, flannels, shoes, etc., introducing myself to Liebe, whom I saw not as a baby, but as a lass of her true age, talking to her as I'd speak to a grown-up, and she answering the same way. I pray to God that it won't be too long now before my dreams, and yours too, no doubt, come true P.G.

Otherwise, Mom, there's nought else to write of at the moment, so I'll end with regards to all and Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
29/7/45 No. 172

Dear Mom,

Here I am again, still keeping fit and well, T.G., and glad to hear the same from you in your last letter No. HH received a few days ago.

I'm still earning my daily bread in the Orderly Room. These last few days particularly I've actually been quite busy, and on two successive days I even had to work during the afternoon, rendering both weekly and monthly returns. Now that that's over, I can take things easy again.

The heat has let off slightly these past three or four days, and life has been just so much more bearable. Is it still cold down your way?

It's very sad about these plane crashes, and I can imagine how you feel about it. I lost a very good friend on the plane that crashed at Kisumu on the 11th. Alf Seymour was his name. However, it seems that they are doing their best to operate the shuttle service at the highest possible safety-factor. Personally I don't expect to be flying home. As I've said before, when my turn for release does come, they'll probably say I must hang on a while. At that stage, there won't be many of us left here, and I anticipate that what is left of us at that stage will all go down together not as individuals, but as a regiment, and by sea. However, we can but wait and see, and hope for the best.

Meanwhile, we are already at the end of July. My fondest hope and prayer is that I can be home for Rosh Hashona, which should be sometime in October. Wait a minute! I have just looked up my little J.N.F. calendar, and I find that Rosh Hashona is on the 8<sup>th</sup> Sept. If it had been 8<sup>th</sup> October, I'd have said it was a level bet, but 8<sup>th</sup> Sept.!, well, I'll continue to hope for the best but prepare for the worst.

You'll be pleased to know that I have decided upon "action", and have written an application for transfer to C.T. to the Collector of C. & E. at P.E. I have stated my case, and asked that he recommend my transfer to the Big Noise in Pretoria. At this stage, when they will be re-absorbing thousands of men into Custom Houses all over the country, there should be little difficulty in finding me a job in C.T. So here's holding thumbs.

Beyond that there is nought else to write of, so I'll end now, with regards to all, and Love to Dad, the Girls and Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

P.S. Incidentally, today is my 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of signing on the dotted line.

No. 329491(V)  
Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
7/8/45 No. 173

Dear Mom,

Here's your son again, still keeping fit & well, T.G., and glad to hear the same from you in two letters received today & on Friday respectively. Thanks also for your very welcome parcel received last week. While on the subject of parcels, I think you'd better stop sending them, 'cos if they arrive after we've left, they don't get returned to the Union. I'll tell you what: send just one more parcel, & then no more. Without being unduly pessimistic, I should still be hear to receive a parcel you send now.

You'll be pleased to hear we're no longer suffering intense heat. For the last ten days the weather has been so much cooler, & for two days now it's been raining. It's not cold, of course, but I like it this way.

We had quite a party last night with the boys who left on a draft today. I've become quite immune to any thoughts of envy or homesickness when I see these chaps starting-off on their homeward journey. My turn must come some day.

You'll be pleased to hear that, with much foresight, I've already written to the Collector of Customs & Excise, P.E., asking for a transfer to C.T. I've stated my case to him, & I hope it's approved. Won't it be wonderful if the transfer is granted and we're all able to live together once more, as we did way back in the dim & distant past.

Pity you & Dad didn't mention the revolver sooner. Mind you, I doubt whether I'd have brought one home even then. But the position was this: during the last fortnight of the war, when things were going so fast, & Gerry Prisoners just rolling in, a few of us managed to equip ourselves with various pistols of German, Italian and even French or Belgian origin, taken off the Gerries. The best types were the German "Luger" and Italian "Barretta". I myself fancied the Barretta because of its neatness & compactness, & in the end I landed up the proud & envied possessor of a .32 calibre Baretta. But as you can imagine, we're not allowed to take out of this country any enemy equipment. I might have chanced my arm & tried to smuggle it out, but I didn't think it was worth the candle, being a peaceloving, law-abiding citizen as I am. So I handed the pistol in when so ordered. As for buying one here now, that's also out, the same reason.

Well, that's all for now, so I'll end with regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
21/8/44 No. 175

Dear Mom,

Here's your errant son again, with his usual weekly letter. Thanks very much for your most welcome letter no KK received on Monday. I'm pleased to hear that all at home are well & I too am in the pink, T.G.

As I told you in my last letter, I gave myself a rest last week, & spent most of the week at home, having early nights. On Friday I took the day off from office, & went up to 6<sup>th</sup> Bty, to play tabletennis with my old pal, Sgt Cocks. It was the first time I'd played since Egypt, but I played a

wonderful game. In the afternoon we had a match against an Italian team, & we trounced them thoroughly - they were quite shaken.

I actually worked in office Saturday morning & got a pass for the afternoon & Sunday. My plan was to go to Milan, meet the girls, & go with them by train to Mandello (on Lake Como) where they live, to spend the weekend there, & come back by train on Monday. But things turned out far better than we had dared to hope for, & Ian & I managed to get a truck for the week-end. So we picked up the girls in Milan, took them to Mandello, spent the weekend there, & then took them back to Milan on Sunday evening, dropped them & came on back to camp.

We had a wonderful weekend. Their people couldn't do enough for us, & we ate like lords. The weather was very bad, & kept us indoors, but on Sunday afternoon it cleared up sufficiently for us to be able to spend two or three hours yachting on the lake. Then we'd no sooner got home than the storm broke again, & this time it actually hailed hail-stones the size of my thumb-nail.

Now this week I'm taking things quietly again. Tonight, however, there's quite a party on. A "Khatatba Old Boys Union" has been organised. (Khatatba is the name of the place in the Egyptian desert where we spent a year of our time training.) There are only about twenty of us still left today, & a big bang is expected tonight.

And that's about all for now, so I'll end with regards to all, & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

P.S. I will be getting leave for Rosh Hashona & Yom Kippur, & will probably attend services in Milan. I must phone the Padre today, & find out about greeting cards. Love, M.

