

Otto Wortmann internment camp papers, 23 March-14 July 1916
MLMSS 261/Box 6/Item 50

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Otto Wortmann
Trial Bay 26 March 1916
NSW

Prisoner of War camp Trial Bay, 23/3/16

Deep inside I had always hoped that I would not be put in the disagreeable position of having to start a second volume of personal notes, certainly not in these paradisiac surroundings! Take note: to start! May God prevent my having to finish it!

Since I intend to include all sorts of rhymes and proverbs that I encounter while reading (yes, indeed, in this contemplative existence I'm beginning to turn into an egghead), I shall start with a rhyme by Langhofer:

If I can't find beauty around me
I shall look for it afar
And if the Earth doesn't always shine
I'll find the shine in a star.

At home, through my own fault, I did not find beauty; afar I would have probably found it. And this fits too: the Earth most certainly doesn't shine in this corner, but the stars do shine at times. So

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take heart! But to be honest, I'd prefer other stars than the bright lamps [sic] in the Australian sky, and if it were only just a small gingerbread one.

The daily routine is always the same here. As again today: swimming, going for walks, rolling the dice and, as forecast accurately yesterday, losing. – Not much new. The "Merinda" arrived in Sydney today, from Rabaul. I still have no mail! From the front, the usual news of losses, etc, to which we have got used by now. Ribot, the French Finance Minister, held a speech; a hint of "peace" was in it. There is supposed to be a huge conference in Paris on the 27th of this month, something "critical" is brewing. We here, we feel the breeze of a new dawn, let's hope we won't be disappointed yet again. There's hope, and I'm well, the weather is nice, ~~and I'm well~~. My dear, what else do you want?

(7.30 in the evening)

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Saturday, 25 March 1916

Still no mail from the "Merinda", so it seems nothing was taken aboard. I would appreciate it if the next steamer brought a heavy load, because if all pans out, there should be "money"! Otherwise the same old same old here: we have beautiful autumn weather. We get up around 7am, at 8am the great parade followed by [indecipherable]; then the great cleaning of the cell. At 9am every day I stroll along the beach, alone, deep in thought like a philosopher, or maybe not so deep; and then a bit of work until 11 or 10 (at the moment: [indecipherable] tropical hygiene). After that, swimming, and big water fights and gladiator games with Stegmann and Jerssen as protagonists; or else more walking. Noon–3pm quiet on board, afterwards reading newspapers and more walking, in the evening reading or writing. – This reads quite nicely, but it isn't so pleasant! [indecipherable]

Sunday, 26 March 1916

Yesterday I had to abruptly stop my chronicle and flee, because Walter [Kamet?] approached with a huge list of sunk ships that he wanted to compare with the tally taken by Hayer.

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I just would have been engulfed by a lengthy lamentation of the difficult times; but that's how it is. And, what to report about today? It was just as bad a day as the previous one. There's really not much to keep you interested; it's just one big laying in wait for peace!

I'm so not motivated to do anything that I've put off writing for 1 hour and instead played a few hands of solitaire. A nice sport, very popular among old spinsters, but this same sport has now become quite the thing here, and it's not half bad since it helps you get over many a boring hour. I think I will indulge in it in the future. "In the future" means, at least for the moment, when I'm alone on a plantation. This would be my choice, but it may not necessarily become reality. Because there are many ifs and buts in the background. One of the things I'm wondering about with trepidation is if I will still have to do military service. But to have to be a soldier after the war, in Germany, and without any financial means, etc, that would really ruin my plans. I should and must not think of these things, it will drive me crazy, and yet,

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these worries continue to haunt me, over and over! – I spent this Sunday with Lembach rolling the dice at the beach, but unfortunately lost 2 bob in the process. This little sum

will have to be repaid within 8 days! What a pretzel! This eternal lack of funds can make you cry!

Tuesday, 28 March 1916

Oh misery, oh unfairness, and what a dog's life! I'm so unnerved, so cranky and restless, I want to smash everything to smithereens, throw everything upside down; for crying out loud, I don't know what I want! No money, no mail, nothing to do, yet plenty of need for all of it! And to top it all, it is raining, and raining; it has been pouring down non-stop since 5 o'clock this morning, so you can't put a foot outside, and have to wrap yourself in your coat just to go to the loo; and it's cold, unbearably damp, and the wind is howling through the window bars, and 500 frustrated and sweaty men are confined to the interior of this damned prison block; and 50 idiots are standing there, chanting and singing to the tunes of a piano, singing hours on end "Kiss her, kiss the red-lipped girl, kiss her right on her lips", and meanwhile you can smell what's cooking in the kitchen!

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Oh holy quiet, oh cozy solitude! Why did I have to be twice unlucky and end up here! Yesterday, as usual, going for a walk and rolling the dice and losing yet again, as always meditating and reading, and tomorrow just like yesterday, or today, or the day before or the day after, one day like the next and the previous, etc. There is no end in sight!

What a blessing, though, to have good books! Thomas Mann with his *Buddenbrooks*, the downfall of a family, has helped me through all of yesterday and today. An intriguing, inspiring book with so many artistic nuances. Yes, I shall probably miss this ample and high-quality selection of books later on. I also have come upon a little prayer again that my Mom used to read to me and which I always loved; it puts me right back to those days in the old country:

"I am a veritable miscreant. A classic reprobate"

"Who is corroded by his sins just like a rusty pot"

"Oh God, give this sinful dog a whack, and throw me a forgiving bone"

"And take me, take this sinner"

"To your heaven of mercy"

(evening 7.30)

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Wednesday, 29 ~~January~~ March 1916

Another day gone and nothing new, and it's still cold and wet, so not much going outdoors, except for a half-hour walk this morning. Sat in my cell all day long and read,

unfortunately a rather dull book, The 5th of May, a story about the Waterkant [coastal areas of the North Sea] that didn't offer me anything new and, because I have little interest for lengthy descriptions of a landscape that I don't know, and whose people and sense of humour I do not understand, did not even entertain me. Nothing new from the battlefields either! We Germans are being repelled everywhere, suffer heavy losses and have lost all morale – that's what the Australian newspapers write. But when we manage to see German news, or even English reports, we Germans are advancing slowly but steadily! And hopefully victory will be ours!

Otherwise, the same old same old. The biggest worry, as mentioned before, is the lack of money, and how to get through another day and night with decency! Nowadays, I associate almost exclusively with Lembach, Jerssen and Stegmann, maybe occasionally a word with Lorenz, or a few

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other highly indifferent, very mediocre beings. The relationship with my cell mate is, strangely, always a little tense, but neither of us really wants to know where the tension comes from. Otherwise, I'm in excellent health and have no complaints, except for a little wheeze sometimes, under exertion. So, just release me into freedom and I can once again tackle work and life. But now I shall try to write a letter home! (7.15pm)

Sunday, 2 April 1916

On Thursday, Friday and yesterday I didn't have time to take notes, but it's no great loss! The weather is still pretty bad, so I have mostly read and played solitaire. On Friday, I did get a swim in with Jerssen and Stegmann. And "work" has popped up again, if timidly, this time in English (Toussaint-Langenscheidt). Last night we celebrated "Bismarck Memorial"; the prologue [speech??] was rather awful, then a few choir and solo recitals, a few orchestral pieces, and piano and violin soli, some of it very nice, and thus, and this is what counts,

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we did something different and managed to spice up life. This morning, lacking money and a haircutting machine, we launched a grand head-shaving operation in Jerssen's abode, under much shouting and laughter. Assisted by Stegmann, Schmidt and Lembach, I began shaving Jochen Jerssen, and then the four all at once attacked my head, and not in the noblest fashion, because blood was flowing freely and my head still aches now. However, "maski me loose", as Ah-Tan would say, and so we have laughed ourselves through half a day. In the afternoon reading and going for an hour-long walk with Stegmann, having all sorts of useful conversations and some hefty plans for the future. – Today, our revered canteen officer Smelling-Ford disappeared and a very

young gentleman arrived in his stead. Nothing else to report. Hints of peace have vanished from the newspapers and the Germans seem to get battered everywhere and by everybody. No mail, no money, but the "Marsina" and the "Matunga" are on their way from Rabaul to here, and hopefully they are "heavily loaded".

Unfathomably, I still have no news from home, and the letters probably end up in the wastebasket because of their length, since Mama no doubt

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will write in epic proportions.

But now a few sayings I have stumbled upon in the past few days. A Greek philosopher, whose name I can't remember now, is said to have said more than 2000 years ago: "He who wants a lot of trouble will get himself a wife or a ship!" Hmm, I better keep this one.

And an old sailor's saying:

"Life is like a dream;
All its glory
Just a weightless whitecap
Which the tide of time
Sweeps away into eternity."

And now a toast:

A heart full of fight withstands all of fate's adversities.
A strong heart is like gold, so keep it strong.

Another one:

Nulla unda sam profunda quam vis amoris furibunda.

Translation:

No well so deep and powerful
As love's torrential wave.

The latter I would not endorse.

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In Bernhard Kellermann's "Das Tor" ["The Gate"] I found a line that is really a slightly ridiculous assertion plucked out of life, known to most but of interest to few. "Why is it that whenever we walk across a bridge that spans whatever water, we have this sudden urge to spit into that water? Watch 100 people who cross the bridge thinking nobody watches, and 90 will spit. Watch 100 kids, and you can be sure 100 will spit."

(8 o'clock in the evening)

Monday, 3 April 1916

Nothing new from Paris and the whole wide world. Today they distributed mail from Germany, but of course they had nothing for me. I had to get out of bed at 7am today, sorry, had to climb out of the potato bag [the palliase], because I had to fetch bread for the mess. Breakfast with Lembach, Jerssen and Stegmann, and the usual banter and jokes. (Lorenz is clearly offended after I lit into him yesterday morning.) Afterwards I walked along the beach on my own until 9am, and then studied English until 10.30am and since the weather

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was pleasant, went swimming with Jochen. Spent lunchtime at the beach café rolling the dice and lost again, but have at least salvaged 2 packs of cigarettes, so I'm blessed with smokes for tonight. It has been raining again since 4pm! Tonight I got the cell to myself, after having to make do with the side table the past few nights; Hayer is playing skat. I shall do a bit of reading shortly.

While reading today, I came across a Landsknecht song [*Landsknechte were 16th century German mercenaries*], which shall be included here. Of course, there is a danger that this book will end up being a poetry collection! But who cares, because if ever I shall read through these pages again, the rhymes will entertain me; whether I shall enjoy the rest of my scribbles is another question.

"That I will have to leave this world fills my poor heart with pain. It was a time of great distress, and into the rising dawn the Reaper came along. Tralali, tralala, the Reaper came along.

2. I leave behind the sun and moon, and whatever else hangs in the sky. Upon my soul, ye thunderbolts! May God give me a peaceful end, and a glorious resurrection. Tralali, tralala, a glorious resurrection.

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3. The field lies there in morning glow, the halberds ready in a row,
that Reaper loves me, turns out he was my truest friend.

He sends my soul straight into that eternal life. Tralali, tralala, into eternal life.

4. A chestnut-coloured maid in faraway lands
prepares for her wedding day with busy hands.

Forget it, my girl, that lad of yours who gave you the golden ring,

He needs to lie down, needs to rest his bones. Tralali, tralala, needs to rest his bones.

5. The man who has brought you this song has often swung his halberd to the sound of
fifes and drums. He has sung it in a mild summer's night, on sentry in Ingolstadt, and he

sounded oh so sad. Tralali, tralala, he sounded oh so sad.”
The Landsknechte Schwerthin and Jürg von Grundsberg called it a “fiery
[indecipherable]”. Strange times!!

And now one more for today, in a very different mould; fresh and new, from Gottfried
Keller:
Wickedness in the woods

[There follows a lengthy poem by the Swiss novelist Gottfried Keller about a tryst in the
woods]

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[Continuation of poem by Gottfried Keller]

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[End of poem by Gottfried Keller]
8 o'clock in the evening

Thursday 6 April 1916

And more of the same, day in, day out. And still no mail, from anywhere, nothing new,
and anyway, no money! Went swimming in the morning, with the usual scuffles; read
the newspapers in the afternoon, and rolled the dice, this time with some success;
conversations in the evening, and a bit of reading. From 10pm to 11pm the great peace
conference in our cell: as deputies, Lembach, Stegmann (the Prince of “the Black
Mountains and of Darkness”), [indecipherable] of the Grande Nation, and Karrer on and
off, and thus I, along with the others, had some childlike, innocent fun! Of course, the
newspapers do not report any German successes! – Today, the ~~consul~~ governor general
was here but disappeared without voicing a sound! And that’s that. In the evening,

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I didn’t write anything because Hayer is still working on his list of ships; incidentally, we
get along better now, and he also has, most obligingly, helped me out with 10 bob, so I
could pay café, laundry and table money and be rid of one worry! Otherwise, I’m doing
fine in every respect. – And now the 5 cents worth of poetry!

The Ballad of James Monmouth: [indecipherable]
A bloody trail leads right across our house in Alters
My mother was his lover, the beautiful Lucie Walters
It was evening, the grain gently swayed, and they were kissing

below the linden tree to the sound of a hunter's bugle. I'm a child of sin.
My mother has often told me of that evening of ~~bliss~~ sun,
Her lips said "I've sinned" but her eyes, they were dancing with bliss.
A child of sin, a Stuart child! And from afar the flash of the [executioner's] axe,
It's the path all have trodden, it's the path I will tread.
Loved the life, kissed the crown and gave my heart to the women,
But the final kiss was on the scaffold – that's the life of a Stuart.

With cithers and cymbals, with cotillion and dance, the whole life a rosary!
The pains of love, the privations of love, the whole life renunciation and death!
Liliencron

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I dreamed I arrived at Heaven's gate and found you there, Beloved!
You were sitting at the fountain before the gate, washing your feet!
You were washing and washing away at the dazzling whiteness,
And in bewildering haste you began anew, all over again.
I asked: Why are you bathing yourself, your cheeks awash with tears?
You said: Because I've walked with you, walked so deep in dirt!
C.F. Meyer? [later added in pencil] or H. Heine?

Who ever knew how to live life properly? Who has not wasted half of it,
In sleep, in fever, in conversation with fools, in the pangs of love, in idle laziness?
Platten

I have begged for lust and love outside your house night after night.
But heart and door remained locked, even as I entreated you:
Behold my need, behold my need. My heart is hammering, my brow is hot.
Alas, I do not know any other solution
Than your love or my death.
Alexis Lomnitz

I have enjoyed the best the world can offer
But those youthful hours are long gone.
April, May and June are far away
I'm nothing anymore, and I don't care for life no more.
Hölderlin

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[Verse by Liliencron]

[Verse by Freiligrath]

Be callous! A heart that is easily moved is a painful liability in this volatile world!
3rd ode to [indecipherable], Lessing

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[Verse by Heine]

[Verse by Johann Christian Günther, 1719]

[Another short verse by Johann Christian Günther]

[Excerpt from Schiller's trilogy *Wallenstein*]

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But now let's have something more light-hearted, whimsical! Come here, old favourite,
Otto Julius Bierbaum! Come forward, you laughing philosopher!

[4 poems by Otto Julius Bierbaum, covering all of page 20 and most of 21]

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[French verse, not attributed: Baissez-vous montagnes!
Haussez-vous vallons!
M'empêchez de voir
Ma Madelon!]

Lower yourselves, mountains!
Rise, oh valleys!
You're blocking my view
Of my Madelon!

So, now I have purged my heart, or my liver, or whatever it was, of the things I
remember, and it's taken me right up to my bedtime.
[indecipherable]

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Saturday, 8 April 1916

Rain, nothing but rain for the last 2 days, making it impossible to put a foot outside. It's

also cold. And it's dreary. Downright desolate. Add to this all the delectable news in the Australian newspapers; the remark by the British Finance Minister that the war will most likely last until at least March 1916~~7~~; the possibility that one could be deported to Germany or, more likely nowadays, to Liverpool; and that there is still no money from Rabaul, and no mail from anywhere, and you should have a fairly accurate idea of my mood. – If no money arrives in the next few days, I no longer know what to do, since my debts already amount to 45 shilling, all repayable shortly. Ah well, let the catastrophe take its course! In Germany I used to shrug off such trivial problems, and would have felt much less threatened by debts of 1000 times this amount than I do here, in this godforsaken place! What used to help me over such situations and would instantly make me feel better is missing here, of course, and that's the one and only medicine: booze.

