

SOLDIER-BOTANIST IN JUNGLE

Mr. and Mrs. R. S. Holmes, of Gorae, have received from their son Pte. T. Murray Holmes, a letter from Java, dated February 2, 1942. Murray is a keen botanist and is recorded in the "Sun News Pictorial" book of Australian Wildflowers as the finder of an orchid in Gorae Forest, which was named by Mr. Nicholls, of Footscray, a noted wildflower authority, "Thelymion Holmesu," so he may have opportunity for study in Java. The letter reads: "Just a note to let you know I am safe and doing fine. We are all in Java now and living in the jungle, where I am quite at home. It is very hot and steamy here, as it is the wet season, but still it is 100 per cent. better than Syria. We had a long and exciting voyage. It was good to touch land again. We are living in the jungle in bamboo huts, just like a tribe of blacks. We get paid in guilders and cents, and are able to buy plenty of fruit from the natives. They are small, happy chaps, clean and honest to trade with. They are learning English fast, especially swear words. You can hire one for any work; digging slit trenches, etc. We had our first bombing raid a few days ago. Since then they have been doing little good, as we are hard to find when they come over. We are fairly safe here yet. Cheerio."