No. 329491(V)  
Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
13/9/45 No. 179

Dear Mom,

I can honestly say that on Monday I was quite the happiest man in the world, and I certainly felt happier than I ever have during the last five years. Needless to say, the cause of all this abundance of joy was the receipt of Gertrude's letter, containing news of the approval of my transfer. Honestly, I was fairly jumping around with excitement; now I can really look forward to getting home and staying at home. Previously I'd always dreaded the possibility that after one months' leave at home, I'd be on my way to P.E. again. So now I'm really happy.

After 7 days on a 3-tonner in Austria and Germany, it was quite a rush to get off to Turin on Friday for Rosh Hashona. I went to all the services there, conducted by our Padre, and spent a very quiet two days. I rather like Turin - it's a very well-laid-out city, with beautiful streets, pavements and buildings - it's really well-planned. For Rosh Hashona I'll be attending services in Milan.

Our 7 days trip was a wonderful experience, and we were very fortunate, for on our return to camp we learnt that all future trips are cancelled by the Brigadier's orders.

During the 7 days we travelled 1400 miles, which is not bad going. Our route lay from here through Brescia to Verona, and thence on to Trento, where we spent the first night. I was thus able to go and visit the three girl-friends I met down in the Appenines last winter. Remember I used to write of the girls we used to visit during December and January, and with whom we had Xmas and New Year Dinners. We were all mutually delighted and excited to meet again - they had returned from Verzuno (where we spent the winter and to where they had fled from Trento and its bombs), about 6 weeks previously.

Next day we carried on, crossed the Brenner in a blinding hail-storm. The Italian side of the Brenner isn't really a pass - it was quite disappointing. The road runs all alongside a river, the

Adige, and remains in the valley until about 3 kilometres this side of the station of Brennero, which is the frontier. Then it starts rising into the mountains, but the road is still quite comfortable, not much sheer drop as one might have expected. On the Austrian side, however, the pass is truly a pass, with miles of winding road, hair-pin bends and sheer drop on the side into deep valleys.

From Bolzano (in Italy) onwards, the character of the houses starts changing to the Austrian pattern, picturesque with their steep-sloping roofs and long-overhanging eaves. As the frontier is passed, the nature of the lands, however, change as if by a magic wave of the wand. We are now in the Tyrol; the valleys and lower slopes are beautiful patterns of various shades of green pasture-lands, all very neat and orderly, against a back-ground of thick dark forests of tall pines. The whole of the Austrian Alps are very thickly forested, and many of the houses in the country-side are wooden, and

Austria, Sept '45

really neat. Every window has a window-box with flowers of most beautiful colour. We emerge from the Alps into Innsbruck, in the valley. We didn't spend much time in Innsbruck, but drove thro'; the place has been quite well bombed. We drove on about 30 miles, and spent the night at a "Gasthaus" at Kirchenbinge, where a meal was prepared for us with our own rations, and where we were put up for the night. The Austrian dress is very colourful. The men wear leather shorts, prettily embroidered, plain shirts, and a coloured jacket, like a waist-coat, no sleeves or collar, and long socks. The girls wear floral or coloured dresses, or blouses and shirts, with brightly-coloured apron. Their whole attitude is very cool toward us, no smiles, no waves, as we drive past and shout "Guten Mittag" to them. (Certainly none of the "Bravo Sud-Africani" we've got used to in Italy.) However, at the Gasthaus, when we got speaking to the folks, they thawed out, and were quite friendly. Their attitude is due to the fact that, though beaten, they're still a proud race, and not prepared to make advances - what a difference from the Ites. We spent a very pleasant evening at the Gasthaus, the old man playing Austrian songs on the guitar, and giving us the true Tyrolean yodel. Our medium of conversation of course is German, spoken by one of our party. I was the second conversationalist, with my Yiddish spoken in a German accent - I didn't do badly at all.

Next day (Saturday) we moved on and crossed the Austro-German border. We drove on to Munich where we spent a couple of hours. We drank a pot of very "ersatz" beer at the Munich railway-station, and were regarded very curiously by the Gerries. They probably think we're French, on account of our berets, but they can't quite make out. There's scarcely a whole building left standing in Munich - it's been really thoroughly bombed; what a housing problem they must have! Incidentally, at Kirchenbinge we changed our Itie money for German, a Mark being worth a sixpence. Prices in Germany are very low, the beer costing us 30 pfennigs (about 2<sup>D</sup>), as there are 100 pfennigs to the mark. I saw a pair of shoes marked at 14.50 marks (7<sup>D</sup>). However, apart from 2 glasses of beer (which was all we drank in 5 days) (it was all we could find to drink), there's nothing to be bought in both Austria and Germany, and the whole trip cost me 3 marks, 1/6<sup>D</sup>. From Munich we drove straight down the Autobahn to Salzburg, which is just on the Austrian side of the frontier. What we saw of Southern Germany is just as beautiful as Austria. The Gerries have got the score right with their Autobahns, (National Roads). They're of concrete, with two lanes, each capable of holding three civvy-cars travelling abreast. And are they built for speed, or are they!

We arrived at Salzburg Saturday afternoon, and left Monday morning. We ate and slept at an American Transit Camp. The room in which I slept was quite a cosmopolitan affair - Yanks,



French, Hollanders, and ourselves. Fouche and I went out in the evening, and when we returned at about 10, we started getting quietly into bed, so as not to wake the sleepers. But one chap sat up, lit a cigarette, and then asked us if we were English. We said no, S.A., and asked what he was, for he spoke little English and a hell of an accent. When he replied that he was Dutch, I spoke to him in Afrikaans, and from then on we discussed in Afrikaans on one side and Dutch on the other. To us it was nothing, but he was amazed - how could two people whose countries were so far apart speak the same language! Every five minutes he'd say, "Ek kan dit nie begryp nie". At about 11 o'clock he pulled out a mouth-organ and asked if I could play. I said yes, but it was a type I never knew existed, so he played instead. I'll give you three guesses what he played - Sarie Marais. Meanwhile the Yanks had woken up, and were listening to this foreign language. Finally one of them said, "Say, aren't you guys English". We said yes. Then it was his turn to be absolutely amazed.