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Yes, it amazes even me that I have been a teetotaller since New Year's Eve, considering my past and those mad student years. Where are you, you countless tankards of Lichtenhain, where are you, you Kulmbachs, Würzburgs, Coburgs, Gose, you native brews from the Augustiner and Paulaner? Am I the one who once upon a time used to indulge in academic fencing in Bollberg and Leipzig, decked out in the student corporation's blue-white-and-black and full of its bravado? Oh Gose tavern, Kümmel dispensary, Schiefe Fresse [probably a beer garden], and Rheingold! Oh Saaletal, and Rüdelsburg, Giebichenstein, and Moritzburg, [indecipherable]! Oh fencing and fraternisation! Lake Halle and the girls of Leipzig! And then Munich! Still devil-may-care and boisterous, but a little more stout, more corpulent. And the company of the one and only, Rosie of Ammersee! Theatre, Augustiner, Café Pfendl. It was such a great time! It was still great, too, to sail off into the world, now ensconced in a job and security, and visit Naples and Port Said, Colombo and Australia, and it was still good to be in New Guinea, even if it meant more work than pleasure, because all in all, I had my fun [indecipherable]. And so what if the sheilas were now black, yellow or brown instead of white! And goddamn it, the good times

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will return! I'm still young, and healthy again, and although the girth of erstwhile has vanished and I'm thin as a beanstalk, I'm still merry! Therefore, O Gods, have mercy and do not cross my plans out of idle spite! Amen! [indecipherable]

But let's calm down now. It was high time that I got away from New Guinea. Dysentery and fever had already taken its toll and then came these relentless drinking sessions in Rabaul, it was like a collective virus, and truly, it wasn't pretty anymore. And to top it all, that latest illness. So yes, it was high time I got out of there, but now I'm recovered and now I'd like to go back to New Guinea, go back to work, be merry and have a few drinks.

Not a lot of drinks, just a few here and there when you need it. I want to work, save and behave, and eventually return to Germany. (A mean-spirited man could now add this: "Spiegelberg, I know thee!") Of course, you always have to expect that life will trip you up!

I do seem to do a lot of thinking here! When you're confined

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to your cell for two days and let your thoughts roam, you're soon back home with Mother and your siblings, or in the tavern, or with the German girls! Or in the bush, or at work. Let's face it: letting your thoughts wander and indulge in fantasies is the best thing you can do here. Because what else is there? I couldn't care less for the singing and music-making here. Täufert gave a lecture yesterday on Turkey and Persia, etc, but it was stiff and boring, plus I wrote a letter to Beyerlein in Kabakaul, and so on the plus side I can only mention a few talks and jokes with friends and acquaintances – well, yes, that's all for today! (7.45pm)

Monday, 10 April 1916

Oh boredom! My God, how boring can it get in this world! I have now reached a point where I start writing in the middle of the afternoon. But I'm too unmotivated and brain-dead to study or do anything else! I wish I could just sleep through to the end of the war! It is still raining, raining non-stop; sometimes it's a fine drizzle, sometimes it comes bucketing down, that's about the only variation we get! Yesterday I spent all of 5 minutes

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outside and then had to hurry back in; today, I haven't set a foot outside. Thus you sit in your cell and by and by acquire a prison tan. Christ Almighty, why is nothing happening! Let this war finish at last! The martial luck keeps changing for both sides. And both sides are busy issuing war bonds, so there is no end in sight! – Still no mail, still no money; the New Guinea steamers have docked in Sydney, but no mail up here yet, and most likely there won't be anything for me anyway! Today, like any other day, up with the bread call, cleaning the cell before roll-call, then the rain starts! And breakfast [added in pencil:] enjoyed. Fetched some books from the library, spent some time with Stegmann, then studied some English, inspection at noon, then Lembach and Stegmann visiting; after lunch a nap and then off to fetch petrol, which is now being supplied by the government; another short visit from Stegmann and Jerssen, and a bit of writing. This evening I shall probably read a bit, and then Schmidt or Stegmann, Jerssen or Lembach will drop by; at 10pm lights out; in between a few rounds of solitaire,

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after 10pm the usual political discussions with Hayer, Langer, Stegmann, Lembach, who will disappear at 11pm, and then we sleep and tomorrow the same again. The same day in, day out. And who knows what happens then!

Once upon a time you could dig your own grave if you felt like it, but here no doubt some military control organ would intervene and probably deport you to Germany, where you would end up a soldier, and that would definitely be the end of your life and the existence that I wanted to create for myself. I could have saved myself the trouble of emigrating and stayed home to begin with! (4.30pm)

Couldn't finish yesterday, because Schmidt dropped by and we had to read the newspaper. In the evening Jerssen, Stegmann and Schmidt came to our cell and read the "Sea Journey", and later the famous remembrances of Rabaul took hold, with all their joys and sorrows. So we had a big conference after 10pm until about 11pm. (10.30am)

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Wednesday, 12 April 1915 [should be 1916] [added in pencil:] (7.15pm)

Mankind's ambitions are vain from the start, and life is just a drag. I'm more miffed and querulous than ever. The mail from Rabaul did not eventuate, therefore no money, and I just don't know what to do anymore; just let it ride, I guess. But eventually I may have to sell my cell, even though I have not the least inclination to do so. I cannot believe that the company in Rabaul could be so callous; maybe our letters haven't reached them, but even so! – Yesterday and today the same old story. Went swimming in the morning, since the weather has cleared up a bit. Yesterday I studied some English, today there was a veterinary's lecture on horses; rolled the dice at lunchtime and in the evening (I lost, of course, but it's the only chance I have to get some cigarettes), and read for a while, etc. Visitors until 11pm. Sad and repugnant, this whole goddamned affair. Lembach, the lucky guy, was in South-West Docks today to inspect the movie theatre for the camp.

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Friday, 14 April 1914 [1916]

Today they handed out the rest of the New Guinea mail, plus a heap of European letters, but of course, nothing for me! So there goes the last illusion. The money simply won't come! Tomorrow I have to pay about 5 shilling to the cafeteria and don't know how, and nobody will want to lend me anything anymore. – New Guinea has sent another £28, and if I'm lucky, I'll get 10 shilling out of that, but those I'll have to give to Hayer right away. It shouldn't surprise anybody that I've lost my sense of humour over

these constant money worries, that I've lost all desire to work [study?] and that I'm cranky and dispirited. I would just like to know what the people in Rabaul are thinking and why I'm not getting any mail from Germany. From Edy's letter at the time I gathered that none of my family is angry with me and he said they had all written to me, but I never received any letters! – It is very cold since yesterday, but the weather isn't too bad, so I've been going for long walks these past two days. This morning I climbed the cliffs with Jerssen, then read a bit and gambled for some cigarettes. The usual nightly visits until 11pm or 11.30pm. Thus one uneventful day succeeds another uneventful day,

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and many more uneventful days will follow. Easter is upon us and will probably go by as drearily as every other weekend, and the war goes on and on, no peace in sight! What's the point of recalling moments from the past in Germany, or building castles in the air for a future that won't arrive, or even fantasising about it on these pages; the present is too bleak, the times are too dispiriting to get the juices flowing and to laugh it all off. Even the conversations among the comrades have become more sombre or shrill, and the laughter doesn't sound spontaneous anymore. I'm lacking the heart and the vigour to tackle anything, be it physical or intellectual. I'm getting more and more listless, I'm practically withering away. I really can only hope for a fast end to this! (7.30pm)
[added in pencil some months later:] I'm talking an end to imprisonment here. Have money in my pockets today, so can't imagine wanting an end to life. Trial Bay, 20/10/16

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Saturday, 15 April 1916

It has become a habit to pull out this journal each evening and write a little. The habit has its merit, as it makes the time go faster. On the other hand, it's a nuisance to rehash all the dire thoughts and emotions that have already plagued me all day. I have become so despondent that I keep turning a thought, or a fragment of a conversation, endlessly around in my head, which then promptly ruins my day. For example, this afternoon I heard a few guys saying that in their opinion, all of us would be deported to Germany after the war and conscripted into military service, and this remark alone ruined my mood for the whole evening, even though I have considered this awful possibility a 1000 times before. It is indeed a weird sport to torture yourself with the same thoughts over and over again, let alone to talk about it, because you won't find any sympathy or consolation anywhere. Besides, everyone here is caught up in his own problems. To top it all, it was damned cold this morning. I fetched

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something to read from the library and went to Stegmann's place to read until 11am (Toma riots). Then out to climb the cliffs with Jerssen. After lunch I slept until 3pm, rolled the dice (needless to say, I lost), then read again at Jerssen's and Lembach's place. Now, after dinner, I'm writing, and then some more reading until lights out. Then Lembach, Haugk and maybe Stegmann will probably drop by, and then off to sleep. And this will be the program for the next umpteen days.

There's not much news from the front. ~~Stade~~ Stead writes that it's only a matter of time until Verdun surrenders, and they say that the English got hammered at Kut-el-a-mara [the siege of Kut al-Amara in Mesopotamia, today's Iraq]. That's all. Yet when you hear the inmates talk, we've had nothing but fantastic victories, so why are we still here? And so we're back to the usual whine, if only it ended, if only I could be back in New Guinea, so let's stop it right here! (7pm)

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Sunday, 17 April 1916

The mood has improved somewhat, because the New Guinea subsidy is due shortly and in about 14 days, the "Merinda" is due from Rabaul. However, there is this strange prophetic premonition that on the one hand, it won't be enough to cover the substantial debts at the beach café, and on the other hand, the "Merinda" will fail to deliver. – Nothing new, as usual. The weather, especially at night, is beastly cold, but also very sunny, very nice and crystal clear. With its pristine air, it recalls the autumn days in Germany, when it's so wonderful to roam the fields and woods, and it makes you crave freedom and your home country!

The days pass as previously outlined, except for a bit of a change today. Went swimming despite the cold, and lo and behold, it was beautiful. The rest of the day went as always, twiddling one's thumbs, reading. The same exact procedure as yesterday and a month ago!

There seems to be some, albeit slow progress on the battlefields. Not that we gather anything from the English papers, but one can read a bit between the lines. There was a speech by the German Minister of War, who also said that the fall of Verdun was only a matter of time, and who thanked the German people for their brave attitude so far

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and who fairly predicted Germany's ultimate victory, all of which was of course extensively analysed and commented. The optimists believe to have read the phrase

that peace was closer than the layman may think. I hope they're right. [Added later:] Therefore, at the time, everybody called himself a layman, to speed things up somewhat. 20/10/16

Now a bit of poetry! A few verses by the Danish poet Jens Peter Jacobsen, whose strange poetry caught my eye and which I love. Born 17/3/1847 at Thisted [Jutland], died 30/3/1885 at Thisted.

[9 poems and aphorisms by Jacobsen, covering pages 34-37, finishing in diarist's usual parenthetical note of the time of day:] (8.30pm)

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Thursday (Holy Thursday), 20 April 1916

Holy [or Maundy] Thursday: can't see anything special in it. Easter will be Easter, what else. I guess here the event will be celebrated by a change of clothes and fresh underwear. Last year and the 2 years before that, I spent Easter with Westphal, [indecipherable], Koch and [indecipherable] in Toma and Papatara, it was great! – This year in prison, interned, and maybe next year as well, since the war does not seem to end, ever. That's looking forward to Easter for you! You can hardly expect a festive mood.

The days have passed along the well-known pattern, except that now I'm reading at night as well. This morning, in the most glorious autumn weather, we went swimming and played the same old war games. The financial situation has improved somewhat thanks to Schmidt's help of 10 shilling. This was just enough to pay off my tab at the Café and to buy a tin of cigarettes. The dice will have to stop now; and I have made a start with stopping by not going to the Café today. Next week, alternating with Schmidt, I shall do a work shift (in the bush) every other day, and that will pay me 3 shilling for the week.

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In [indecipherable] "Storms" I found the following:

Describing the seamen's bars in St Pauli and the effects of booze, especially the worry-killing effects, he says: "Where are they now, those worries, which have so burdened many a patron all week long, which rose with him in the morning, which sat alongside him at work, at lunch, and went to bed with him? The booze, that great comforter, has swept them away, the booze that is kept in those huge barrels and that can be had so easily and readily if you have money in your pockets. It's so simple and so handy, so inviting and so tempting! Just one glass and that brain in your head already feels lighter, the future no longer looks bleak and black! One more! Already a way out of all the

trouble and sorrow appears on the horizon, how could you torture yourself all week long, at home and at work, over such trivialities! Let's have another one! Where is he now, that tedious guy who kept creeping up on you with his dour and sour demeanour? His bitter voice has been drowned out by the merry noise, his dour face has changed completely, he's now peeking out from behind the barrels with a grin and a smirk, as if he wanted to say: You fool, don't worry about me, don't worry about tomorrow! Well then, let's have another one. Ah, now, let's join that

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merry chorus: "Brothers, let's be jolly!" The chest opens up, the weights and shackles fall off, you're human, you're free and carefree, brave and self-confident!" – But what about the morning after?!

The New Guinea Water Hoffmann [Hoffmann of the New Guinea Water Company?] came and talked non-stop until 10pm, and that put an end to my writing.

Easter Saturday, 22 April 1916

The beautiful, clear autumn weather continues, offering a particularly beautiful view into the sprawling mountains across the bay. Yes, it would be wonderful if one weren't imprisoned. Some people here don't seem to mind, they like it just fine and would probably remain here forever! Well, it's a matter of taste!

Although I have enjoyed myself reasonably well these past two days, an undertone of crabbiness seems to linger, and will probably keep hanging around, it's this constant financial worry! The next steamer from Rabaul is not due for another fortnight, and there's no trace of the New Guinea donation either.

But one good thing happened. Yesterday, after almost 2 years, I have received the first mail from home. It was only a postcard, and ¼ of it

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was cut off, too, but my father wrote it last New Year's Eve telling me that all was well at home, and Mother, Lisel, Ada and Giggus said hello, ever so briefly. Still, I'm happy and so at last, I did get my Easter present.

Not that there is any sign of Easter festivity here. Yesterday, Good Friday, swimming in the morning, and a bit of putting the stone, then reading all day, except for ½ hour at the Café for lunch. In the evening, more reading, Jerssen dropped by for ½ hour. From 10pm-midnight, peace conference. – This morning, reading and then going for a stroll with Stegmann. Now, at 3pm, I'm writing because I don't know what else to do. The Singapore and Hong Kong people have received their luggage today, after more than 1

year in captivity! What a bloody mess!

The war goes on and on, but for a change it's the Turks who get battered; the Russians have captured Trapezunt [Trabzon]; I have less and less hope!

In the works of the Dane J.P. Jacobsen I found the following nice beginning of a letter written to his friend Edward Brandes:

"Your words are sweet like the mountain honey and soothing like the balm from the Amala tree; your letters please the eye like the ornaments on the sacred elephant's harness and your thoughts are like sparkles in the dark eyes of the gazelle. May Krishna fill me with strength for the trip to the northern

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hills, far from the tender shadows in the sun-flooded parks...

Alas, my soul is limp like the camphor tree's leaves and mournful like the night's birdsong. There's the man with the curly head and his blue-eyed wife, whose face resembles the sunlit blossom of the Asora tree and whose voice sounds like the clouds that mirror themselves in the water, will serve me heavy rice and wine ... Nine times my forehead touches your neck's [indecipherable], there where the black dog lives in the rock."

(3.30pm)

Easter Monday, 24 April 1916

Easter! The tolling of bells, preened and festive people, doubly festive because after a long winter, spring awaits. Beautiful weather, mild temperatures, maybe the first gentle, light-green leaves sprouting on trees, the first blossoms. Merry, laughing children, Easter eggs, ham! Church ceremonies! Confirmation! The world is round and turns. A chapter further along! And me, I find myself at the exact opposite of this world! Easter, days of celebration, days of rest! The sun shines down on tall, lean palm trees, towering eucalypts,

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shady gum tree woods. In the morning's early hours we have saddled the horses and rode off into the still dew-covered bush, up to Bitapaka and Toma, where we enjoy the booze and the good company and think of the fatherland! The world is round and turn it does, another chapter opens: Australia. Out there in the world the savage war is fought with changing fortunes – Easter peacefulness, what a joke it has become! And I'm sitting here a captive, behind prison walls, and never before have I been in such a foul mood throughout Easter Sunday. No money, no cigarettes. Four men shared 12 eggs, that was our Easter. Mass in the morning, a concert in the evening. I have skipped it all, preferred

to sit by myself, read some, dream some, went for a walk with Stegmann. Grey and boring, a day like any other, the same old mind-killing tune. In the perennial monotony of life the festive mood withers, and instead of spring and the awakening of nature, we're facing winter and everything dies off.

