

(note change of man →)
PPS Please send pillow slips.

Mess. 22,
HMHS Sydney,
1/ G.P.O.
25/8/41 At Sea

Dear Mother,

I know now how it must have been to be at sea for months. When you get this letter I will have returned to Sydney after having been at sea for three weeks.

Our first couple of days were rough going across the Tasman to N.Z. I went ashore at Auckland & had a good look round, in and out of curio shops looking for souvenirs etc. We stayed three days & I went ashore each day. I saw three pictureshows; they were old & yet new; see what I mean?

On the last day of our visit I went on a bus tour with some of the boys; ~~we~~ right round the city & then into the mountains. You should see the fern & small palm growth they are simply beautiful. I saw many places of historic interest: Auckland's first church was one. The volcanic hills and the Pan American flipper at its base with stars & stripes

that one sees at such a place. I've
got many snaps of the beautiful spots
& they are beautiful, everything is green.

The buses were provided by the Auckland
Seamans Mission & the guides were benefit
& comfort fund workers, at the end of
the trip we had sandwiches, cakes &
tea. These were welcome because the
day was cold, but we enjoyed ourselves.

We left the day after & the sea & is-
lands in the gulf were good to look
at. We steamed northeast into the tropics,
this meant tropical shorts, very comfort-
able when it is as hot as it was.

The sun & calm sea made me think
of summer at home.

We arrived at Suva in Fiji on a
Sunday & I went ashore. It is really a
beautiful place, green growth everywhere.

The natives are very kind & polite & are
good christians, most of them were at
church. The men are very well built
they smile & say "Bulla" which means
"good".

There are only 2000 whites on the island
 I enjoyed a swim in the pool, the
 first I've had for months. Everything
 is very clean, like as in Auckland, they
 must have seen us coming. The natives
 are funny. They say "Six Hob" we say five
 hob. He say 5/6, we say 4/6 then he come
 down to 5/6 and keeps going down.

When all were on board again the
 mess decks were littered with coconuts
 coral, wooden knives, shells, the boys
 were wearing grass shirts & sarongs
 everyone had a happy time.

As we steamed out we passed many
 little islands & could see the ^{villages} camp fires.
 It made me think of music & hula
 dancing.

Three days ago I lay in the shade
 on the deck asleep. Well, we either
 shifted or the sun but you know what
 coming. My stomach was horrible, red-
 raw & sore, now it is itching & peeling.

We were in Suva again yesterday,
 Sunday, I went ashore again.

Incidentally we worked 8 days last week
we crossed the International date line which
makes ~~today~~ tomorrow — today. Puzze
that out.

At present I'm off watch, the sea
is calm & it's a beautiful day & am
~~am~~ anxious to get back to Sydney. I
expect a big mail & besides, there's
somebody looking forward to see me
again. Coral is a very nice girl & we
are great friends. She has no mother or
father & was ~~be~~ adopted by friends when
she was 9. I will be in Sydney on Thursday.

I think you will have noticed by
this letter that I am happy & enjoy life
on the sea. I couldn't think of any
thing better. What a life! The High Seas
for me. Enough of me, I'll be a pirate in
a minute if I don't control myself.

How is everyone at home? Did the
kids have a good holiday. I hope the
garden is lovely. Must write some letters.

Good bye. Kisses & Love to all.

P.S. must attend the washing after. From Johnnie.