Sunday morning we did a walking-sight-seeing tour of Salzburg, led by an old man who spoke English. He welcomed us to Salzburg, all but gave us the keys and freedom of the city, expressed his pride at meeting us, and told us of his stays in Cape Town, P.E., and Joburg, "as a soldier of the Imperial Austrian Navy". We went up by funicular railway to an ancient fortress, commanding a beautiful view of the town. In the afternoon we drove out to Chiemsee, and then to Berchtesgaten. It was a beautiful drive through the rugged beauty of the Bavarian Alps. At Berchtesgaten we saw the ruins of Hitler's house, Goerings', Borman's, and the S.S. barracks - the place has really been thoroughly bombed. Unfortunately we were too late to go up to his Eagle's Nest, at the top of the mountain. At his house he had a tunnel, an air-raid hide-out. What an affair. Down four flights of stairs, cut out of the mountain and cemented, and then a long tunnel, anything over 100 yards long, with rooms and passages leading off it. What an affair.

Monday morning we left Salzburg, and crossed the Alps by a pass that reached a height of 8300 feet, what a pass. We climbed for over two hours, with the 3-tonner straining away in extra low-gear. We stopped at the Gross-Glockner, a glacier. Simply a huge mass of ice, which looks out of place somehow - you expect it to melt at any moment. The pass is really a stupendous piece of work, and beyond imagination or even description - it winds slowly, but quite steeply, up and up and up, with a sheer drop of thousands of feet on one side or the other. Then we drove down into the

valley on the other side, and there we spent the night at another Gasthaus. The owner gave us a house to sleep in, but no beds. Everything, he said, had been taken away by the English. Quite a change from the old Italian theme of "Tedeschi portare tutti via", which means "the Germans have taken everything away", and which we've been hearing for the last 18 months.



Morning coffee and biscuits

Tuesday morning we drove on, crossed into Italy, passed thro' Udine, and spent the night and the next day in Venice. Venice is rather old and dirty, but it's a most unique place. There's not a wheeled vehicle, not even a bicycle, in the either. All movement gondola. Venice is are side-walks too, probably do the foot, but would have and canals and do so, as otherwise dead-ends, and have for another bridge to else. It's a hell of a place for losing oneself, which Fouche and I did everytime we went in. Then all you do is call a gondola, and let him drive you back to the station - which we did.



We got back to camp at 5 p.m. on Thursday, and left at 8 a.m. Friday for Turin. I was rather stuck for clean clothes, as one gets rather dirty spending 7 days on a 3-tonner, and when I got back to Turin on Sunday night, I had to hand in for washing every bit of clothes I had, except what I stood up in.

On Monday afternoon I played a spot of tennis, and in the evening went into Milan. I spent the evening at my girl-friend's place, but as she was alone in the house, I couldn't sleep there as I do when her people are at home, so she sent me round to her brother-in-law's. She gave me directions as how to get there, and I found the street alright, but she'd given me the wrong house. So after I'd woken up three different families at 1 a.m., I walked to the station, used the phone to phone him and tell him to put on his light, and then went back to his street, and this time he was waiting for me.

Yesterday the Div. had a swimming gala, which I had to attend, but the only thing I swam in was the relay-race, and we came second. Still, we had quite a good day watching the other events.

Tonight I'm on duty, and I'll be on tomorrow night too. Meanwhile it's almost midnight already, so I'll end now with regards to all and Love to Dad, the Girls and Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

P.S. I took 6 spools on the trip, so there'll be 40-odd snaps turning up soon. The enclosed two are out of somebody else's camera. Love, M.

No. 329491(V)  
Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F.  
18/9/44 No. 180

Dear Mom,

Many thanks for your letter No. MM received today on my return from Milan. I'm pleased to hear that all at home are well, T.G., and I too am in the pink, T.G. Now the festive season is over, and I trust you all fasted as well as I did - I really fasted well.

During last week I decided that Turin was too far to go for Yom Kippur, so I combined business and pleasure and decided to attend services in Milan. So I left office on Saturday morning, met my girl-friends in Milan, and went out with them to Mandello, where I spent Saturday and Sunday morning. There they fattened me up for Monday's fast, with the usual meals of spaghetti, etc. left them at 4 p.m. on Sunday, and got to Milan just in time to have a bit of supper at the "Rand Club", before going to Shul at 7 o'clock. Then I actually missed "Kol Nidrei" by landing up at the wrong Shul - I landed up at the Milan Civilian Service which was so packed that I couldn't get anywhere

near the rooms in which the service was being held. I was amazed at what I thought at first was such a large number of Milanese Jews, but I discovered later that most of them were refugees in Milan. Nonetheless, there were notices all over the place, in Italian, about "joining the Milan Zionist Society", and about subscribing the the Keren Kayemeth; it seemed very strange seeing those notices in Italian. However, I finally landed up at the service, which was held at the Jewish Services Club, at about 7.30. After Shul we took a fair-sized walk up to the "Corner House", a Div. Transit Hotel, where we had booked in for the night. I spent most of Monday in Shul, except for the period 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., between Mussaph and Mincha, when I had forty winks up at Corner House. I fasted very well, and, to keep Dad company, I "doveled" the whole of Mussaph standing, and didn't sit down right thro' Mincha and Naila; I suppose Dad still hangs on to the back of the "Bimah" for most of Rosh Hashona and Yom Kippur, so by standing right thro' the day I felt ever so much closer to him and to you all at home. We finished "Mairav" at exactly 7, and the Padre had laid on a "break-fast". It was just a light snack, coffee and cakes, then some soup, and that filled me up. Then I went to the Rand Club to meet Ian, who was supposed to be coming in to Milan for the evening. He turned up at 8.30, and we took our girl-friends to bio. After the show we went up to their house in Milan, and next thing I know I was partaking of a delightful plate of fried eggs and tomatoes. The girls reckoned I'd lost weight and gone thin by fasting all day.

We slept at Corner House again, and returned to camp this morning, where I was greeted with the news of a soccer-match this afternoon. I tried to cry off, but they consoled me by saying it was the second team, so I said O.K. But when we pitched up at the grounds, I found myself in the first team, which rather took it out of me. Anyway, tonight I'm feeling really fit and full of the "joei di vivre" which I understand is French for "the joys of life".

I know Bdr. Sullivan and he'll probably remember me. We went on a leave party to Florence together round about January this year. He's rather a decent type. And that, dear Mom, is all for now. Regards to all and Love to Dad, the Girls and Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F  
1/10/45 No. 182

Dear Mom,

Here's your wandering boy tonight. I'm keeping fit & well, T.G., & hope to hear the same from you, P.G. We're living a very comfortable life here at this hotel. You've never seen an army like this - the whole of RHQ eating in one dining-room, with white tablecloths & clean crockery & china, & waited upon by waitresses. This place is quite a holiday, John & I swim during the day. The weather is very pleasant, & the Ligurian sea quite warm.