The world is round, and turn it must. Hopefully, next Easter another chapter will have begun. Where will I be? Easter in the barracks? Or free again in the lush tropics? Or still here? The worst thing is this uncertainty, this lolling about in the space of time without a destination! (3.30pm)

[Added later, in a different ink] Still in the same old place, same old cell, at the same old table! Easter 1917. W. [Added later still] 24/4/18 semper idem = still the same. W.

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Tuesday, 2 May 1916

A full 8 days have lapsed, without any work, without any achievement. If I'd have to account for how I spent the week, I could not say. I do know, however, that the nights were bitterly cold and the days crisp and beautiful, so mostly I went swimming in the morning and for a walk with Stegmann in the afternoon. I only rolled the dice once, and with success, and spent the evenings reading. All in all, I entertained myself reasonably well. And thus we are back to the same old same. What a ragout! Stop! One exception: On May 1, at 5.45am, the band gathered and played "May has arrived and the trees are greening" and all the while we were lying in bed, trembling from a cold so fierce that the nose water risked freezing. To double up on the irony, the band then played "Rejoice". Yes, yes.

For 8 days now I again lay in wait for money. Like a monkey waiting for peanuts. The "money ships" come, the "money ships" go, but none brings the real gold, or at least some Australian bank notes. As for the "New Guinea donation",

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which they say is money indeed and already in Liverpool, I assume we're playing a modern game of patience here. The longer we wait, the less it will become and in the end it will all have come to nothing anyway, just all shit, as the slang would have it.

Despite all, I do thank my fate for having led me out of Liverpool and to this blessed gaol. Apart from the climate and nature, it's not great here at all, but it's far, far worse down there. From what we hear, and it's no exaggeration, they kill each other down there; who falls from grace, or even just dares wearing a clean shirt, will be beaten up. The "Black Hand" gang robs anybody they suspect of having money, and hundreds of people are being beaten to pulp. People arm themselves with knives for protection. In

order to stop the thieving and mugging, the "White Hand" has formed, and this had led to a huge battle; one was killed and thrown across the fence to the guards; 3 are so badly hurt they will have died by now as well, and 8 heavily wounded ones are in hospital. Result: the Australians are gloating and we have to feel ashamed for our countrymen!

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A somewhat more lighthearted matter happened there as well. The guards caught 3 strong guys distilling whisky, with all the distillation gear, etc, and in the cell of one of the heroes, they found 18 bottles of the noble brew, which the man sought to explain with the laconic statement: "I'm a drinking man." Result: a fine of 200 guinea each = 210 £ sh. or 12 months forced labour.

On the front, something's happening. Kut-el-a-Mara has fallen and Townsend has capitulated; the Russians are being clobbered at Lake Naroch; England is being bombarded by Zeppelins, while our navy is shelling the coastal areas; and, best of all, there is rebellion and revolution in Ireland! And right away my hopes for imminent peace rise.

But no mail from Germany or New Guinea! And to make my mood complete, the following intermezzo happened today. I'm strolling along the beach caught in my thoughts when from lofty heights Count Stegmann starts hollering that I should come up to the office. Well, what else could it be but money; the dear old Count is all smiles and merriment!

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The Tommy had been looking for Hieber, Jerssen and someone called Doh-, Woh- or Bohmann, he said, and that had to be me. From the office emerges first Hieber Baum with money, then Hieber with money, but then Jerssen has only a letter in his hands and a terrible frown on his face, and me, I get kicked out with an angry "I didn't ask for you". So, it must have been someone else. And I once again got the short straw. (8pm)

Thursday, 4 May 1916

In the last few days, lots and lots of mail has arrived, from Germany, from New Guinea, from all over the place, but for me – nothing; I could scream! I've got a terrible craving for cigarettes, but there's nothing I can do, I'll have to wait until Stegmann realises my plight and offers me one. Oh misery! I would have never thought that I'd find it so hard not to smoke. To be able to continue writing, I had to bum a cigarette from the Count. I find it indeed easier in the long run to be without booze than without smokes. Smoking

is just so comforting, although nowadays I have to make do with 5 cigarettes a day at most.

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Yesterday (and the morning before) I studied some English, afterwards Hayer and I limewashed the cell windows ; from noon to 1.30pm walking along the beach, as always; a nap from 2.30pm to 3pm, then the newspapers, then another stroll from 4pm to 4.45pm, and more reading in the evening (Multatuli's adventures [indecipherable]) despite the noisy music out in the hallway. This morning, first a short walk, then a lecture on "Havarie grosse" [general average] from 9am-10am; then swimming with Jerssen and Stegmann; during the usual water battles I hurt the 4th toe on my right foot, I slammed it so hard against something that it is still hurting like hell; I almost believe it's broken or at least sprained; if it doesn't get better, I will have to see the doctor. As it has been raining since 2pm, I'm using the afternoon to write. My mood is well below zero; I'm venting my irritation by loudly cursing the company and anybody who deprives me of money! The New Guinea donation is nowhere in sight either.

4.45pm

I shall try now to write a letter to Germany. Yesterday, I wrote to [indecipherable].

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Monday, 8 May 1916

Friday and Saturday, it rained. Sunday was pretty monotonous. And today not much else is happening either. But at least I can walk normally again; it seems I only concussed that toe, after all. So I've been able to resume my morning and evening constitutions. I've been given a lot of good and interesting reading matter, so I haven't had much time for anything else, like English, for example; on Saturday, I did write a letter home. It was quite a festive day, because for the first time in almost 2 years, I received a letter from Mother. Thankfully, she is well, as are Father and the siblings; only poor Edy has been sick again, sicker than I thought. Mother writes that they will have to take out his left kidney, which is affected by tuberculosis; I hope he weathers the surgery all right and can finally, finally fully recover and enjoy his life. At home, they haven't had any news from Ernst since August 1915; no idea if he is seafaring or if he stayed on in Buenos Aires! I was so happy to finally hear that all my loved ones are OK, and now they are already looking forward to a reunion with me, whereas I want to

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remain overseas for a few more years and earn some decent money, so that I can then, at last – and I wish it were rather sooner than later – return home with money in my

pockets and a good conscience. But how things have changed at home already; materially, the change of apartment, but then you realise how the time passes, especially looking at the boys, whom I remember as small, dear and cheerful little lads in short trousers, and now this [indecipherable] will be confirmed this year, and Giggus is wearing long pants and both are learning Greek; and Lisel is grown up and probably dreams of marriage already. And dear Mother must be getting on as well, but in her letters and thoughts she remains the caring, loyal mother of erstwhile, whose kindness, unfortunately, was not always understood. And I, the Camel, am getting older too, although in no way wiser, and Mother would probably say I'm more childish than ever. – But otherwise, simply nothing is happening here, one day resembles the next, except that it's getting really cold now and I'm still without a cent.

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Nothing new on the front! It feels like the calm before a storm, and of course I hope that the storm will bring an end and set us free. Although various people are already getting used to the idea of having to spend another Christmas behind these idyllic gaol walls. I do hope they're wrong. Idleness is a beautiful thing, but when it's protracted it becomes boring, and I'm even looking forward to work!

(7pm)

Friday, 12 May 1916

Day after day goes by, empty and pointless. Sleeping, walking, swimming, eating, and the same again, that's the day's labour. And even this "labour" could be okay if it weren't so mechanic, the body just going through the motions. Every day we eat at the same time, we go walking at the same time, we sleep at the same time, etc. I'm so numbed by it all that I find it hard to even muster enough curiosity for reading; not to mention work like studying English, which I haven't done in a week now. This mindless, monotonously syncopated existence, this

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numbing captivity and, most of all, this uncertainty as to how long it will last and what will happen after the war, is making us all nervous, sick and irritable.

I still haven't had any news from Rabaul, no money in sight, nor is there any sign of the New Guinea donation, which looks like it will remain pure fantasy. Last Tuesday, I've written once more to Rabaul and asked them to at least acknowledge receipt of my letters. No more mail from Germany.

It seems they are preparing a new attack at Verdun, and hopefully they will succeed this time, bringing us a step closer to peace.

Now a few aphorisms, of which the first clashes considerably with the above-mentioned nervousness:

“To use nerves as an excuse is abusing the privilege of being unbearable.”

Some are freakishly intelligent, well, almost learned.
They stand on their heads and say the world is upside down.

One goes to college, one flies towards the ladies, one runs to the bar and rushes into the booze, but one falls flat at the exams.

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If you want to know mankind
No matter if man or woman
Don't look to the stars
Try borrowing some money!

He who doesn't cherish wine, women and song will remain an idiot throughout his life. I have sung all right, I've cherished all right, I wish I had remained an idiot!

And in [indecipherable] I found this:

How nice to reminisce about our ignorant youth, when we saw even the toughest things through a rose-coloured glass.
(10am)

Sunday, 15 May 1916

Wow. The tide has turned. What I had stopped hoping for, although deep inside I desperately clung to a last shred of it, has become true. Saturday night, about ¼ hour after Jerssen, I was called into the Office, which I first thought was a joke of poor taste on the part of Lembach or Stegmann, but lo and behold, we were handed a cheque over £4. The joy was immense, but it soon gave way to a silent rage when I discovered on the back

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of the cheque the insidious remark that Jochen was to get 50 shilling, but I only 30 shilling. The reason for this new insult by the Rabaul people is not clear, since no note or explanatory letter accompanied the ominous cheque. I shall wait if something arrives in the mail, before I send a heated letter to Rabaul. Of course, I could make do with 30sh a month if it weren't for the accumulated debt. The long-awaited parcel from Rabaul has

not come yet, nor has any other mail from Germany. Nothing's really changed in this idyllic life, and it seems we have definitely been cheated out of the New Guinea donation.

Yesterday, Pastor Dix reappeared in camp after about 4 weeks of freedom in Sydney; they brought him back in a hurry. Nothing new from the front, and of course, the local papers tell us hardly anything. Every day the Germans are defeated "somewhere in France" or "somewhere in Russia", they write, but you don't have to believe a word of it. But something's in the air again that's being kept from us; the optimists among us believe that Verdun is about to fall or that

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the Russians will be trounced. Well, that would do me. – If ever I had any stamina, it would be down the drain now. For example, I had to stop writing just then to pack and unpack my suitcase, to clean my cigarette case, etc; my concentration is not worth 5 pence. – The daily routine remains the same, of course. At 7.15am, and with the mandate to get bread, I get up, wash myself, get dressed and, for lack of water, clean my teeth with coffee, and then sweep the room. At 8am, it's roll-call, then breakfast until 8.30am, and then I go for a walk on my own until 9am. From 9am to 11am, I'm reading or writing, or, if things are really well, studying. At 11am it's off to the beach, where we first practice stone put and then indulge in aquatic wrestling (although today and yesterday we missed out in it because of the cold); if I'm not swimming, I go for another walk around noon. Lunch is at 12.45pm, followed by coffee and a few rounds of dice (now hampered by the hole in my purse), after which I enjoy a nap until 3pm. From 3pm to 4pm, I read the papers. From 4pm to 5pm another walk, usually with Stegmann. At 5.15pm, roll-call and dinner, stretched out to about 6pm, and then, after briefly dropping in on Stegmann or Lembach, more reading or writing until 10pm, or playing solitaire. (11am)

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Tuesday, 16 May 1916

Yesterday, Lembach dropped by and we decided to take up stenography for an hour each day. Yesterday, from 2pm to 3pm, we had the first lesson, so far I'm enjoying it but I'm not holding my breath. As for the daily routine, which I began describing yesterday, there's not much to add, except for the hour from 10pm to 11pm, when Lembach, Haugk and Stegmann visit us for some lively conversation. Today, it's disgustingly cold. Nothing new to report, especially since yesterday we didn't even get the papers. (9.30am)

Wednesday, 17 May 1917

Hail the ducks! Yesterday, the New Guinea donation, which I had awaited so desperately and which I had already written off, finally arrived. Even if it didn't amount to much (12/6 per head), such an event succeeds nicely in lifting my mood and boosting my morale. I can't concentrate on writing today, as too many visitors are coming and going, e.g., Lembach, Hofmann and Schmidt. There aren't any news to relate, anyway, except that it's a bit warmer again. Tomorrow, I'll try to work on my English, and also resume stenography. From 2-3pm, Lembach and I practice stenography.

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By doing so, the afternoon nap is cancelled and I sleep like a young God at night! Yesterday afternoon and today, unfortunately, I went to the beach café, but surprisingly I got away with it both times.

From the money, I bought myself writing paper and envelopes and right away wrote to Johanna [Hayn?]; I'd love to hear from her or [indecipherable]. And once again that's all, folks. To judge from the Australian newspapers, Germany is being attacked on all fronts. And if it holds true, as it usually does – that if they write that Germany is being clobbered, it's really them who are taking the beating – we should be very near a glorious victory for our side, since we are being clobbered far too often (wow, what a great sentence this is). Lo and behold, the money has lifted my mood to such an extent that I've turned optimistic even on this score.

Went swimming this morning, even though it was rather cold, but I'm beautifully tired now. (9pm)

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Thursday, 18 May 1916

Something's not in apple-pie order as far as Verdun is concerned. In the newspapers that we get to see there is not even a mention of it, but here in camp they are talking about clandestine news sheets and banned newspapers, etc that report either that Verdun has fallen, or that parts of it have fallen, like some of the forts, and that lots of prisoners were made. St. [later added in different ink: Stead's "Review of Reviews"] is even said to have written that the war will last no longer than another 3 months, because Verdun could not possibly hold out much longer. Well, as I said before, that would do me just fine.

Last night I slept beautifully and didn't get up this morning until the "fetch bread" signal. Cleaned out the cell before breakfast. Roll-call at 8am, it went on and on, and after a sumptuous breakfast with A-1 peach jam, I went for a solitary walk; studied English from

9am-11am, went to the beach from 11am-12.30pm, with the usual stone put, snorkeling, water wrestling and jumping activities. After lunch – braised meat with rice dumplings – we rolled the dice for a round of coffee, and then off to stenography with Lembach, until 3pm. From 3-4pm, potted about, brushing off the trousers, filling up the lamp, reading the paper, etc. Afterwards I rolled the dice with Stegmann to see

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who'd buy another round of coffee and then went for a walk with the same gentleman and also watched a game of tennis until 5pm. Roll-call. Dinner [consisting of] veal ragout and a little entertainment. At 5.45pm, I wrote to Aunt Otilie, and now I've been "diarising". Also enjoyed X cigarettes during the day. This all reads quite nicely, but in reality is absolutely boring, since it is the same every day. Now I shall see if I can drum up something worth reading until 10pm, and after that we'll hold the usual conference until 11pm. Haugk hasn't come the past few days, by the way, Probably got miffed by some political views he doesn't share. And so off I go.

For the first time in a very long time, Hayer is not spending the evening in the cell. (8pm)

Wednesday, 24 May 1916

Quid novi ex Afrika? [indecipherable]. But one thing should not be forgotten; our former friends, the Italians, are being pummeled at the moment [the diarist refers to the Trentino Offensive]. And even if nobody writes so, something's in the air and it smells of defeat and thus peace! Well okay,

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maybe that's not quite the case and it all just exists in my head! By Jove, I'd give my kingdom if anything at all were to happen and change, and if the words "maybe" and "hopefully" would disappear from the vocabulary for good!

Life limps on; since Saturday, I'm not studying anything anymore except for an hour of stenography. On Sunday I had a bout of fever, which still lingered into Monday, it's another one of these nice ailments that seem to have become a fact of my life.

No mail! But Pankow-Müller from Liverpool informed us that he receives £5 a month from the company; that he gets more than us can be attributed to his "heroic" deeds, for which I could tear his head off.

All days look the same, just like eggs. Beach, walks, dice, but on Tuesday we have inaugurated the new bowling lane; it is, like everything here, rather remarkable given the circumstances. (11am)

Shall write home now.

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Thursday, 25 May 1916

Yesterday the Rabaul mail finally arrived, but unfortunately, it delivered only one of those "blue letters" by the company, which left me stewing for quite a few hours. Totally unfairly, I'm only being paid 30sh a week, the others get more. I shall refrain from answering right away.

