

LETTERS FROM P.O.W.

Mr. and Mrs. R. S. Holmes, of Jorae, have received two letters from their son, Murray, who has been a prisoner-of-war in Japanese hands for 3½ years. Along with other Aussies Murray was captured on Java. With the exception of a brief notification that he was alive and well, no news was received of him until the arrival of letters a few days ago.

The first letter, undated, was written from Bombay. Murray expressed great joy that the war was over. "Since the 18th," he says, "we have been living a new life here, and things have been happening so fast it is hard to believe that it is not a dream. I am in good health as most of the 2,500 in this camp are. We are getting everything possible in the way of food and clothes. Everyone is very excited as we are being flown out of here by bomber plane to Rangoon. There is a non-stop service night and day to Rangoon—700 miles in 2½ hours. We expect to be home in about two months, so keep on smiling. I received a letter from home at Xmas, 1943; also one about five months ago."

The second letter reads:—

Bangalore,
India Command,

6/9/45.

Hope you have received some of my previous mail before this. Since we were released on 18th August I have sent four letters and cablegram. Am still in jungle awaiting instructions re evacuation. Yanks have already evacuated 1500 by plane. Camps have been filled up again with Dutch and Aussies from neighbouring camps—2,000 in all. So when we will get out goodness knows. Still we are getting used to waiting now as we have for 3½ years. We are living on the best of tinned foods dropped by parachute; also got newspapers and cigarettes by plane recently. So today is a pleasant surprise as everything we read is new to us and we are able to catch up a bit on the outside world, since we have been shut off from civilization. Dad and Dave have nothing on us for being out-back. What few lines we were able to send home (about once in 12 months) was just so much baloney and we are doubtful if it ever reached home. As for your letters, Mum, I received the first one Xmas, 1944; also one from Pop and Reg. Since then I have received two 25-word c.c.s. five months ago. So please excuse my ignorance of home news. I know you all must have written every month as permitted, but you don't know how inhuman these nipet were over our welfare. Still we never let them break down our spirit, much as they tried to do so. Three-and-a-

half years on rice and melon water takes a while to forget. Rice might be a very handy substitute for confetti at weddings, but as a substitute for roast beef and apple-pie its a definite failure. If you have any in the house, get rid of it before I get home (I don't want to go jungle-happy again). You don't know how I am longing for a good home meal of new spuds, green peas and a taste of mutton again. Also good old apple pies. We all have so much to look forward to and hope it won't be too long now before we are back in civilization. Hope you are all well and remember me to all friends.

Your affectionate son,

MURRAY.