Here's some news. 'G' group have started moving off. On Friday I was told that I'd be leaving on Friday the 5<sup>th</sup>, on the first stage of the journey south. So for two days I lived in a fool's paradise, visualising home just around the corner; for today I was told that I'll have to stay on a wee while. You see, all five of us in office are G group, (incidentally we've all been together right from Barberton), so it meant getting 5 new chaps to learn our jobs, & leaving the sergeant with five partially-trained newcomers on his hands. At first they thought they could manage it, but then the O.C. decided that of the five of us, three could go on Friday, & the other two (myself & Eddie Atkinson) hang on for a wee while. Ian Walker is being kept back too. Rex Watling is going off on Friday, & most of my old pals, so it's going to be rather lonely here without them all. However, I don't think it should mean a delay of more than a week or two. Of course, I need hardly tell you that that does not mean that the chaps who leave on Friday will be home in a fortnights time - they go first to Foggia & then to Egypt, & there's no knowing how long they wait at each camp. In fact,

I'll probably catch up with them at Helwan. Johnie Bartleet was scheduled to go on Friday, but last night, taking a short cut, we jumped over a fence, & he landed badly and bruised his heel. It's nothing serious, but he's hobbling a bit, & the doctor might keep him off the draft which is very unlucky.

I was thinking yesterday that maybe I'd be home for Edie's birthday. Now it doesn't look quite so likely, but who knows - it can still happen. On the other hand, it might not be until the end of November. So we must just wait & hope for the best.

And that's about all for now. I'll keep you well posted of developments.  
Regards to all, & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Chins up, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
Bdr Kramer, M.  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt.S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F  
3/10/45

Dearest Mom,

Just a short note to enclose my snaps of my Austrian-German trip. Sorry they're a bit late.

I'm keeping well & fit, & hope to hear the same from you all.

I'll be writing again shortly, regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
U.D.F. C.M.F  
8-10'45 No. 183

Dear Mom,

I'm afraid last week's letter must have rather depressed you; I refer, of course, to the news that I had been taken off the draft. Well, to counter-act that, here is some good news for you - I'm back on the draft, in fact, I'm already at Foggia.

Everything happened rather suddenly. I had written to you on Monday night, saying that I was being kept back for a week or two. On Tuesday I took the day off, & went thro' by truck to Milan, to see my girl-friend. On my return at about 9.30 pm (as Milan is quite far off), I was met by John Bartleet with the news that, firstly, the draft had been moved forward from Friday to Thursday, & secondly, that I had been put onto the draft again.

Well, as you can imagine, Wednesday was spent in an orgy of organisation, teaching my job to the newcomer, etc. Thursday we left camp at 10 o'clock, went to Spotorno, only about 20 kilometres away, from where we caught a train at 3 pm. We spent the next 49 hours in the train, in cattle trucks, arrived at Foggia Saturday evening. Now we're awaiting transport to Helwan, Egypt; there seems to be good stories that there'll be ships leaving Helwan on the 15<sup>th</sup>, & we're all hoping to be on those ships.

I shan't write too much of the train-trip. There were 26 of us in this box car (what we call a cattle truck). A cattle-truck has this advantage over normal carriages, & that is that at least everybody can lie down in a cattle-truck. Twenty-six was a bit thick in one truck, though. When we slept at night, we were honestly dove-tailed into one another, to coin a phrase, packed like sardines. I've never had so much sleep in 48 hours as I had on the train. There was no light in the truck, so when it got dark we went to bed, at about 6.30. The second night I went to bed at about 7, & got up at 10 next morning. Our journey took us right across the North of Italy, & then down the Adriatic coast, ie. from Genoa, through Bologna, Faenza, Forli, to Rimini, then thro' Ancoria to Foggia. Meals were provided all along the way, so that all in all, it was one of the best trips we've ever made in the army.

When we got to this transit camp, we brought the strength up to 1600, & life was just one queue after another. Queue up to wash, to shave, to eat, to buy cakes for morning tea, for beer, to fill in forms, to weigh your kit, to get an extra blanket, to hand in a blanket, just queue, queue, all the time.

I've never been so surprised as I was on Thursday morning. You see, when I'd gone to Milan on Tuesday, I hadn't seen my girl-friend, as she was at work, so I'd left a note saying I was leaving on Friday. And darned if she doesn't turn up at camp at 10 to 9 on Thursday. She had left Milan on Wednesday morning, hitch-hiked 160 miles, without even knowing exactly where we were. All she knew was that we were somewhere on the Ligurian coast, but that didn't deter her. At breakfast Thursday morning one of the boys brought me a slip of paper with my name & regimental address on it, & I knew that she'd arrived. These Itie lasses certainly have guts.

Well, that seems to be about all for now. There's no knowing, but if I can catch one of those ships at Egypt, I do hope to be home in time for Edie's birthday.

Regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Chins up, Your Loving Son, Myer.

No. 329491(V)  
Bdr Kramer M  
R.H.Q. 4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.  
Arty/Armour Group,  
Rand T Depot,  
U.D.F. M.E.F.  
18/10/45 No. 186

Dear Mom,

Here I am again - and still at Helwan. What's more, without wishing to be pessimistic, it looks as if I'll be here for some time - till the end of November at least. However, we can but wait and see; perhaps some miracle will get us home sooner than we anticipate at the moment.

Incidentally, I've made a slight change in my address - I think the letters will reach me with less possibility of going astray this way. Actually I've not had a letter from you for about a fortnight, but I suppose a whole bunch will turn up one of these days.

The days here don't hang too heavy. I go to school and take Afrikaans from 9 to 10 a.m. daily, and then on the way back to the bungalow I stop at the Y.M. for morning tea and cake, and by the time I get to the bungalow it's usually well after 11. Then follows an hour of reading or writing, and so lunch-time arrives. Then in the p.m.'s there's usually 40 or so winks, followed by a spot of clothes-washing, a trip to the Y.M. for tea, and so supper time arrives. And then our nightly feature is bioscope - we see a show a night.