Yesterday, Stegmann and I went for a walk from noon to 12.45pm. After lunch, I did stenography with Lembach, afterwards I read for a while and then went for another walk with Stegmann, also did some gymnastics. In the evening, I rolled the dice with Hayer, Lembach, Stegmann and Schmidt, we were in our cell and it got quite loud at times, but it was very cozy. Afterwards the usual conference from 10pm-11pm. (From 11-12 horse care.)

Today it's bitterly cold again. Was in Lembach's cell until now and tried to do some writing. Found this one in St. v. Kotze:

Time is like a woman; if you haven't got one, you're unhappy,
But if you have one, you don't know how to get rid of her.

Hope [indecipherable]

Men talk and dream much of a better future; you see them chase a happy, golden ideal. The world turns old and turns young again, and still men hope for better days. Hope escorts men into this world, the young boys thrive on it, the young adults are spelled by it, and the old ones cling to it. Even on his deathbed, man will seek refuge in hope. It's not an idle, futile concept born from the mind of a fool, it originates in the heart and it makes itself heard: you're born to a better fate; and what the inner voice says, the soul cannot dismiss. (11am)

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Monday, 5 June 1916

Ten days frittered away, wasted in dolce far niente [sweet idleness]. I don't seem to get anything done and time passes and elapses. Just one letter, from Mirow, who says nothing news, other than that, the world is mum. We got more money from New Guinea, a paltry 6sh/6- – well, it's better than nothing.

One day like the previous day and the next one. It's cold, but there's a beautiful autumn light, crisp and clear way into the distance, and it makes me long for freedom, for the

freedom to roam. In the mornings, a few walks, from 2pm-3pm stenography, after lunch, that is, after 3pm, we roll the dice to make out who's paying for coffee, and lately, in the evenings, we've been playing "Cameroon" [a game of dice] in our cell, with Lembach, Schmidt, Stegmann and Hayer. From 10pm-11pm, the famous "night conference" is in session, and any free time in between I spend reading, although there is a lot of crap around, so too yesterday.

The past 3 days, however, I've had such maddening headaches that I couldn't read or write, and even feared to be going blind,

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because at times, I couldn't see from either the right or the left eye. Now the spook is over and all seems to be fine, but I hope the writing doesn't harm me!

Like Ariadne's thread, one thought meanders through my mind non-stop: if only there were peace. We hear good things from the front: the Italians are being trounced, and elsewhere we're gaining ground, only at Verdun things move slowly. Nonetheless, we dare to hope ... and hope that reality doesn't hit us over the head.

Despite the whining and the uncertainty, we still find reason to laugh, and I manage, at least for half a day at a time, to accept my fate with a sense of humour, bolstered by the motto:

Human life is like Angostura – bitter but not bad, really. (10am)

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Friday, 9 June 1916

Once again I'm trying to get over a strong episode of complete and utter laziness, and as usual, it's hard and requires several attempts! A first attempt yesterday to write a letter to the company, to get more money (this month, I haven't yet received any and had to borrow 10 bob from Lembach, which are already gone too). Second attempt: managed a letter to Mirow today, and now a bit of journalising. Can't manage anything more than a bit of reading, walking, swimming and stenography. But after Whitsunday, I shall resume my study of English! Nothing new under the sun, and I'm mostly talking mail here.

A few days ago we heard rumours of a huge naval battle and, originally, of a victory for us; but it has since turned into a defeat, at least according to the Australian rags (at Jutland).

We are now regularly playing Cameroon in our cell, from 6pm-7pm, and afterwards I don't feel like writing. But this will change, I promise. (10am)

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Wednesday, 14 June 1916

Whitsunday [Pentecost] has come and gone and was like any other day, except that I spent more money. The weather was okay, but not quite what we would expect for Whitsunday [in the northern hemisphere]. And having borrowed a European "frock" from Stegmann, I actually looked the part. The Gods were well-meaning, too, because on Monday, I received a letter from Beyerlein in Kabakaul who told me about the state of affairs over there, but also that my good "friends" are unhappy with me (which doesn't faze me because I don't need any friends). But I also got 2 cards from Father! At home, everybody is doing well, except Edy; the poor guy has been minding the bed for 9 weeks already after very heavy-going surgery to remove his left kidney. I do hope he gets well again. I am really worried that he may not survive this, but I do wish him all the best, because I really care for him. It seems that many of my letters never make it there, and even more of their letters seem to disappear somewhere between there and here. Father tells me that he wants to petition the powers that be, so that I might get some money from Germany,

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but I don't really expect much of an outcome from this, I am very sceptical. It's a pity that none of Mom's letters makes it to here, because I would have loved to hear something about Rosa. How this relationship can continue and how it may survive beats me! To be honest: I'd much rather see the whole thing ended and her married to someone else, because first, I don't feel anything for her anymore, and second, I could do without the liability. After the war, if everything goes according to my plans, I just want to work and make money. So that, after 2 or 3 years, I can return home with money in my pockets. But according to Beyerlein's letter, very few bureaucrats remain in New Guinea, and I can already picture myself alone in Kabakaul and right away my dreams take a dive. Administrator, etc! All wishful thinking, it seems.

The energetic burst of activity I had envisaged for after Whitsunday hasn't materialised, of course. I did write home today, and I went swimming (with the Count!), but that was it. During the day I can't get anything done, and in the evening it's too busy.

Our hopes for peace have pretty much vanished. It seems the Russians are advancing

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in great strides, which doesn't make me any happier. And in the camp, everything is as dour as always. The stenography lessons have petered out, the weather is autumn-like

and rather cold lately. And so one hopes from one day to the next that the war will end and things will get better! Hope and fantasies are really all that keeps us going.

I found the following fabulous poem from Ludwig I of Bavaria, dated 1847, to Lola Montez, Countess of Landsfeld (daughter of an English officer, Gilbert, and the Creole Oliverra.) [A "poem", half in German, half in English]

(7pm)

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Thursday, 15 June 1916

For a change and to our great delight it has been drizzling all day, accompanied by a comfortable dampness and cold that made the day even more interesting; in other words, a day as dreary as the last. At 7.15am I crawled out of bed and right away, to my great delight, I noticed throat pain, but thanks to the stimulating day I eventually forgot about it. Hayer had already left, and so I washed and dressed in solitude and reasonably good mood. I had just finished sweeping out the room when the signal came for the roll-call, which was held inside and lasted until after 8am. Over a measly breakfast (melon and lemon jam) I got into a mighty spat with Jerssen and afterwards, this striking case had to be discussed at length back in the room, where eventually talk drifted to the war, so that Lembach, Stegmann, Hayer and I found ourselves chatting until 9am. A visiting Haugk was fast dispatched. From 9am until 10.45am, stenography, 5 minutes of reading and then, just as I opened my English book, Lembach suggested an early pint. Nobly does the world perish. I went to buy a glass of beer and a pair of warm "Vienna sausages".

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Soon Lembach, Traub, Stegmann, Schmidt and Hayer had gathered in our cell and we enjoyed our pint and a lot of sensible talk about life and beer in Singapore and New Guinea. Noon! Inspection! But no, it was cancelled! After I idled away a quarter of an hour at Lembach's and in the hallway, and treated myself to a few rounds of solitaire, it was time for lunch. The food, pork roast and cabbage, wasn't half bad, and afterwards we rolled the dice to see who was going to shout the coffee. I "won". From 1.30pm to 2pm, I lay on my bunk reading "Adventures of [indecipherable]" over which I blissfully nodded off until 3pm. And lo and behold, at 3pm the newspaper arrived, which today had a few more favourable reports. It seems the Russian offensive was stopped. The Turks in Mesopotamia and we at Verdun made progress. When I finished the paper, it was 4pm and time for another coffee. Since my usual partner, Stegmann, was still napping, I rolled the dice with Hayer and Schmidt and who would have thought it, I "won" again. Back in our room, after a short stop at Franz's (Stegmann's), I wrestled

with Schmidt, umpired by Lembach, and somehow Schmidt suddenly had me in a full nelson; today, it was only the newspaper that got destroyed in the process, yesterday, it was Stegmann's

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watch-glass that lost out. The guests soon dispersed and so I had another quarter of an hour to myself to check out the *Sydney Mail*. A brief visit by Horst, who wanted to borrow some books but was "repulsed" [diarist's English word]. Thus it was time for the evening roll-call, this time outside and held by a corporal. Dinner (lobscouse) was uneventful. Played solitaire until 7pm, and Hayer is still at it at the big table. At 7pm, for the first time in months, we had a general assembly, which was peaceful and at which we granted the theatre £50 from the cooperative's surplus. – Then solitaire again until 8pm, and after a trip to the loo, I produced these scribbles. Schmidt and Lembach emerged sporadically. – This morning they hit me for 1sh 6p for the kitchen kitty. And so, that was the day. All I've got left to do is to get some fresh underwear out of the suitcase and turn the room into an "night ambience". I shall probably read a little. Haugk will drop by, and at 10pm, Lembach and Stegmann will show up as they usually do to discuss world events, etc until 11pm. Another trip outside and then I'll be left with my thoughts, remembering the fatherland

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and New Guinea, until I fall asleep. – If it rains again tomorrow, the day will pass the same way, if it doesn't rain, it will pass similarly. (about 9m)

Friday, 16 June 1916

It has been raining from dawn to dusk! And bitterly cold it was. And I have a cold that looks pretty serious. There's a desperate similarity between today and yesterday. After breakfast, I did go for a half-hour walk, the rest of the morning was spent reading, playing solitaire, paying visits and receiving visits. After lunch, reading, napping, rolling the dice. At 6pm, a quick round of "Cameroon", now solitaire again, etc. Am not in the mood for writing. It's anyway bloody dark since Hayer has usurped the lamp for reading. No news from the front. The newspapers seem to be in the dark themselves and are just full of empty phrases. No mail! No money! Mood very bad! (8pm)

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Sunday, 17 June 1916 [should be 18 June]

The weather has changed. It's biting cold but crystal clear, the air pure and fresh. We have the most beautiful moonlit nights with starry skies so clear like I've never seen

them before, neither at home nor in the tropics. – What's less beautiful is that the change of weather has given me a bad cold that gives me a lot of trouble, with a cough and pains in my right lung. It's quite inconvenient as I had planned to take up some "work" again with Hayer, Stegmann and Schmidt, since I have to earn a few shilling and also to while away the time.

Yesterday morning I went to get some books from the library, among them Kipling's "Kim", I want to at least try to read in English, and so far I'm doing alright. Most of Saturday, except for the usual interruptions like going for a walk and rolling the dice, I have been reading. And from 10-11am, we bowled.

Today I haven't achieved anything. In the morning, cleaning out the cell and shaving, etc, and then the room was full of visitors until noon, Stegmann, Hieber, Lembach, Schmidt. Then, until shortly before lunch,

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a walk with Stegmann. After lunch and the usual roll of the coffee dice, I slept until 3pm and then went for a solitary walk until 5pm. The most spectacular sunset, of a richness of colours like hardly ever before!

But except for nature, everything is dreary. I still haven't received money and am now so indebted that the June pay will vanish. There's no mail. The eagerly awaited New Guinea parcel doesn't seem to make it here either, although Stegmann's and Schmidt's things from Rabaul have been advised, which makes my frustration even bigger.

The newspapers are reporting the worst possible news, and here they all seem to think that we will be stuck here right through the winter.

Okay, because it's Sunday, I shall play a few rounds of solitaire and then read some more. (8pm)

Have played a double hand of solitaire with Hayer.

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Monday, 18 June 1916

My cold reigns supreme. The weather is as chilling but beautiful as before. After breakfast [indecipherable] with Lembach and Schmidt. And to top it all, for the first time in a long while, I went to the beach café until 11am. Then played solitaire with Lembach and laid out the work clothes. – In the afternoon, Schmidt, Hayer, Stegmann and I dug

trenches in the road. We did a good job, but my lower back hurt like hell. In the evening, solitaire again, a bit of writing and now I shall do some reading in English. (7pm)

Thursday, 21 / 6 / 16

“Work is a burgher’s delight”. Well, I don’t think this includes the toil and drudgery here, paid so handsomely with 1sh. But even though it’s an insult, it has its positive side. First, the time goes faster and second, I’m blissfully tired in the evening. On Tuesday it wasn’t much because we worked in camp, behind the smithy, where an annex is to be built. But most of the time we just stood there, 6 men, shivering like crazy in the cold. Yesterday and today, however, we were back on the road digging trenches. The only time I’m not freezing is when I work, because

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it’s still biting cold. It’s a factor that pushes the overall mood, which is already down because of the bad news from the front (Russian advances, etc, etc), right below zero. – On Tuesday morning, I played bowls with the bowling gang and did well for a change. Yesterday: morning constitutional, shaving, playing solitaire, reading. Throughout we have shivering visitors in our cell, even though we try hard to keep it warm. – My money from Burns, Philp hasn’t arrived yet, my cold has reached the apex of coldness, and my legs are also freezing. I suppose I better get into bed and read a bit. (8pm)

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7 July 1916

My birthday! It makes me want to laugh and cry at the same time. Nobody would have believed me if I had predicted that I was going to spend another birthday in prison. I just wish for myself that this will be the last one.

Frankly, I’m not exactly in a celebratory mood, especially since I’m suffering from vile stomach cramps. But at least I find solace in the certainty that my loved ones at home, especially Mother, will think of me and wish me all the best. I in turn wish that they fare well, that Edy will fully recover and that we will all see each other again in the best of spirits. For myself I wish imminent freedom, good health and a few years of excellent earnings.

Yesterday, I finally received another 30 bob from Burns, Philp, but once I pay off my debts, not much will remain of it. And here I sit alone in my cell, anything but celebratory, and write. Out in the hall, the choral society is making a racket. Outside,

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it's cold and completely calm, and the sky hovers like lead, grey and monotonous, over the yellow-green meadows along the shore and the parched bush land. It's dreary and it makes you drowsy, and it fills me with nostalgia for the sunny New Guinea or the fairy landscape of a German winter full of snow and ice.

The past 3 weeks were dedicated to work; each early afternoon, Hayer, Stegmann, Schmidt and I would go outside and be road workers. My hands and the small of my back often hurt, and I shed quite a few beads of sweat, but it was good and healthy, and it helped me pay off my debts with Hayer. In the evenings, we also worked on our cell, renovating and beautifying it. A wardrobe separates the bedroom, consisting of a double bunk, from the lounge, reception or living room, which has been fitted out not with a carpet, but with panels of burlap that we fastened with rails. It really looks good and it makes for a change. On Sunday we want to stop working, and I shall have more time for writing.

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Tuesday, 11 July 1916

My birthday passed uneventfully, and if on the day I indulged in some optimism regarding my future, the very next day plunged me into an abyss. At breakfast I was still merry, from 9-10am I bowled with the usual gang, and at 10.30am Grundig brought me a letter with black borders and Mother's handwriting, and right away I knew that Edy had died. Sadly, indeed, he died on Easter Sunday, at the age of 22, after a long and painful illness; he was buried on Tuesday at the forest cemetery. I shall never see him again, and who knows if I will even see his grave. He was the dearest of my brothers, he was the most diligent of all the siblings and Mother's most loyal son. I suppose we shall never forget this Easter. I don't know yet how he died, hopefully he drifted off without much pain, he was always such a good patient. Although at first I was deeply sad, I have come to think that it was for the best, that he had suffered enough.

I have thought long and hard about Edy's death, if

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there is life after death! I should think that the Christian concept of life after death is not a fantasy, and so I might one day see my beloved brother again in heaven or eternity. Although I myself can hardly stake a good claim on heaven. –

I want and must spend quite a few more years overseas and I just hope no one else in my family dies, and that I will see them all again one day. From the death notice I see

that Ernst is in Chile, but why he is there and if he's still in the merchant navy, I wouldn't know.

My life here continues as always. On Saturday and Sunday I was useless. I have stopped working in the bush. On Monday I had another bout of malaria and spent most of the day in bed. This morning we did some bowling, afterwards I read. At lunchtime I wrote 2 letters home and now I'm writing in my diary. –

The war doesn't seem to ever end. The English and the French, the Russians and the Italians are attacking on all fronts and of course they're "claiming" great successes. Hopefully, those are as insubstantial as their earlier "victories" and

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our fatherland eventually wins!

No mail from anywhere. Nor does the June money from Burns, Philp arrive. I'm broke once again, and with the pay for the work we did I have to pay off Hayer.

They say that in New Guinea, a suspiciously high number of people have contracted blackwater fever, and that one guy, a certain Dornfeld or Dornig, even died. In New Mecklenburg, around Kavieng, bugs are destroying the plantations. So, even there nothing but misery.