There are bookkeeping classes being held too at the school, and I thought of doing a spot of revision in that direction so I went along to the bloke who's giving the lessons, and asked him what the scope of his lessons was. So he in turn asked me what standard I'd attained in bookkeeping, and when I told him I'd got my C.I.S. he asked if I'd come along and give him some lessons. So obviously there's no point in my going to his lessons - he's handling only the elementary stuff. Now tomorrow I'm going to make enquiries about the Economics class, with a view to attending that.

Johnie Bartleet is attending the art-classes. He's quite good really, and he's already turning out some very creditable sketches and drawings.

Walking around from our bungalow to the school and then to the Y.M.'s and Naafi's, we don't sort of notice the distance, but during the day we do quite a lot of walking. The walk to the school alone is a fifteen-minutes' walk. We should be quite fit one of these days.

Tomorrow morning we're rising with the lark, and going to have a set of tennis, followed by a swim.

And that seems to be about all for now. Regards to all and Love to Dad, the Girls and Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

(Printed at the back of the card: "Tyres checked and batteries topped  
Japs wrecked and python dropped.")

No. 187 21:10:45

Dear Mom,

The time is now 21.40 hours, which in civvy-street would be called twenty to 10 p.m., & it's rather late for me to start writing. However, I came down to the Y.M. tonight expressly to write letters, so it'll be disappointing if I don't write at least one letter. When we arrived here earlier there was such a terrific crowd (as there are no shows on Sunday night, so all roads lead to the Y.M.) that we couldn't get near the writing-room, and then, inevitably, I got tied up in a game of table-tennis. Now the crowd has thinned out slightly, & I've got a writing-table, which explains my presence.

I'm still attending my Afrikaans class at school every morning, & from Monday I'll be attending Economics classes three times a week. I'm now a regular attendant down at Shul on Friday evenings, last Friday the Padre gave us each a bottle of sweets, being a rather belated Simchas Torah present.

I've had a very lively day today. I played in a tennis tournament (doubles) which lasted all day. We played until about midday, then I went for a swim & for lunch. After lunch we resumed & played until 4 & I swam until five. So all in all I'm just burning up the calories and then, of course, tonight I must fall for Table Tennis. Incidentally, during the week, when the courts are rather crowded all day & one has to wait long for a game, four of us get cracking at 6.30 a.m. & play tennis from 7 to 8, before the rest of the world is awake. Then we hurry back to the bungalow for a wash & shave & so to school.

I was just thinking of what you told me in your last letter of the addition of a room to the house. I'm thinking of your words about my sharing a room with the girls. I'm afraid the idea doesn't appeal - I don't think it's very practicable. So I was wondering what possibilities of adding yet another room would be. It needn't be attached to the house. It can be just four walls, a roof & a floor in the yard, say where the garage used to be, or in the other corner, where the fowl-run used to be. I suppose that quite apart from anything else, there must be certain difficulties in obtaining building materials these days, but as an ex-serviceman or ex-volunteer or whatever they call us, I'm entitled to certain facilities in that respect. Anyway, that's just my proposal in the raw. Let me know all the pro's and cons, & just what the position is, & then we can discuss it further.

And now it's just a few minutes after 10, & I think we'd best start making tracks for the bungalow, & go & hit the hay, and build up all the burnt-out tissues.

Regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

22/10/45

My Dearest Ethel,

The most fitting epithet (only one 't') I can think of at the moment is "Dammit! Late again". Over the period of the last year, I have failed, unutterably miserably and similarly unaccountably, failed to convey betimes any good wishes, whether on the occasion of birthdays, Rosh Hashona's, Simchas Torah's, Bris', Barmitzvah's, Birthdays or the ilk. My great fear now is that my name becomes synonymous with late; I mean, it would be terrible to hear people saying "Better Myer than never". And yet, in the light of past history, that's just the way proverbs are formed.

Anyway, kid, to coin a phrase, here I am at last. I'm sorry this letter is late, but you see, it's like this; I had hoped to be home for your birthday; or, more accurately, I had deluded myself with the

hope. The speed, rapidity and masterly organization with which we were whipped away from the regiment, passed thro' Foggia and despatched to Egypt, led me to believe that there was sumpin' big in the wind, and that the end of the month might see me at home. Which explains why I told Mom in a letter from Foggia, that I might be home for your birthday. But 'twere not to be, kid. I'm sorry if I raised false hopes, but cheer up, I'm confident, that at a conservative estimate, I should be home for your 21<sup>st</sup>. Seriously, though, I anticipate being here at least another two months; now two months may not sound a long time when measured against 3 score years and ten, but when measured in terms of my intense longing to see home and all you loved ones, it's a mighty long time.

Yester-afternoon I got myself inveigled into a soccer-match again, and I was gratified to realize just how fit I am, for it left no stiffness, and I lasted the match with ease. And believe me, a soccer-match on desert sand in the heat of a "Gypo" p.m. is no joke. This a.m. we played tennis from 7 to 8.30, then I swam and went to school at 9, sans breakfast. A message for Miriam; my tennis-arm has lost none of its ability and art; I hope she's practising keenly. Don't you play tennis too?

Tomorrow we're going into Cairo for the day, just to break the monotony of camp. Our programme includes nothing more than a couple of good meals, some beer straight off the ice, and perhaps a good show; sight-seeing is definitely out.

And that, kid, is about all for now. Here's wishing you a very happy birthday, and many many happy returns of the 31<sup>st</sup>.

Regards to all and Love to Mom and Dad, and the Girls, Your Loving Brother, Myer.

26-10-45 No. 188

Dear Mom,

Here's your son again, but a very browned-off son at that, not at all a nice person to know; he's bad-tempered, sour, liverish & very sad. And all because he's had no letter from home for 3 weeks - I know it's probably not your fault, that you've been writing, but the letters are floating around somewhere between the Regt, Foggia & Helwan, but that doesn't make the disappointment any the less. Every morning I awake full of the gie des vivres, go to school, get thro' my studies, & half-run all the way back to the bungalow after school confident that I'll find a shower of letters on my bed, and instead I find nothing. I keep telling myself - Tomorrow, but now I'm beginning to doubt my own word. However, perhaps this tomorrow will be my lucky day, & then once more I'll be the sweet even-tempered boy you used to know.