The weather is fine, but the cold is incredible, hard to take without a coat and European clothing. Nonetheless, my health is quite good, apart from a cold and a dysentery-like diarrhea (but only on one day).

But now I want to go for an hour-long walk (it's 3.30pm). Stegmann isn't ready yet for the "limbimum", i.e. he's only just begun studying, so I shall while away another hour here. In the foreseeable future I, too, shall resume the mental work. Let's see if I can motivate Lembach to take up stenography again. And although I have read quite a bit of English literature lately, I did not check out and study the

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grammar, etc, but mostly I was just happy to get the drift of it. But this, too, shall change.

I'm socialising quite nicely with Stegmann, Lembach, Hayer and Huber nowadays, whereas Jerssen is becoming quite priggish and intolerable. Now, however, I want to read the paper and roll a few cigarettes. I'm now rolling my own cigarettes, which saves

me quite a bit of money. What happens once I'm through the bag of tobacco that Hayer gave me is another question.

A quote from an author whose identity eludes me, titled "Handel recitative":

A parasol, an Empire dress, brown suede shoes
And a huge hat with a green band – Sweetheart, that was you.
Light trousers, blue coat, immaculate crease,
A panama hat and a walking-stick – Sweetheart, that was me.

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Wednesday, 12 July 1916

Just now, as I plugged in the light without really needing it, our only cylinder burst [?]. We'll be soon sitting in the dark. Such normally trivial events become huge episodes here and cause much agitation. Otherwise, one grey day flows into the next grey day, like a stream. (Have tried to repair the lamp, won't probably last long, but will try to continue the diary tonight.)

Friday, 14 July 1916

Wednesday night was spent repairing the lamp over and over again, and with a minimum of light. Yesterday, for a change, it rained all day and it was freezing cold. Everything looking grey, feeling grey, dreary, making you feel listless and lethargic. The refurbishment of our cell is now complete, and last night it was quite cozy sitting here in the glow of a new suspended lamp. Hayer has financed the entire renovation, a fact that embarrasses me but which I cannot remedy owing to my being totally broke. At night, the usual

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assembly of delegates and highfalutin politics. At the moment, we're getting the worst possible news from the war. The Russians are closing in on us from the east, the English and the French from the west, and the Italians from the south, and in Berlin they all intend to shake hands. It sure doesn't look very promising for the Germans, but there is hope yet.

But there is something else that greatly agitates the camp and leads to much debating and conferencing behind the prison walls, like a beehive under siege. There are negotiations with England about an exchange of civilian internees, particularly those interned in the English dominions. Hence this storm in a teacup, hence these tears [the author uses the Latin term "hinc illae lacrimae"]. The most meretricious, well, let's say

“kitchen” rumours are doing the rounds, and well-informed people who have god knows what secret relations to the Reich, the Kaiser and other majesties, which of course exist in their imagination only and in reality always end up being nothing but kitchen gossip, already know of course when the first transport to Germany

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will leave. (I, for one, don't trust the matter. It would be nice if true; but if untrue, I shall continue calmly, with all the calm, stamina and dignity of a seasoned prisoner) [added afterwards in small script:] especially since this imprisonment has made one so happy. Who needs a theatre when half of our inmates are treating us to the best theatre of all. The greatest scaredy-cats and cowards are those who open their traps the widest. They will grab the coat buttons of anyone who comes their way and looks patient enough, and vividly describe the revenge they will bring upon the enemy of the fatherland. Blood will flow to avenge the shabby treatment. What, you don't believe me? I beg your pardon! My coat button is gone, and with it a fair bit of cloth. Ha! He pats his ever-loyal German hero's chest, he is of course the best marksman, steeled in the bush and proven in so many ambushes. Ha! He is one hell of a horseman, he will show them all. And then, in a horrible mix of English and German, peppered with swear words in the best Australian tradition, he goes on to paint in glowing colours his future heroics as a “sniper”, as a daredevil messenger who braves the Russian steppes to deliver his dispatches. The listener

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is suitably impressed; but of the hero it is said with equally disarming honesty that he fled Germany to avoid military service, that he is one of the most notorious gentlemen (speak: spivs) in Australia and belongs to the popular class of work-shy riffraff they laconically call “beachcombers” here.

This species is by far the worst. Another sort are those that resign themselves to the *inevitable (*or so they think) and stare silently into a corner. Last night, at midnight, in lethal cold in a quiet corner, I ran into a gloomy Austrian who at first pretended to be a reserve officer but then sank remarkably fast to the level of a private, and when he, too, asked me if it was true what they were saying, I was mean-spirited enough to claim some dark connection to the highest office and to say that, yes, I had already received “secret” information. He was horrified and let off a stream of swear words, and I quickly escaped to my room. I promptly got my just deserts because this morning alone I was asked 6 times from where I had got my secret information (which goes to show that there are indeed those who believe it) and I had to retreat to my cell and keep low, swearing to myself that I would henceforth abstain from communication with “high up” and keep my mouth shut.

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Although we do have a fair share of deserters and slackers in our motley crew of people, having been collected from various places in the East like Australia, Hong Kong, Tsingtan, Singapore, Saigon, Sumatra, Bangkok, (Colombo &) Ceylon, plus New Guinea, the vast majority of them is thankfully very patriotic. They are honest and worthy people who braved the winds, proved themselves as expatriates and gained admiration and respect; who long to return to Germany and be able to serve their country, who can and will be useful to Germany in many ways. – And so we are happy to hear that negotiations are finally taking place to get us out of here and back to Germany. Alas, I fear, I fear it's just a beautiful dream! (11.30am)

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Saturday 15 July 1916

Over and over the same sad song! Yesterday, after writing, went for a walk with Stegmann until about 12.15. Lunch and then coffee. Nap until 2.30pm. Until 3.45pm our cell was full of visitors, so I didn't get to do much. Afterwards another walk with Stegmann. Dinner. Interrupted by visitors, I read until 9.30pm. Went to bed. Conference until 11pm. So it was today, so it was yesterday, and so it will remain!

No variety, no fast pace, all slow as a snail. Once it gets warmer again, we can at least go swimming, but that's about it. No mail. No money! No books, and not enough ambition or calm to want to do mental work all the time. It costs money to play tennis, it costs to play bowls, and even the library now charges a fee; and then you have to pay your share to the entertainment committee, to the music society, to the kitchen and lavatory personnel, the table needs to be cleaned, and getting the laundry done costs more than anything. Add to this the debt I have to repay, the cigarettes I want to smoke, plus I need petroleum and matches, and every now and then I want a coffee. And the punch line: this is all to be paid out of my monthly 30sh! I wish

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somebody would show me how to manage this. I nearly managed at some stage, but then the pay just didn't come for a whole month. It could drive you to the loony bin, and like most, I'm probably partway there already.

Shoes and socks are worn out and simply unusable. I have twice written to Rabaul, but no reply. How can I possibly remain calm! – All the more galling it is to read how well the English prisoners are treated in Germany and the German prisoners in England. They get what they need and even what they want. We here haven't received a thing: 2 men within four cold prison walls, 3 blankets each, 1 tin plate, 1 knife, fork and cup, once a

year 1 pair of pants, 1 shirt, 1 pair of boots, 1 cap, 1 sweater. 1 pail and 1 broom per 12 men. Everything else we had to buy ourselves and not too cheaply: beds, tables, chairs, lamps, petroleum, washbasin, carpets. Hayer and I have invested at least 150sh in our cell. And they have the nerve to demand that we make up our own private beds, scrub down our own private tables, and sweep out the cells (with 1 broom between 12 men!) before 8.30am. During

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our strike, when for once we all agreed to refuse to work, they managed to incarcerate 500 men for 14 days; and for 14 days, 500 men had to make do with a 3-meter-wide corridor around the block for their constitutional, like wild animals in captivity! They went even further and confiscated all the lamps, petroleum and drinking water that we had bought with our own money and made us sit in the dark. There was no tobacco, etc, because the canteen was closed. The most desperate among us smoked tea, which was probably more bearable for them than for their fellow inmates. In the last few days, people collapsed to the right and left. And we are in Australia's elite camp, the others in the other camps are doing it even tougher. Is it any wonder that we all lose our temper occasionally?

Soon, this horrible war will have completed its second year. On 23 July, I will have been imprisoned for a full year, a full year in jail. But not a day has passed when I didn't think of my loved ones at home! How often have I wondered what they are doing, how they are faring. How often have I envisaged their time of the day and what would be their activity at that moment. Since Edy's death I think even more often of home. But I

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am not getting any news. In 2 years, in response to my 30-40 letters, in response I have received 1 letter from Mother, 3 cards from Father and Edy's printed death notice. Not a word from an acquaintance, a friend or a relative, not a word from Rosa or other people who know me, and yet I am certain that they write to me over and over again. – Christ, it's not a good situation, especially not paired with boredom, homesickness, and hatred and rage against this country and its people. And thus my most ardent wish remains the one and only: stop the war, stop it soon! (11am)

Monday 17 July 1916

I would love to know if Mother and the siblings are already in Unterwässen or at another quiet place, where she can recover from all the sorrows she had to endure. Father would usually start his vacation later. But hopefully they all are spending a few quiet, relaxing months. I still have no news and yesterday, a letter that I wrote to Mother saying that she should not write more than 150 words since all else would not

pass the censors, was returned to me with the beautiful comment: "contains an untrue statement". Well, what is

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one to do? What I wrote is true, but nobody wants to own up to it. – The weather seems to be getting a bit better, but it's still bitterly cold. In this monotony, I'm pining for a German summer and I keep imagining the most alluring scenes from the past and my youth: a rural retreat surrounded by my loved ones, Unterwässen with its beautiful mountain backdrop, Joseftal, Schliersee, spas in [indecipherable], merry harvesting in Lauern and, further back, not to forget Hohenschäftlarn and Wildemuth. Rosa and [several indecipherable names], our Hallensee girl students, and the Saale Valley, they all pop up in my mind. – Last night I sat there with Hayer and Schmidt, and we all reminisced about our youth, about German girls and German summers, but while each of us evoked a different part of Germany, the stories were very much alike, a hymn to youth, which of course will never come back. But when the guards gave the "lights out" signal at 10pm, I felt like being rudely awakened, being yanked back into the present and the hopelessness of my situation.

Other than that, yesterday took its usual course with the usual boredom. In the morning big cleaning up, shaving, etc, then reading until 11.30am. Goethe: Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship.

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At noon, I borrowed a khaki coat from Hieber so I could mingle with the crowd. After lunch I was paid my salary, 6 bob, which went straight to Hayer. Afterwards, when leafing through the Almanach's "Merry Pages" about life in Berlin, a great wrath about all things Australian began to take hold of me. I ended up going for a solitary walk. In the evening I rolled the dice with Hayer and Schmidt, amid the above-mentioned talks. – Night conference until 11.30pm, during which, as so often, we vented our dissatisfaction and grievances with fellow prisoners. I shall dwell on the various foibles and unsettling habits of certain gentlemen some other time. A letter from Burns, Philp added a nice note to the day. Said letter brought the agreeable news that my July "income" had already been remitted to Liverpool and that I could expect it any day, and thus I'm off the hook for a while. – Nothing new from elsewhere; on the war front it's still the same: the enemy is attacking from all sides; Verdun just won't fall. We think it's all bad news because on the 1st of August, war compensation [repayment of war bonds, war contribution??] of more than 1 billion Mark becomes due for Australia. So if the newspapers were to report German victories now, the Commonwealth would

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probably not get a penny. The arrival of the German U-boat "Deutschland" in America has caused a great uproar.

Talk in camp still centres on the exchange of prisoners. At the moment, people nurse the illusion that they will be released onto neutral ground, i.e. America. Under "release" they probably imagine complete freedom. I must say I can't share these flights of fancy. –This morning I got up at the last possible moment, as always, and during roll-call and breakfast I shivered like a dog from the cold. Cleaned out the cell. Fetched some books from the library, where I was relieved of 1 shilling, went walking on my own, right now I'm "diarising". What else will the day bring? For an answer, look up all previous days! Oh, would it be that we were a step further! Oh would it be that I were at home! (11am)

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Wednesday, 19 July 1916

Yesterday was one of those days when, despite the nice weather, I didn't accomplish a thing. Every time we go bowling, it will shape my whole day, because awaiting our turns and chatting away, the morning just disappears, and in the afternoons I have never been very productive anyway.

Bowling is actually quite horrible, because the lane is in an awful condition and the balls are anything but round. The first of the 3 balls is a perfect egg, the second approaches the shape of a square, and only the third could be called a ball, and only with a lot of goodwill, and some have taken to addressing it as "pear". Our results were accordingly bad, and afterwards, until noon, we had to discuss them in detail in our cell. After lunch, unfortunately, I fell asleep. From 3pm to 4 pm, Stegmann and I went to the beach and watched some hockey. Afterwards, until evening roll-call, I read the newspaper. News, oh Gods, news you want to forget right away. – Around 7pm I sauntered to the office, proud as a Spaniard, to pick up the regal sum of 30 shilling (my monthly pay for July). I do hope I manage to make it last for once. Hayer was attending a lecture, and

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thus, ruling the coop, I got down to writing a letter to Eysen, asking him to send me shoes and socks. I hope he does. Afterwards I rolled the dice with Stegmann and Lembach and later also with Hayer, Hieber and Schmidt, always for a penny a round. The conference was cancelled. Lembach showed up at 10.30pm for 5 minutes. According to a dispatch, Austria has asked Russia for a separate peace. Everybody was highly agitated.

So far today it has rained non-stop. Grey skies, stormy sea, a howling wind penetrates our castle. In the morning some shopping in the canteen. I shaved and already Haugk arrived, followed by Hieber, Schmidt, Stegmann, Lembach, and so we sat until noon over high politics. Strenuous game of dice for cake with Hayer and Hieber, which cost me 9d. After lunch a cup of coffee and then a nap. At 3pm another cup of coffee, wrote and sent off a letter to Eysen. Now everybody is attending a lecture so I have time for the diary. Apart from reading the paper, rolling cigarettes and some more reading, not much else is likely to happen today. (4pm)

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Thursday, 20 July 1916

The news from the front is getting worse and worse. The Russians and the French-English are pushing forward. Both claim huge amounts of prisoners and already brag about the imminent demise of Germany. Let's hope fate disagrees! Of course, should the fatherland escape the current danger intact and weather this substantial crisis, there is good reason to believe that it may yet turn around this war! Still, it doesn't look very promising at all at the moment.

The depressing news weighs on the general mood here, and frustration and anger dominate. There's not much hope of us regaining our colonies. Which affects me quite personally, as I cannot imagine what my future life and career might be. Don't even think about it.

The weather is good today. Went on a solitary walk this morning. Made a list of library books and went walking again. After lunch, a nap. Now I've been writing and afterwards I will most likely go for another walk

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and read the newspaper, which looks particularly appealing today.

I'm not getting any mail from anywhere. And thus I feel lonely, neglected, unloved and unhappy like I haven't in a long while. (3.15pm)

Wednesday, 26 July 1916

Another six days gone and wasted. Not that they were in any way exciting. How many more of these dull days? There is absolutely no promise of peace, yet deep inside the hope persists, not based on facts nor sustained by any news, that peace will somehow happen by the end of this year. Yearning for peace! We are building this hope on a non-existing foundation, on shaky ground. It is more a case of "anima" or let's say, of intuitiveness. May it come true!

I imagine how beautiful peace would be. I imagine the moment it arrives, the huge joy that weapons and disputes

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have ended. But what would it bring, what would the Goddess bestow on us? A peace in which all of Germany's conditions are met, which restores all her territories and wealth, and last but not least her colonies, where in the calm of the ensuing years she is able to rebuild all that has been destroyed without having to impose a heavy tax burden or other sacrifices on her people — such a peace I can no longer envisage, jaded as I am by the constant intake of English news and opinions. But wouldn't it be a colossal disaster if after all this gargantuan wrestling with all its sacrifices of human life, money and ammunition it were all to end like the Hornberger Schiessen? [a proverbial expression describing futile efforts, derived from an event in Germany in 1519]

Every man is primarily an egoist, openly or secretly. And so I'm racking my brains again as to whether peace could bring me anything more than freedom. The prospects are minimal. If we are sent home, the situation is doubly unfortunate, because I probably would have to do military service, which would cost me time and money, none of which

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I have but which I desperately need after the long captivity. If New Guinea were to be restored as a German colony and I were able to return there, I'd have at least a promising start. But there is no reasonable hope that Germany gets back her colony, whereas there are lots of reasons why New Guinea should stay in English or Australian hands. Yet working under an English administration would be horrible. Those who have remained there are already lamenting; apparently the health problems among the Europeans are frightful. Malaria and blackwater are the order of the day. The justice system is biased against the Germans; regulations are unreasonably harsh. Pater Dix told us today that a missionary (a padre) who had beat a native was condemned to 6 months of hard labour; a punishment never before meted out.