We spent the day in Cairo yesterday, & now we appreciate the peace, quiet & restfulness of Helwan camp. Cairo hasn't changed in the twenty-odd months we've been away, & as we drove in it seemed as if we'd never been away. We spent as quiet a day there as possible - a good lunch, followed by a rest during the afternoon at "Ouma's" then a spot of shopping, & after a good supper we went to see an ENSA production of Oscar Wilde's comedy "The Importance of Being Earnest". A spot of drama was introduced when one of the actresses fainted on the stage during the middle of the last act. The curtains were drawn, & the conductor of the band immediately struck up with the theme-song. Then, he turned to the audience, apologised, said that the leading-lady had been taken seriously ill, & played "The King". While that was being played, the leading actor appeared before the curtains, & immediately the "King" was over, he announced that the show would go on to its end with a stand-in. Actually the same actress had recovered sufficiently to finish off the play in a seated role. It was an excellent show.

The question of clothing ourselves when we get out of khaki is one which is often discussed in camp. It would appear that prices are very high at home. Now in Cairo, certain articles can be purchased, not too cheaply, but possibly cheaper than at home. Good leather shoes, for instance, can be bought here at about £2. So if you can let me know the average prevailing prices of clothing at home, then we can see whether it'll be worth doing some purchases here. Is there still anything left of my old clothes? I wonder if it's worth trying to get the stuff up here. Anyway, if you let me

know how things stand at home, we can see what's what.

Another thing, please let me have Mr. Gabbai's address, so that I can go & look him up. Now I know that you don't refer to my letters when you write, but please try to remember this request.

And that's about all for now. Here's hoping that I hear from you tomorrow, & then I'll write on Sunday again.

Regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

(Printed at the back of the card: "Tyres checked and batteries topped  
Japs wrecked and python dropped.")

28/10/45 No. 189

Dear Mom,

See that twinkle in my eye? - that smile on my lips? - that joy in my heart? It all means only one thing - I received a letter from you yesterday; it was written on the 18<sup>th</sup>, and addressed direct to my new address, so it means that the last two or three letters you addressed to C.M.F. are still in transit. No doubt they'll turn up in a bunch, any six months from now. However, all's well that ends well; communication has been re-established, and the terrible period of waiting is over. Now I can look forward to regular letters, and life will become more bearable. I was pleased to hear that all at home are fit and well, and I too am in the pink, T.G. I always felt that a day would arrive when Liebe would cease to believe in my existence, and could discredit any tales concerning me and my home-coming. I see I shall have to write to her personally, to lend weight to your stories, and to convince her that all she needs is patience, for, as the old Greeks used to say, "Helwan wasn't evacuated in a day". She must be quite a big girl these days; I dreamt of her only two or three nights ago. In my dreams I always see her as the replica of Sylvia at the same age; mind you, I suppose that's a reasonable conclusion, as all your daughters could have been mistaken for one another at that age. Of course, my biggest handicap is that I always think of the girls as they were when I left home in 1940. Thus the name "Sylvia" conjures up a vision of a 7-year-old baby-classer; "Gertrude" means a fire-eating 10-year-old who was needed constantly to be put on the receiving-end of a deftly-flung spoon, etc. It's only when I receive letters from them that I realize how I'll have to change my ideas when I get home, but if I seem slightly surprised at first, all aggrieved parties will have to excuse me. I shudder when I think of meeting, recognizing, and memorizing the names of all the additions to the family circle during the last five years. It's quite a task, and I think you'll have to give me some specialized coaching, to reduce to a minimum the number of faux's pas I make.

The weekend has been very quiet. I didn't even play tennis today. We came down to the Y.M. very early, to procure tables. In contrast to last Sunday night, when I commenced writing at 9.30-odd, tonight it's only 7 o'clock, and I've already finished this letter.

And that's all for now. Regards to all, and Love to Dad, the Girls and Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

(Printed at the back of the card: "Tyres checked and batteries topped  
Japs wrecked and python dropped.")

15/11/45 No. 194

Dear Mom,

Very many thanks for your most welcome letter of the 4<sup>th</sup> received today. I'm pleased to hear that all at home are well, T.G. & I too am in the pink, T.G.

I paid a visit to No. 8 General Hosp in Cairo today, just to consult the skin specialist to see whether he could suggest any particular treatment for my back, but as I expected, there's not much can be done. Anyway, it's almost better, I just get the odd pimple or two there, & that should pass

over soon.

I'm writing this at the Y.M., to which we've adjourned after bioscope, as is our habit. The show was called "Rhythm Serenade", & we were afraid we were going to see some cheap musical, but it turned out to be a war-show, of all things, which only goes to show how deceptive names can be.

I had a letter from Rose on Monday. She tells me that Aunt Sybil has changed her job, & is now working for Uncle Harry. I didn't even know that Sybil had been working. Rose, of course, is retiring from work - 'twould appear she's contemplating presenting Alec with an heir or heiress.

We had quite an entertaining afternoon on Tuesday, quite a relief from the general run of things in camp. A big Gala in aid of St. Dunstan's & the Native Fund was organised, & included a Donkey Derby. The tote operated on each of the 8 races, with a "double" on no. 7 & 8 races. Tickets on the tote were 5 piastres, & usually paid a dividend of 11 to 13 piastres. I backed one winner all day. It was race no 4 & I worked it out like this. There were 6 donkeys in each race, numbered 1 to 6, & the first three races were won by no. 2 in each case. So I said to myself, 3 two's are six, therefore back no. 6 in the 4<sup>th</sup> race, & voila! She won at a gallop. The donkey that I had backed in no 3 race actually came in first, but the jockey had fallen off at the starting-post. Anyway, it was a good afternoon's entertainment in a good cause.

And that seems to be about all for now, so I'll end with regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Chins up, Your Loving Son, Myer.

Helwan, 21/11/45  
No. 196

Dear Mom,

Well, here it's Wednesday again, & here I am with my usual mid-week letter. I've not heard from you this week, not since last Thursday, but there'll probably be a letter from you tomorrow. However, as we're going to Cairo for the day tomorrow, I'll only receive your letter on return to camp in the evening, & I shan't be able to write until Friday. So I thought I'd just drop you these few lines now to let you know I'm still keeping well & fit, T.G., & trust this letter finds you all likewise, P.G.

This week I've launched myself upon a new game, namely, squash. It certainly lives up to everything I've heard about it as a very fast game, & one which soon has the participants blowing & sweating. As with tennis here, there are 4 squash courts available, rackets & balls being supplied too. We have to book the courts in advance, for half-an-hour at a time, & believe me, at the moment ½ an hour of squash at a time is more even than a feast. I'm certainly having sufficient exercise these days, for we've got a tenniquoit court at the bungalow, & for the last three days I've played squash, tennis & tenniquoit each day. All I need now is to get home & get on with my badminton lessons - I believe there are a couple of teachers in the family.

Repatriation is going well, & there is a general air of optimism in the land. In the last 3 days 350 have left Helwan by air & 100 by frigate. On Sunday there were still 700 E's in camp & 1200 F's, to be gone thro' before a start is made on G's. Now there are only 350 E's but F's have gone up to 1500, so there are still 1800 to go before the G's start to move. However, we're daily awaiting the announcement of a ship draft, which we hope will take a lot of F's & make a start on the G's. Rex, John, Ian & I are all early G's, & we're hoping to get onto the first boat that comes in. Probably the Carnarvon Castle. Still, we can still only wait & see.

Well, that's about all for now, so I'll end now with regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

Helwan, 25/11/45  
No. 197

Dear Mom,

On Thursday morning, on my way down to the bus-stop to catch the bus for Cairo, we met the postman, & he gave me a letter from you dated 12<sup>th</sup> inst. which was most welcome & for which many thanks. I am pleased to hear that all at home are well, T.G., & I too am in the pink, T.G. That letter contained Mr Gabbai's address, but I didn't go & look him up as we were in a party of 5, & I didn't want to split up.

In reply to your remark about how worried Mrs. Oz gets at not hearing from Julie, & what a "blessing of a boy" (of course you flatter me) you consider you've got, I can only say that I've also been very fortunate in my choice of a mother, so that we're quits.

We spent quite a quiet day in Cairo. We arrived there shortly after 11, & by the time we'd had tea & gone to book seats for an afternoon show, it was lunch-time. So we had a very heavy meal at a Gypso restaurant, after which we felt so heavy & sleepy that we retired to "Ouma's" lounge, where, while Ian & I played snooker, Rex, John & Rod slept. At 3 we went to the Diana to see "The Three Caballero's", the animated cartoon featuring Donald Duck, Panchito & Joe Calioca together with live actors & actresses. It wasn't very funny, but it was very fantastic, & there were some amazing effects of kaleidoscopes of colour. Then we rested awhile at Groppi's, eating ice-cream, & then went to the Metro for a very light meal, after which we went to see a 3-act play called "Spring Meeting". As, however, we were impressed neither by the acting nor the plot of the said play, we baled out after the first scene of Act II. Then, of course, the dread trip by carry to the station, by train to Helwan, by duty-bus from Helwan station to camp, all of which spoils the whole effect of the day in Cairo & which decided us not to visit Cairo again for another month, by which time we hope to be at home.

This afternoon we went to Cairo to see a Rugger Match at the Alamein Club, but of course we travel there & back by truck, so that doesn't count. It was a big match today, Springboks vs The Rest of Egypt, which we won 10-0.

On Friday p.m. I went down for a game of squash, but there was no ball available, so I played tennis instead. I was lucky, there were few chaps & I managed to get in 6 sets in the p.m. In the evening I went to Shul. Saturday p.m. I played squash & in the evening we went to bio to see "The Mummy's Ghost", the first "horror" film (Ron Chaney) I'd seen for a long time. Talking of Shul & Saturday, you'll be interested to learn that my latest "fad" is that I give up smoking on Saturdays. From supper time on Friday I don't smoke until after supper on Saturday.

Repat. is going well. The E's are just about finished, & there are only 1500 F's in camp. The Carnarvon draft will be announced tomorrow, & the ship will sail next Sunday. I know I'm not on that draft, but it means that by the time she sail (the 2<sup>nd</sup>), the camp will be clear of F's up to 25<sup>th</sup> May 1942. Then it leaves only June & July chaps ahead of me. So while we can't build on anything, I do think I should be home by Xmas. However, we can still only wait & see.

I'm enclosing some more snaps for the collection. They should give you some idea of what this place they call Helwan looks like.

They are all (except the one of myself) taken from the top of a water-tower near my bungalow. The snaps actually fit over one another; No. 2 onto



Helwan, Nov '45

the right of No 1, No 3 onto No 2, & so on, the ink mark showing more or less where each fits.

Well, that seems to be about all for now, so I'll end with regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Chins up, Your Loving Son, Myer.

25/11/45 No. 197A.

Dear Mom,

This is not a letter. These are just a few lines as a precautionary measure in case the letter which I have just written to you, & which contains some snaps, should suffer any delay in arrival. Then these lines will serve to let you know that I am keeping fit & well, T.G.

I can't write anything else, 'cos it's all in the other letter, which has probably arrived simultaneously anyway. Much Love, Your Loving Son, Myer.

Helwan, 28/11/45  
No. 198

Dear Mom,

Here I am again, fit & well, T.G., & trusting this epistle finds you all likewise. I must thank you for a letter received on Monday; unfortunately it was rather out of date, having been written on the 25<sup>th</sup> Oct., but it came the circuitous route via Italy. It seems that out of sheer force of habit my mail keeps speeding thro' the air straight to Italy. It was the letter to which Miriam added her little portion, so if she's been feeling hurt up till now about my not having acknowledged her contribution, she can cease those sentiments forthwith.

We have changed billets in camp, but this is in no way connected with our homecoming. The change was necessitated by the necessity to make space for the Div which is to move here from Italy during December. Now we are living at the Western extremity of Helwan, almost within smelling-distance of the Nile - I suppose one might, by a mighty stretch of the imagination, call it the Egyptian Riviera. We are now nearer to the School, nearer the only NAAFI where one can get a really decent meal, & nearer the squash & tennis courts; but generally, the position is less amenable than our old one, for we're further from our mess & the showers, the things that really count. Can you imagine walking 100 yards to each meal - granted that it probably works up an appetite, and that the post-meal walk back to the bungalow may be good for the digestion, nonetheless I dream of the day when you shout "Come & get it" & I've got to move no further than from the sitting-room to the diningroom. And finally, we're so far from the Y.M. now that the trip there is almost a pilgrimage, & tonight is the first time this week that we're at the Y.M.