I have not had any news from my parents or my siblings, and I'm worried. Was Edy's death not enough, is more bereavement on its way? I dare not think of it. It was my most cherished hope to be able to return one day and find Mother, Father and the siblings in the best

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of health and making a good living. It would be awful and crippling if this hope were to be dashed and this incentive killed.

The prospects for the future are murky. I've just gone through one of my so-called lazybones episodes (lasting 6 days). During those episodes I follow the ostrich's strategy, put my head in the sand and go into denial mode. Make sure the depressing thoughts are buried, too. Apart from short solitary walks from 8.30am–9.15am, 11.45am–12.15pm and 3.45pm–4.30pm, I have done nothing but read and roll the dice. Nietzsche's "Thus Spoke Zarathustra" lets me forget a lot. And thankfully, I had no time to mope. Hayer is constantly present and in the evenings, Hieber and Schmidt stay with us until 10pm, and later Lembach and Stegmann. On Saturday and Tuesday, we bowled. On Saturday we had a lengthy liquid brunch and later coffee paid for from our [indecipherable] kitty. Last night a lecture by Father Dix on New Guinea. It was a lecture that might have fascinated a 15-year-old, but for people like us, involuntarily gathered here

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and mostly with years of experience overseas, it was all too simple and hardly noteworthy. Saturday, however, marked another event as well: one year of captivity. But because it is time for a constitutional, I shall not dwell on it now, maybe tomorrow. The headline would say something like: "A year of captivity in barracks and jails". (3.45pm)

Thursday, 27 July 1916

If man couldn't laugh, his fate would be 3 times as hard. As it is, I can often laugh myself to tears over all the senselessness here. – Today, they deported the Catholic and Buddhist clergymen to Liverpool, from where they'll be shipped to Germany via Cape Town! Lucky guys! Among them two brothers named Bauer, cowardly dogs (Buddhists) who pleaded and whimpered to be allowed to stay, [indecipherable]. When leaving, the Buddhists were still swathed in their yellow-brown rags. Particularly appealing, as always, was "Bismarck", a puny fellow with a huge head on which is perched a ridiculously

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small cap; he also wore a white lava-lava, grey shirt, white shoes and black stockings. He is a very rich bloke, a former pharmacist, and terribly foul-tempered. The minute somebody addresses him, he starts spitting on the floor. Upon departure, he was standing aside as usual, lost in thoughts, until a Tommy yelled at him: "Come on, Johnny!" Our "Bismarck" was given just enough time to spit on the Tommy's boots! – Another sane person is our neighbour Schreiber, who shares his "deepest secret" with everybody, namely, that it is high time to escape, when in reality he doesn't even dare dreaming about it. – Yesterday, for the first time, I saw an Australian rural police officer in a most particular "dress" [diarist's word]: white pants, yellow boots and gaiters, spurs, blue coat with silver buttons and a kepi similar to a French infantryman's. – This

morning, after cleaning out the cell, I went to the beach with Stegmann. Then, until 11.30am, I read Nietzsche and made excerpts. Went for another walk with Stegmann until 12.30pm. After lunch, we rolled the dice for coffee, then a nap until 3pm. Now diary. The rest of the day will presumably continue like yesterday: reading the newspaper; going for a walk; after dinner more reading or rolling the dice, but hopefully that won't be the same as yesterday, when Hayer and Hieber quickly

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relieved me of 6 pence. The nightly conference is a given.

Yesterday's initiative to recap my year of captivity will have to wait, I just don't feel like it today. Every skeleton in this camp has received mail from Rabaul today, except me of course. Strahm has signed up for 2 years in Frads [?] and I am outraged that they should assign a clapper like him to such a beautiful plantation, where much money can be made; while we planters broke our backs working virgin land, some nincompoop now gets to reap the fruit of our labour. Well, it's not my business, and may Eckmann break his neck, he certainly deserves it. Most of my frustration hinges on the fact that he is able to live and breathe and earn money out there, in freedom, while we are stuck here and getting more miserable by the day.

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Friday, 28 July 1916

The weather has finally turned and a hint of Spring is in the air. This morning I helped move the book collection into the new library. Wrote a letter to Elsa Kertmann and then some excerpts from Nietzsche. After lunch I was paid my salary, 12 shilling, which will all go to Hayer. Yesterday evening we had a very agitated general assembly that offered more comic relief than the wickedest comedy. We were once again promised that the borders would be extended to the Thompson House. But I'm not very hopeful that the promise will be kept this time. (3.30pm)

Wednesday, 2 August 1916

The books I fetched in the library on Saturday (Weber's Democritus) kept me from doing anything else, like writing or studying, but I found the reading hugely engrossing. Still no mail from home or New Guinea. Today I wrote to Mother. Unfortunately, one cannot really write all that needs to be

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said. Otherwise, life takes its usual course. Still the same bad news from the war front, but also rumours of peace in between. The conditions for peace reportedly put forward by the Chancellor are not very favourable, and we would definitely be rid of New

Guinea. Internally, we had a few storms in a teacup. On Monday, there was suddenly a list on the wall with 20 names of people that were to be deported to Liverpool; poor Schmidt-Livko was one of them. We felt truly sorry for the poor devil, but in the end he managed to bribe somebody into going in his place for £5 and was able to stay. On Friday, another 35 men are to be sent off to Liverpool; if I'm destined to be one of them, I won't be able to buy a fall guy for obvious reasons. On Sunday, it was very nice to watch a solar eclipse from 11am to 3pm. Unfortunately, the moon didn't completely eclipse the sun, as its bottom stayed outside, and you only ever saw half the moon. We did a nice little experiment with a playing card, in which we had cut a small

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circular hole, and through that hole the sun cast a shadow in the shape of a crescent depending on how far advanced the moon was. There was also an intriguingly pasty, crepuscular light. – Recently I had to see the dentist and will have to be treated tomorrow. Paying for this will be even harder than going there. Schmidt had promised to lend me the money, but after the infamous Liverpool episode he is broke himself. It means I will have to be extremely cheese-paring for the next few months. – The petroleum stove that Hayer ordered has finally arrived and is in operation every morning, lunchtime and evening. Toast and coffee! Invariably after lunch and at 8pm, Lembach, Schmidt and Stegmann drop by for a lengthy coffee chat. It's nice and toasty inside, despite the foul weather outside. Because of the bad weather, we couldn't bowl on Saturday and Tuesday. Every night our usual war conference. I'm sleeping really well since I stopped napping in the afternoon. – But now I want to indulge in a quick "limlimburn" [?], something I have neglected lately, and I imagine getting a bit of a prison tan. (3.15pm)

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Friday, 4 August 1916

Since the damned petroleum stove is in the house, i.e., in the prison cell, we spend 1-2 hours in the afternoon and from 7.30pm to 10pm in here chatting away and forgetting the time. And over and over again we reminisce about our salad days in Germany or our adventures in New Guinea. By doing so we forget our misery and build the most formidable castles in the air. We are happy to sit together like this, as it relieves each of us of our little pains and worries. But of course there has been no time for studying, although I've promised myself to take up English lessons again. I have resumed my daily walks from 8.30am–9am, noon–12.45pm and 4pm–4.45pm; the rest of the time I kill by reading books or the newspaper, which never fails to bring bad news. Nonetheless, at the moment everybody believes that peace will be achieved shortly, before the end of this year, and that we will be set free and finally know what the future brings. Oh, to be a Turk and able to say "Kismet"! Sadly, I'm not a Turk and so I ponder my fate day in, day out: it would be easiest to return to New Guinea, as

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it would mean immediate employ and income; to go to Germany would mean to be reunited with Mother and the family on the one hand, but on the other hand, I'd be broke and to do service without money and as a mere back-up after the war would be horrifying. And how I should leave this camp without clothes is another problem; my whole wardrobe consists of 2 white suits. –Yesterday I went to the dentist and had a tooth filled; the whole affair was so surprisingly easy that I intend to have another one done, if I still feel game enough next Monday. Of course, I have no money, since Burn, Philps once again lets me dangle.

Wrote to Pieper in Eitape this morning. No mail from either New Guinea or Germany. And yet I am sure that Mother would have written about Edy's death; I would really like to know why I'm not getting any mail. – The weather is very fickle but mostly cold; I sure hope I won't spend a 3rd winter here. My health is fine. I no longer take a nap, but once conference is over, I sleep like a log until "7.20am" (which is Hayer's wake-up call). (11 o'clock).

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Tuesday, 8 August 1916

I shan't get much writing done in the next few days and today. Through Walter ("Comet") I managed to get some agricultural brochures on copra, cotton, rubber and fertilisers, etc that I want to study. – Absolutely nothing new has happened. From the war front the usual, rather vague news, and peace seems to have taken a back seat again. No mail from home, nor from New Guinea. The saddest part is that once again, I have not a penny left. For the past 8 days I've been awaiting the Burns, Philp letter and I will have to write them again today. – The coffee sessions are getting longer and longer, especially on Sunday, when Stegmann shouted cakes in celebration of his birthday. On Saturday, we bowled. Today I can't participate because I have to be at the dentist's at 10am. I was there yesterday, too, and I hope he can finish off the front tooth today. After that I want to get one of the molars filled. The only problem is that I won't be able to pay for it if the money doesn't arrive soon. Once again I have to hope for the best. (9.30am)

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Sunday, 20 August 1916

I haven't felt very bored in the past fortnight, because thank god, I've had plenty to do – I've been taking notes on tobacco, cocoa, rubber, etc – and had good reading material. But today is one of these days when I lack everything, from an activity, a book, or clothes and shoes to money or a sense of humour, which completely ruins my mood. Sundays have never been my favourites, and contrary to their epithet as "the Lord's

day", they usually mean nothing but trouble. The reason for my Sunday grumpiness today is rather trivial and nobody's fault but mine. In short, I've got nothing to wear. Shoes, socks, everything is worn and torn. And from my measly 30 shilling a month I cannot possibly afford a new wardrobe. Thus, every decently clad man gets my hackles up. On such days, the extent of this goddamned humiliating captivity really hits home. We are wasting years, the best years of our lives, and even if we try to fill them with content, nothing much will stick. I'm nervous, tetchy, and at loggerheads with God and the world. We degenerate mentally, and

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also physically, at least as far as the clothes go. If this war ends at all and we should be able to leave one day for either New Guinea or Germany, I won't even have anything decent I can travel in. Who but me would have the good luck to lose 70 pounds, which means none of my suits still fits me, and they're all in Rabaul anyway, where nobody looks after them or where they make some natives very, very happy! – Another thing that keeps bugging me day and night is the uncertainty of my future. Let's say I can return to New Guinea, assuming Germany gets her colony back, which is what I most fervently hope, I would then have the possibility to get fitted out again and, if all goes well, to save good money over 3-4 years, so that I can return to Germany with a few pennies in my pockets. In the worst case, I would fall ill again over there and die this time * — well, the world would neither be poorer nor richer. If, however, you take the second solution, the one I dread but which

[added later, in a different ink] * This idea is no longer one I hold today, a year later; I can do without dying. 17 April 1917. O.W.

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seems more and more likely, we will all be shipped to Germany. And that means I would show up there emaciated, in tatters and broke like a beggar, and would have to depend on my parents feeding and housing me, if they're even in a position to do so. And to cap it all, I would probably have to do military service, which costs a lot of time and money. And the relatives will most likely refuse to stump up money for a commission, which means I would have to serve as a wretched coolie. Well, hey, plenty of reasons to be merry. And if the people here begin to hang themselves, I can understand it full well. It's sad, however, that even for such a noble endeavour, I lack the wherewithal and the guts.

Everybody is getting letter and parcels from home. Since Edy died, I have received nothing but 5 lines of condolences from Schuh. I laughed it off but I could have wept in sheer frustration. I just cannot believe that my parents and siblings are in any harm. I'm sure they would write me. And yet, nothing comes my way. I also have no mail from

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New Guinea. Several times I have written and asked for money, and for shoes and socks, but no success, not even a reply.

At the front, according to the newspapers here, we're being clobbered from all sides. The Austrians have lost [indecipherable], and in the Carpathian Mountains, they had to retreat all the way to Püssen. The Russians have pushed our front back, and Tarnopol and Lemberg [Lviv] are about to fall. On the western front, we have lost terrain from Verdun all the way to Belgium. – I no longer hope for a peace agreement on favourable terms. As mentioned earlier, I have studied quite a bit lately, read a lot, especially in the evening, went for walks and also swimming with Stegmann. Once. Thank God, it's almost dinner time, let's wrap it up! (5.15pm)

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Monday, 28 August 1916

A storm is howling and whistling across the peninsula. All day and night the steel doors have been rattling. The wind has easy access through the open window bars, gets caught in our courtyards, where it whirls and rages. – Outside the sky is a monotonous grey. Heavy grey-and-white rain clouds hover low on the horizon, one moment torn into tatters, the next moment knotted into lumps. Behind nebulous grey veils, half hidden, the foothills rise from the wide Trial Bay. The sea churns and seethes, throws itself in a dark roar against the rocky shores, the froth of the breakers thrust high into the air and dropping back in thousands of white drops and droplets. The green-grey water races towards us in huge waves topped by snow-white crowns. Wave after wave, whitecap after whitecap, right up to the horizon. And somewhere far out a little steamship is dancing along in the chaos, popping in and out of the whirlwind froth. – On the shore, however, the warm, rain-scented wind has swept everything clean and now heralds springtime, the promise of imminent bright sunshine and warm showers; while in Europe

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mother nature will soon get ready for autumn. – Here we have peace, a peace and quiet that becomes so boring, so grating, so repulsive that it can drive you to despair. Day after day is wasted in senseless, fruitless endeavours. Day after day is lost forever. One starts fretting about things that are hardly worth it. Every little turn in the gigantic world battle, every loss or victory gets discussed and rehashed over and over again. Endlessly we prognosticate and condone or condemn the terms of peace. And as if that weren't enough, we're also worrying about what will happen to us after the war. Will New Guinea be given back to the Germans? Will I be able to return there? Money problems

weigh heavily. I can't live on 30 shilling a month, but more is not to be expected. And so I keep turning every penny, calculate and recalculate. I have to buy shoes and socks, but from what? I have written to Rabaul asking for stuff, but no answer. I need a European suit to get me through Sydney and maybe even to Germany in decent fashion. I will have to beg Eyssen again this week for £5. I just need the money and I'm willing to working if off later on.

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One harrowing, maddening worry, the biggest question, has been solved: how Mother, Father and the siblings are doing. Thank God, they are fine, if still in great sorrow over Edy's death. I still cannot believe that he, of all people, is dead, that I won't find him again as I left him. On Thursday I received a letter from Lisl and Richard; on Friday a postcard and on Saturday a letter from Mother. Once again, thank God, they're all in good health. Father is a bit exhausted, I hope he has since found some relaxation in Grafrath. Mother and the siblings, now just Lisel and the runts, should be in Unterwässen and I hope they are having a great time. How much would I give to be with them right now! To be carefree and happy once more like in the good old days. Only now, much too late, do I realise how good and happy those times were, how Mother cared for us and loved us. Too late! O anxiety, loneliness and [indecipherable]!

When I think and dream of home I always picture my parents and the siblings just as I left them, and now suddenly I'm told that Ada has been confirmed. I'll be damned, that means the runts are practically grown-ups; little gents who already smoke and long to go to the tavern and

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soon will chase after girls. My God, how great it is to be 16! But me, I feel so ridiculously old, so done and dusted, and yet I'm so immature! – Lisel, the homebody, is old enough to marry, and when I get back home one day, she may already be blissfully wed; Ada and Richard are young men, Father and dear, dear Mother grey and old. – Ernst is in Chile and doing well. I wish for him that he likes it better there than back home, and maybe for him, too, an unfettered life overseas makes more sense. – Mother's letter has comforted and strengthened me, at least one person in the whole big world cares for me and worries about me, and that's my mother. Is it not wondrous how much a mother loves her children?

The world of pals and so-called friends remains silent. Not that it bothers me too much. But one thing does bother me: I haven't heard from or of Rosa and my son. What lies in store for me there?