I am now the proud possessor of a squash-racket. I took it over from the chap with whom I used to play, & who left for home yesterday. Now I've got two new opponents, one with whom I usually play in the morning, & the other in the afternoon. So between the two, I should be very fit soon, for I don't think there's another game in the world in which, in the course of half-an-hour, one works up the sweat one does in squash.

I had a letter from Rose yesterday written from the shop on the 19<sup>th</sup>, & on the back was a note from Alec that Rose had made him a happy father on the 20<sup>th</sup>. I suppose the daughter will be named after Roses' late mother, Leah.

The latest repat. gen today is a disappointment. Namely, the news that our allocation on the Carnarvon is decreased by about 200, & on the Rainer del Pacifico by the same. That sets me back another week, I think, but I'm still hopeful of being home before the New Year. Today is 7 weeks that we've been in this camp, & I've just about "had it".

In the hope of being home soon, I told my friends in Italy to write direct to Camden Rd, so if any Italian mail starts turning up, please keep it for me.

I suppose I'll hear from you tomorrow, & then I'll be writing again soon.

Regards to all & Love to Dad, the Girls & Yourself, Your Loving Son, Myer.

P.S. Note the slight change in address.

(Address on back of letter-card reads: No. 329491(V) Bdr Kramer M, Artillery Group (4/22 Fld Regt. S.A.A.) R & T, Depot U.D.F. M.E.F.)

Helwan, 2.12.45  
No. 199

Dear Mom,

Many thanks for your most welcome letter of the 19<sup>th</sup> ult. received on Friday. Thanks to Miriam too for her contribution thereto. You say that my letters 191 & 192, which you had just received, sounded disappointing. Well I suppose they were really, for they were so intended - I didn't want to build false hopes for either of us; but at the same time I didn't mean to invoke in you quite the pessimism they seem to have invoked. When you speak of missing the summer at home, you're right off the mark. Now that the month has turned, I am able to say, not with undue optimism but with justified hopefulness, that I shall be home this month. Tell Miriam I'll be home for the second part of the Paragon League's programme. The season has turned here now, and it's quite definitely winter. The days are alright but once the sun goes down it becomes bitterly cold. And what a job it is getting up in the mornings. So I'll be glad to get back to the height of a S.A. summer. We've had some filthy weather this week, typical desert gales, laden with dust, so that one is not keen to venture from the protection of the bungalow.

The chaps for the Carnarvon left camp during last night, and I think she sails today. Amongst them were Ian Walker, my pal and confederate these three years, and young Jackie Walt. There were about 800 "land forces" out of this camp on board. The prospect now brightens. At the most there are now about 500 F's in camp, and then the G's must start. All chaps up to 29<sup>th</sup> June 1942 now have their "numbers" - that means they're on draft and just standing by. And my date is 29 July, so I'm hoping to get my number by the end of next week. Anyway, whatever happens, I should be home by the end of the month. Anyway, I'll end this chapter in the usual way, "Let's wait and see".

My letter to Rose on Wed. set me thinking of names. I was very pleased when Rose told me that the child would be named after her late mother, and I only hope the lass has been named "Leah" without any attempts at embellishments. I deeply deprecate the modern tendency to disguise our good Jewish names to make them seem not-Jewish. And on Friday night, in Shul, the full significance of the blessing said by בָּעֵל חֶבְיוֹן to his daughters on שְׁבַת struck me. The blessing is בָּעֵל חֶבְיוֹן אֶלְעָם קְשָׁה רְבָה רְחָל וְאַתָּה and for the first time I observed that those are the names of yourself and your three sisters, names which all can be really proud to bear.

And that seems to be about all for now. I'll be writing as usual on Wednesday, and I hope to be able to give you some substantial good news.

Until then, regards to all and love to Dad, the girls, and yourself. Your loving son, Myer.

Camden Road, Maitland  
10/12/45

Dear Myer,

Many thanks for your letter no. 199 which I received today. I hope and pray P.G. that your name and number is on the next list and which I am patiently waiting to hear, but as you say we can only trust in God and wait and see. You know there must really exist between you and I a mental telepathy complex (I don't know if I've got the right word) as in my last letter I mentioned almost the

same about about the name of Rose's baby as you mention in yours. However I have not yet heard what the name is. You'll most probably hear it before I do, however, there's the saying what's in a name, so whatever it is I wish them everything of the best P.G. Before I forget, Dad asked me to remind you to send Mr Nunes a Xmas card. I meant to write you sooner about it but did not get as far. I don't know his address, but you can send c/o National Meat Suppliers, Dock Road, C.T. If you cannot manage to get a Xmas card just write one of these cards, or else forget it. I am glad to hear Jackie Walt is on the Carnarvon Castle, I suppose his people know, but I'll go down later and tell Aunty Becky. Well, Myer, the school holidays have started today and everybody is home this morning even Edie, as she is on late duty. I have just received your letter and am replying at once. We went to Muizenberg yesterday for the afternoon and even Liebe bathed, but she was shivering when she came out but she warmed up quickly when I dried her - did she enjoy herself. Sylvia came 2<sup>nd</sup> in class place and walked off with the Preserverance prize as she has been working hard all the year. She's now going into the High School. She is getting also a big girl and you'll never be able to recognize her, so you see don't say I didn't warn. They have decided not to disband the C.P.S. just yet, but the men are all kicking against it, and I too. I am just wondering if this letter will still get you or if you'll be on your way. Well, here's hoping to seeing you soon P.G. Keep well and God bless you and a safe return home. Love from Dad the girls and Mom.



Myer took ill in 1948, and died on 15 October 1948.  
He is buried in Pinelands No. 1 Cemetery, Cape Town, South Africa.



The inscription on the "fallen" stone reads  
HIS SUN WENT DOWN  
WHILE IT  
WAS YET DAY.



The main inscription reads  
IN LOVING MEMORY  
OF MY BELOVED HUSBAND,  
OUR DEAR SON AND BROTHER  
MYER KRAMER  
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE  
ON THE 15<sup>TH</sup> OCT 1948 - AGED 27 YRS.  
ALSO FONDLY REMEMBERED BY HIS  
RELATIVES AND FRIENDS.  
M.H.D.S.R.I.P.  
SO LONG AS MEN CAN BREATHE  
OR EYES CAN SEE, SO LONG LIVES THIS  
AND THIS GIVES LIFE TO THEE.