Day in, day out it's the same. One egg looks like the next egg, and one day in captivity looks like the next one. In the morning I wake up from the humming of the petroleum cooker. That means Hayer is already up and toasting bread for breakfast,

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and in a few minutes he will call out his "7.20am" (day after day, "7.20am"!) so I have to get up as well. Brrrr, it's cold. So first I reel in the government-issued pants and the sturdy brown soldier's shoes (no more socks left) and quickly put them on. Now get outside to the pail for a wash. Shirt, sweater and khaki coat finish off the perennial wardrobe. At 7.45am, roll-call. That means 10 minutes of freezing your balls off, but soon it is over, and now off to breakfast; that, too, perennially the same: bread and jam. Then we have to sweep out the cell and make the bed, clean the lamps and the cooker, dust ourselves off and have another wash. If I don't go to the library to fetch a book, or if it isn't shaving day, I take a walk on the beach until 9.15am. 9.15am–11.15am reading or writing, interrupted by umpteen visitors, of course. 11.15am–12.15pm either swimming or a stroll along the beach with Stegmann. 12.45pm stately lunch. Afterwards coffee klatsch in our cell. Then some more reading or writing from until 4pm, and until 5pm another walk with Stegmann. 5.30pm, evening roll-call. Dinner. Coffee klatsch, reading until 10pm. At 10pm, Lembach and Stegmann arrive and great political debate until about 11pm. Then a last trip to the loo. I'm always tired as a dog,

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God only knows from what, and fall into a deep slumber until morning. And then the same routine starts all over again, just like the day before and seemingly ad infinitum. – In between, one or the other visitor stops by, mostly when it least suits you, just like now, which is why I end this. (11am)

Tuesday, 29 August 1916

Nothing new. The wind is still howling with undiminished force but, quite unexpectedly, it has turned cold again. The day has a feeling of old and slack about it. Began a letter to Eyssen this morning, whom I intend to relieve of some funds. Before that a walk alone, after that a walk with Stegmann. After lunch until now, coffee klatsch, Hayer told us about his adventures in Africa. Otherwise, all is quiet. I'm totally sleepy. The rest of the day will pass as it always does.

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Friday, 8 September 1916

It's strange, I'm hardly doing anything all day and still have no time to write or begin anything real. Yesterday I had a field day: the first parcel from Mother with 400 cigarettes. The joy was immense and even more so because I don't have the money to

buy any. Since the 1st of the month Jerssen, Hieber and I have been waiting for our money from Burns, Philp; the good people seem to have more time and patience than we have.

There's not much news. Romania has declared war on us, but it doesn't seem to achieve any victories. But it does mean that war will now last 1 year longer! That's a development I don't want to dwell on, it makes me sick just to think about having to stay here another year. At least at home everything's okay, thank God. New Guinea keeps silent. As for our internal affairs, not much worth mentioning. Except that our borders won't be extended! Morning roll-call has been cancelled the past few days and the gates are opened before 7am so that one can go down to the beach or sleep in until breakfast, or even until noon, whatever, sleep longer anyway, which I definitely prefer. I stay in bed until 7.30am, sweep out the cell, go for a walk until 9am, play solitaire until 11.30am; go for another walk. After lunch

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we have our coffee klatsch until about 3pm; then I read the paper, after 4pm another walk, more reading, roll-call, dinner, and then we brew some more coffee and read until 10pm; from 10pm–11pm Lembach drops by and we solve the war like the fine strategists we are.

Recently, I had another bout of fever! On Monday, courtesy of Stegmann, I went to the theatre ([indecipherable]) and quite liked it, rather unexpectedly. In future, I hope to have the cell to myself again every afternoon since Hayer goes working. But now, thanks to Mother's kindness, I shall read the paper with a "Zuben No. 6" [a cigarette] (3.15pm)

Saturday, 9th/9/1916

Mood and sense of humour have fallen below zero, because the damned money, which I expected yesterday for sure, has again failed to arrive. No news to report either.

Tomorrow is another of those blessed Sundays, I have no shoes to wear and am feeling doubly festive! All's disgusting. (2.30pm)

[added later] Have received money from Burns, Philp in the evening of the 9th.

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Friday, 15 September 1916

Wrote to Burns, Philp yesterday and to Lisel today, which kept me busy all day. I had received a small letter from Lisel yesterday, dated 23/6. If I now received a favourable letter from Rabaul, along with money, I'd be happy. But obviously, we're not meant to be happy here. Müller wrote to Jerssen that "Eckmann was lobbying for our release". Not clear who is meant to be included. Maybe just the merchants, which would mean I'd be the only one left here after their release. But for now, I don't believe a word of it. –

Nothing else to report. War events are inconclusive, the prospect of an imminent peace has totally vanished. Internal affairs: all our Buddhists except the "Wren" have returned, they have not made it to America; the crew on the English steamer that was to ferry the Catholic priests to England refused to work if the Germans remained on board. Despite the bigotry so typical of the English they spat on the priests, etc. The steamer had to return to port and discharge the clergymen. Now they're back in Liverpool. No comment!

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Except for yesterday, we had gorgeous weather. Along with Hieber and Stegmann at times, I stood in for the absent "Wren" by squatting atop the wall [breakwater wall?], sunbaking and reading. The day before yesterday I went swimming, alone. Stegmann now works half the day so I'm mostly clambering about all by myself. (10.30am)

23 September 1916

[Various war songs or ballads, aphorisms and book extracts follow across several pages, to the end of Page 129]

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Tuesday, 11 October 1916

Month after month goes by. One hardly notices. I'm living through the days fairly numbly, devoid of emotion or wits. It's the same for everybody else. You always plan to do this and that, and never do anything, and it's almost groundbreaking if you manage to cobble together 2 letters a week. – I go to sleep at 10 in the evening and sleep right through until 7 or 7.30 in the morning, and yet I get up as tired as ever and in no mood for any activity. In the mornings we go walking or swimming for a bit, after lunch we sit together and have coffee until about 3pm, and the rest of the day we fritter away, in the evening we drink coffee again and read, or visitors drop in, like Broadbelt lately, and we talk. After 10pm, Lembach stops by for some 15 minutes and then we sleep. And the next day, the same thing happens all over again, and again!

The last 4 Sundays, I've been going to the theatre with Stegmann, whom I get along with best, and there we idle away 2 hours with a comedy or a revue, getting a bit less bored than we would otherwise.

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Just then I was once again rudely disturbed in my activity by an officer and ordered into Lt. Dare's office where, after a lengthy sermon, I was handed 30sh. My finances look pretty good this month – 30sh from the company and £5 from Westphal, the only one

to help me out. Towards the end of the month I should be getting a well-deserved 16sh for my work (for 8 days, Haugk and I have been hauling water for 3 hours a day, one each after breakfast, lunch and dinner). The job cost me a lot of sweat and my bones hurt like hell.

The oh-so-esteemed company has no intention to pay a greater monthly subsidy and writes the most hair-raising letters. I heard from Eyssen that my entire belonging are under police seal in [indecipherable]. He said he was not allowed near them at the moment but was hoping to get permission soon and would then send me some shirts and shoes. From Mirow I got a letter yesterday saying that his little son had been run over and that his right leg had been amputated up to the knee.

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Mrs Mirow and the little one are in New Zealand now, waiting for an artificial limb they ordered from America.

I have better news from home. While the grief for Edy still lingers, they all seem to be doing well. Lisel sent me a photograph of hers that shows her to be a rather well-turned-out girl. I have now hurriedly posed for a picture of myself so I can send my loved ones at least a little Christmas surprise. Although, given the extraordinary sloth of the photographer, it probably won't reach them until Easter.

The war situation, to judge from the local papers, is so muddled that one cannot get a clear picture. Quite a few people here count on peace by the end of this year, but I sure don't share their view. (10.30am)

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Wednesday, 12 October 1916

If a German housewife or cook were given a chance to look into cell A30 yesterday afternoon, she would have had a major shock. Five of us – Broadbelt, Lembach, Hayer, Stegmann and I – were totally absorbed in making "pancakes". Each had his chore, all of us smoked one cigarette after another, the air in the small cell was of course "pure and limpid". But the main thing: the pancakes turned out a treat and for once we felt well fed. In the evening we all sat together again and yapped until 10pm. Lorentsch, the deserter who escaped on Sunday, was nabbed and brought back last night and Bedford, very decently, let him off with 14 days of "confinement to the barracks".

The weather was good today, but very windy. At 7.45am, extensive roll-call (thanks to Mr Lorentsch). After breakfast half an hour at the beach with Stegmann. Shaved. Studied a bit of agriculture and English. Went for a walk with Stegmann from noon to

12.30pm. After lunch, coffee with a good newspaper. The U-boat war has resumed and already 6 steamers have been sunk near Amerika!

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Vivant sequentes! They are now conceding German successes against Romania and the tenor of the dispatches is quite encouraging (for us). – If nobody interferes, I'll be now off to a lecture on social studies. (3pm)

Saturday 14 October 1916

Another 2 days gone! I wish they were the months that bring the end! The end of this excruciating monotony, a victory, a German New Guinea! I have no other wishes for the near future; if they were fulfilled, I could build on that foundation. Unfortunately, it doesn't look like peace. And that's about all that can be said about it. Meanwhile, I feel like a puppet on a string. The string is our daily routine that jerks us into action at 8, at 5, at 1, at 4, and dutifully we attend roll-call or dinner or fall into bed at 10pm and, out of sheer stupefaction we fall asleep by 11pm. "We live this way, we live this way, it's how we live the day." Those bent on yodelling can prolong this great song

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endlessly with trills and other cheerful embellishments born of their joy of life! When I observe any one of my fellow captives, for instance, the guy who greets the smallest noise with a stentorian "Quiet, right! Bird, right?! Ring through the nose, right?!", and amuses himself all day long with this game, for more than a year already, I begin to understand that the man is crazy, ripe for the loony bin. But what miracle! The man stays here! He doesn't even stick out of the crowd! Nobody takes notice, because lo and behold, everybody is busy nursing his own tic. And although you can't help but notice the escalating madness of your neighbour, you completely ignore your own. And thus we get along famously, each making fun of the other. Well, we live this way, we live this way!

Once upon a time there was this tiny place on Earth, far far away, almost at the end of the world. And many weird men lived there. They had a big strong fortress, wherein they lived in many many small cells, always 2 men together.

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The men were very diligent, they wrote for hours each day, learned foreign languages, built huts on the beach, they fished and exercised and swam, they recited, made music and put on plays, and some gave lectures that were so grandiose that nobody understood them, least of all he who lectured, and they played Skat and chess and solitaire, and some even tried their hands at poker. In the evening, the men's guardian

angels appeared and locked them into the fortress. The younger ones of the men weren't happy and protested, they would have liked to stay on the beach and watch the sun disappear in the sea; the older men and the council they had elected chastised the younger ones, called them ingrates and hooligans. And then the men all slept, 2 in a cell. And all men loved each other and looked out for each other. And if occasionally one man beat another man up, it was merely unintentional and done out of love. And if one robbed the other, it was but

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a misunderstanding. Earlier, much earlier, these men from this place at the end of the world had roamed foreign lands, they knew a lot about steamships and trains, and many had been important merchants, and there were also physicians and academics, and many had been farmers or missionaries, living among the black and the wild. But all the men had forgotten their past. Now they roamed the beach, without shoes and socks, wearing nothing but shorts, and if the sun deigned to shine in this remote corner of the world, they got tanned, and many grew long beards or dug themselves into holes in the sand, growling like bears, and all were proud of their progress. And all men swore a lot, and they had their own language, developed out of four other languages, because the men were also smart.

But after a while, when the men had lived like this for a long long time, they forgot a lot and many could no longer believe that in the land of their forebears,

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from where they had all once migrated, a horrible war was raging. They forgot that outside their fortress people were dressed decently and no longer lived like wild animals. And because the men were given so much milk and tea and coffee, they forgot how beer and wine tasted, they smoked the vilest tobacco and forgot how good a real cigar or cigarette could be. And far far out there, at the end of the world, there were but – men. And so the men forgot that elsewhere in the world there were women and girls, pretty young girls one could love and cherish and kiss. They simply stopped believing that girls existed, just as one distrusts a fairytale full of fabled beasts.

And still those men lived there and kept forgetting, believing soon that they were the only ones alive, feeling more and more resigned if not content. We live this way!
(10.30am)

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Tuesday 17 October 1916

On Saturday, our cooks had the fabulous idea to add too much cooking soda to the vegetables, which triggered a fascinating spectacle: 500 men were kept in motion all through the night and right through Sunday, and when you know that these 500 men had a grand total of 15 toilet buckets at their disposal, you can vividly imagine the stimulating situation and the contorted, rather innovative postures of the waiting men, with tortured expressions like Laocoon. On Sunday I was half-dead. Monday was bad, too. In the evening, I went to the theatre with Stegmann. Of all things it was Hermann Bahr's "The Concert". Granted, the good men try hard, but still, those girls, those girls! ["The Concert" is a comedy about the clandestine love affairs of an ageing pianist who seeks to maintain his youth by having affairs with his young pupils]

Meanwhile, since yesterday morning we could all sing [of rain = the diarist adds a Bavarian doggerel about rain]. All we can see of the rain is a limited view through the barred window, and the cell is full of tobacco smoke, I'm sitting at one table writing, a Christmas letter to Mother is already completed, and Hayer sits at the other table banging away on his typewriter, and outside it rains and rains

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and it probably won't stop raining! Still life! Coziness behind prison walls! Selah! 3 pearls!

I've been tired all day, bone tired. Sometimes I want to roar from frustration and ire, but the worst is this vegetating, this lack of energy, and next thing you know, you're abysmally sad. One becomes horribly stultified. Another year like this and I'll be mad, eligible for the seat of honour at the asylum. Although the dear neighbours assure me that I'm there already!

Well, it's not that bad yet. I like to read and I write, sometimes even gladly; I like to dress up, except that I have no clothes; I like to smoke and drink and absolutely love to spend money, if I only had some. The inclination to work, physically or mentally, is small however, and lately, to be honest, it has hit rock bottom.

There are no aberrations from the monotony to report, because generally all is what it was a year ago. (10am)

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[three lines of a verse, out of context]

27 October 1916

All's well. Weather is good, so have swum every day. Nothing new! No mail! From Rabaul, after asking Eyssen for my shirts, handkerchiefs, etc, I received the last of my belongings: 3 handkerchiefs, 2 pajamas, 20 pairs of socks! A right royal allowance. A

ridiculous remnant. When I'm not busy bristling with anger about the dishonesty of man, I'm copying my letters!

[what follows, however, are various German poems, songs, etc right up to the middle of page 146]

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Thursday 24 November 1914 [sic]

Time flies! And yet I accomplish nothing. Almost a month has gone by with just a bit of reading, letter writing, walking and swimming. Occasionally I played a hand of poker, and for 10 days I banged around the tennis courts, but otherwise I drank coffee, read the newspapers and filled the evening by going to the theatre or reading some more.

The news from the various continents is good. Father and Mother have been writing. I received a picture of Rosa that greatly amused me. Father wrote to my company in Hamburg and expects some success.

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Mother wrote a nice letter and alerted me to a letter from Rosa, which I'm awaiting with great suspense. I also have news from Johanna Mayr. A blast from the past! The erstwhile girl with her short skirts is now a certified teacher! Brr! How the time flies.

I heard from Eyssen in New Guinea and lo and behold, he sent me £10. Which is not unwelcome. I'm fairly wading in wealth! The company seems to have relented somewhat, had some shoes sent to me, and now I'm waiting for some suits. Money, however, doesn't seem to be on their agenda. Jerssen and I have jointly written to Hamburg.

A while ago the camp commander showed up and promised to extend the borderlines, which means we could roam about within a radius of 2 miles, on parole. That would be great. But we have been waiting for a decision on this for 3 weeks now. Nothing's happening and we might just have been goaded once more. --
The weather is gorgeous! Off to the beach! (10am)

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An extension of the borderlines would really be nice, especially now in early spring. The days are of exceptional clarity, the ocean flat as a mirror on which the sun shimmers and dances. The air is so clear and pure like I have only ever experienced it high up in the German mountains. It makes being imprisoned here even more painful, running around in circles and seeing fields and meadows only from afar.

Quite some time ago I have written to the Minister of Defence and asked for my release or at least an explanation for the captivity. I'm sure the good man will find plenty of excuses, but it would be a riot if I were to be released! – At the moment I couldn't even get to New Guinea because the valiant Australian coalminers and coal workers are on strike. On strike ... on strike in the middle of a war, and with stamina and gusto! I guess they want to force their Prime Minister, Mr Hughes, from his office, since this man has dared, well, has tried to introduce conscription in Australia, which any decent Australian soul abhors. Soon

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all public transport in Australia will come to a standstill. Already 200 ships are idly lying at anchor. Electricity and gas utilities will shut down in the next few days, and eventually the trains will stop running and soon enough Australia, the blessed land of kangaroos and emus, will lie in complete darkness. Noble! Very noble! And all, as mentioned, in the middle of a war!

Since yesterday the news from the war are better again; the Romanians seem to have been badly trounced. What's happening on the other fronts is less clear. But the U-boat battles seem to flourish. There is also lots of talk again about peace, but let's not go there, otherwise we'll end up being disappointed yet again!

[some more quotations and aphorisms follow, some rather abstruse, extending to the end of page 150]

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Friday, 24 November 1916

The war news are good. It looks more and more like peace. We are making good and rapid progress in Romania. In Australia, however, they continue their strike. The weather is very good. Spent the morning alone on the beach. Stegmann is still angry with me because yesterday, jokingly but also clumsily, I stepped on his lovingly boiled eggs. So I'm leading the solitary life of a hermit crab right now. (Kaiser Franz Josef has died!)

Now something about wars. 1914/15/16 will have been a bit bloodier than in the good old times.

"Gaulois 19/VI/1871" At Solferino, the Austrians discharged 8,400,000 rifle shots. They hit 10,000 Frenchmen and Piedmontese; of those, 2,000 died. Which means that they wasted 800 shots to hit 1 man, and 4,200 shots to kill 1 man.

"Rotterdam [indecipherable]" 28/12/1871

1870. Of 3,453 Germans that were wounded in Metz, 95,5% were hit by [indecipherable] bullets, 2,7% by cannon balls, 0.8% by sabres and bayonets. German artillery wounded about 70 men, German cannons killed a total of

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25,000 Frenchmen. Which means that each German cannon's third shot killed a Frenchman, whereas the French needed 100 shots to wound or kill 4-5 men, and [indecipherable] 5 men. –
[several doggerels and quotations follow, in French and German, all a bit weird, extending to the end of page 153. This is followed by 21/2 pages of Kipling quotations, in English]

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The preceding excerpts are the result of my present reading activity; since yesterday, I'm greatly entertained by Kipling's "Jungle Book". No news otherwise. The weather has been consistently nice and hot, and at night we have had thunderstorms. I've been swimming every day, alone, since Stegmann still bears a grudge. Today it's a bit rainy, plus I was at the dentist's, had one of my molars capped, costs me 25 sh. But thanks to the 200 Mark that Eyssen sent, I can afford the luxury. But mostly I am busy restyling my hair, trying to have it parted,

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on which occasion I discovered a few premature grey hairs on my distinguished scalp.

Internal affairs are more than galling. The canteen is supposed to be taken over by the Australians again. Nothing more has happened to the supposed extension of our borders. For Christmas, we're allowed to buy 1 bottle of beer or wine each, you can see how Mr Berblingen's personal income grows immeasurably. Nonetheless, the infamous guy is still telling us "I have managed to ... I've succeeded in ... etc."

More enjoyable are the war news. Bucharest is about to fall. On the other fronts, it's eerily quiet. In England, Parliament is in uproar. In Italy, the mood is turning pro-German again. In Germany, every creature with legs is being drafted into work. The U-boats are attacking and achieving glorious successes. But we, we sit here and twiddle our thumbs. In Australia, the coalminers' strike is over, but now the moulders – *variatio delectat* – or however you want to call them are on strike.

As for the mail, I received only a letter from Mother,

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and thank God, they're all well at home, except for Ada, the scallawag, who shot himself in the foot while playing with the rifle, now the poor chap is in hospital. I hope he recovers, but poor Mother has another thing to worry about.

All day and evening, visitors drop in. Once a week there's a concert in the hallway. Once a week we have the theatre, but good heavens, why are they staging Schnitzler's "Liebeleii" and "Anatol", and soon Ibsen's "Nora"?! If it weren't so asinine, one could laugh it off, but they don't appreciate it if you laugh. (3pm)

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Monday 18 December 1916

Wonderfully brilliant summer weather! Warmth and sun are a factor here, are the main factor you can count on to make the day, the limited activity and the mood more agreeable. Thus, the beautiful weather right away puts "swimming" on the agenda, which means 2 hours are accounted for, and agreeably so.

Therefore, for the past fortnight, the day's sequence looked like this: At 7.15am the rousing of the lion! Getting up, doing ablutions, taking a small trip to the "quiet place" and then, with new vigour, cleaning out the cell (if it's already too late for it, Hayer will equally diligently take care of it during breakfast time). Tara! The call to roll-call, you lob into the courtyard and stand around for 10 minutes until Mr Lieutenant has stumbled past you, you lob back into the hall to get coffee and jam and bread rolls! Whereupon, armed with sunglasses, follows a solitary

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walk exactly twice around the house, until 9am. From 9am to 10.30am, it's time to shave, read, write, etc, and then a big trip to the ..., and then off to the beach. Since Stegmann is still holding a grudge, a solitary sunbath, a solitary swim and a short walk, all in Adam's costume. This goes on until noon. Noon-1pm, a richly deserved rest in a comfortable chair, smoking cigarettes. Around 1pm it's lunch, then coffee until 2pm, mostly alone and quietly. 2pm-3pm, reading the newspaper. Now things get lively in the cell. Hayer, Hieber, Schmidt, in particular, with plenty of argy-bargy and fun. 3pm-5pm, reading or going for a walk and a lengthy conference. 5.30pm, the second roll-call, see No.1. 5.45pm solemn dinner. Afterwards brewing and drinking of coffee, with cigarettes and various interruptions, and more reading until 9.15pm. Concentrated reading until 10pm and then lights out.

Lately we are having a lot of visitors, which makes me cranky: Schmidt, Hieber, Wittrock, Jerssen, Broadbelt, Harst, Schröter (Apia) and, the least welcome guest, Eckhoff, alias [indecipherable]!

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Curious to see how long this will go on. Hayer and the other are now building a hut on the beach, so it might get more quiet here. There will be no border extension, and the

canteen will be run by the Australians again. "I have been successful in ..." Oh Berblingen! Oh blessed camp committee!

Another bout of insolvency! The bank money did not arrive, nor did the money from Burns, Philp. I had the blue coat altered, but now I don't have any [indecipherable] for it. I'm done with the dentist for the time being, and I've even paid him with Schmidt's help. I have also ordered a new pair of glasses and a pince-nez. These are the new purchases.

No mail and no parcel from New Guinea. Could not happen anyway since the coalminers' strike prevented ships from arriving.

But I did get a letter from Germany, from Mother. Although it doesn't reveal anything new, it still made my day. Not so uplifting is the fact that apparently, several parcels from Mother

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never reached me. I can only hope that they arrive tomorrow!

The health is good. Not weaned of O. [presumably onanism] Intervals of 5-6 days. –

Good old Bork, a zany, elegant bachelor, thin as a nail, who tends to sleep all day and play poker at night, suddenly emerged on the tennis court during a tournament and right in front of everybody, he strutted across the court proud as a peacock. Lorenz, upon spotting him, yelled: "Hey, Bork, what's wrong with you, this is not a poker game!"

But something else: Hush, hush, a very small, rosy little cloud on the dark horizon. Hush, hush, keep the joy down, but maybe, just maybe there will be peace. Peace! What a sound, promising freedom! Happiness and a life! No more prison walls! Coming and going as one pleases! Oh peace! The German chancellor, via America, Spain and Switzerland, has made a peace offer to her enemies! The terms are not yet known to the parliaments of the enemies. There has been

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no reply yet. Only the enemy press is already busy agitating, vilifying Germany and saying there should be no peace. But if there is a God, dear Lord, please let there be peace!

If peace negotiations don't eventuate, the war will have to go on and Germany will not shy back from any means to destroy the enemy. Victory must be ours, just like Serbia, Belgium, Montenegro and now Romania have become ours!

The "Sun" had a pretty piece of news: Monsieur Brizon as a dove of peace! A water bottle as an olive branch! In the French Parliament, the socialist representative Brizon advocated peace. When one of his parliamentary neighbours objected, he hit the man over the head with a water bottle! We need more such men! Then we'd see splits among the enemy ranks and we would have half a victory already! England and France both have new cabinets. Asquith has resigned. That's a good sign. So maybe, just maybe?! (3.15pm)

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3 January 1917

So, I made the transition into 1917 without pains, without too many burdens and tribulations, and in slightly tipsy and therefore rather serene fashion, despite the prison walls and other restraints. I'm expecting quite a lot of the new year, above all: peace, freedom, good health. I've made plenty of resolutions and thus I am ready for it!

Christmas and New Year are behind me, or rather, have been endured. The first two days of the new year were not very enchanting; I had chest pains and lung twinges, so I stayed in bed most of the time and was cranky with God and the world. Today I'm feeling a bit better.

I was awaiting first of all a Christmas parcel and a Christmas letter from home, and then a New Year's parcel and a New Year's letter, but none of all materialised. There couldn't be any mail from New Guinea since the first steamship isn't due to arrive until 11 January.

The good thing about these festive days is that you can rest assured

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that the loved ones at home will think of you and that all of us here spend some time thinking of home and our families. Even though the time difference makes it hardly a simultaneous act. The European New Year's Eve (midnight) coincided with 10 am on 1 January here, because the time difference of 9 hours was artificially turned into 10 hours by the "daylight saving bill". At midnight, it was suddenly 1am, so we now go to bed at 9pm and get up at 6am.

I celebrated Christmas Eve with Jerssen, Stegmann, Lembach and Pauer in Stegmann's cell (Stegmann and I also had a Christmassy reconciliation – peace on earth!) The entertainment committee failed, because in the morning of the 24th, at 5am, our comrade Adam died here at the hospital. Adam had cut his foot while swimming. Apparently, he didn't pay any attention to his wound, went to see the doctor too late

and was hospitalised right away. About 10 days before Christmas Dr Herz and Dr Hirschfeld operated on him, but in the night from the 23rd to the 24th, the big

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artery in the leg burst and he ended up dying from the loss of blood. Christmas Day [festivities] were officially postponed, but then Hornung protested so loudly that the Commander relented and brought out the nuts and apples, and let us each buy a bottle of wine for 2sh 6p a day earlier. And thus we celebrated with grog and merriment and talks (Hayer sat alone in our cell and was absolutely grumpy for several days). On Christmas Day, the funeral. The day was marked by masses: funeral service, mass at the coffin, mass at the grave, and then the holy Christmas mass. The first three I celebrated in absentia with a few early beers at the Duck's Coop, together with Lembach and Stegmann. Adam was buried on the neighbouring hill in the presence of the pastor and lots of people, anybody who wanted could march along, the flag was at half-mast, changing of the guard in front of the coffin draped in black-white-red cloth, and an eerily beautiful trumpet played "The last post". But heat and the hill kept me from going along. – In the evening we had the official Christmas celebration in the great hall: Christmas tree, holy mass,

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prologue, music, recital, music! We sat with Walter and Zell at our table in the hall and were bored. At 11pm, we were animated to dance, several drunk and ill-behaved "preserve officers" showed up and many thought it wise to go along and pretend to be drunk as well, but I was stone sober and totally repulsed and so I retired.

For New Year's Eve the committee promised a similar affair and we were allowed to purchase a bottle of beer each. The program included a festive dinner (pork roast and potato salad, just like in the countryside), a concert and recitals, a speech and lights out at 1am. We (Lembach, Jerssen, Hieber, Walter, Hornung, Schmidt, Wittrock, Zell, Stegmann and I) again sat at the same table, the concert was good, the recitals awful, Berblingen's speech at midnight even worse, the toast to the Kaiser and the song "Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles" were heartfelt and full of zest. And, well, the booze kept flowing. First I got some stamps for tap beer from Schmidt, then I had a chance to buy some myself, and at the end

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we were able to buy as much keg beer as we wanted, and thanks to Eyssen I had money and the mood kept climbing. The thirst was immense. The drinking, too. And our spirits went soaring. At 2am, when the party was officially over, Lembach, Stegmann and I

killed another bottle in the hall. At 3.30am, off to bed. The next morning an early drink (alcohol free!) at the beach café with Wittrock. And then I got sick! In the evening I steeled myself enough to have a bottle of beer with Hayer. It's rather amazing how much I and most of my pals suffered from the few beers we had; the long abstinence must have completely killed off our capacity for revelries. And I'm not sure if I should deplore it or laugh about it.

We don't hear much from the war front. Successes in Romania. The whole world is demanding peace, but nobody wants to make the first move. Everybody's clamouring for a conference. Hopefully, it will be a peace conference. In my calculations, peace is due by April. But ... who knows! (10.30pm)

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Friday, 5 January 1916 [sic]

Yesterday, the office gave us our pay, but for January, so apparently they have cheated us out of the December pay. We already signed for it on 7 December but have not seen a penny. Today I wrote to the paymaster in Liverpool, tomorrow I shall send a letter to Burns, Philp.

The weather is beautiful, almost a bit too hot. Went swimming with Stegmann yesterday and today. Have started my new life today, i.e., the new program, which shall include work. In the morning I continued my long letter to Mother, in the afternoon I studied some English, read the paper, wrote my journal, went for a short stroll afterwards, and read in the evening. Let's see if I can keep it up!

Peace seems to be vanishing gradually, just as it had surfaced; it seems the Allies don't want peace, so let them be pummelled, trounced, just like they're being in Romania right now. The U-boat war appears to be in full swing. And today's "Sun" is making noises about Salonika becoming a second

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Gallipoli. But I still believe in a not-too-distant peace.

I was awaiting a parcel or a letter from home with great anticipation, but nothing arrived! One wish though I'd like to see fulfilled, to be out of here really soon, see something else for a change, see women, because gradually one forgets that there is another gender out there besides men. Which is why there are so many male friendships and love affairs here in camp, the [indecipherable] and rascals who shamelessly offer and sell themselves like whores! Outrageous and revolting! (4.30pm)

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Wednesday 17 January 1917

For the past 12 days I have indulged in nothing but laziness, and wholeheartedly so. The weather has been fantastically beautiful, almost too hot, and so Stegmann and I have been going to the beach as early as 8.30am. By the time we're done putting the stone, walking, and wrestling in the water, etc and are safely back in the cell, it's 11am, the perfect time for a glass of milk and for brewing some coffee, and before you know it, it's 1pm. After lunch I lie on my bed and read. After that a walk seems to be the right thing to do. After dinner, we race around the courtyard, then we read a bit and either play cards (Binocle) [sic] or take in a play (Sudermann: Morituri), or an open-air concert, and lots of good reading (Flaubert: Salambo [sic]). And before you know it, half a month has gone. On the various war fronts things progress quietly. Romania seems to be completely ours very shortly. But we never hear or read about how matters in Germany really are. The English newspapers report uprisings,

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revolts, famine and high mortality, but in letters from Germany none of this is mentioned. Nonetheless, there has to be some deprivation, but how desperate is it? Do our loved ones suffer the lack of bare essentials? – Something else though: will there be peace? Notes are being traded. All parties would have to be tired of warring by now and yet there seems to be no solution in sight! The Allies, through the local papers, have made public their terms of peace, but they are so ridiculously outrageous that you can't take them seriously. Where on earth are their successes and victories that would warrant such unconditional terms? On what grounds do they demand the surrender of Alsace-Lorraine, Belgium, Serbia, Romania, part of Bulgaria, Constantinople; disarmament of the German army and fantasies like surrender of the German navy? It is us who control immense enemy territories, who have subjugated entire peoples! You can hardly imagine what crazy terms the Allies would come up with if they had achieved some real successes, such as the victories achieved by German weaponry

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and German troops, and by the troops of our own allies.

I no longer really doubt an imminent peace, we just have to call the bluff behind England's bombastic rhetoric! But what will happen after the war? If I ever get out of here alive, I will have a tidy amount of debts. How can I hope to pay them off? And where would I end up? In Germany? In military service? In New Guinea? And where there: Kabakaul? Or? Thousands of questions like these assail me in sleepless nights. None I can answer. The brooding makes me tired, listless, numb and too slack for any meaningful activity. For eight days and nights I have suffered raging headaches, for eight

days and nights I have thrashed around in my half-sleep; nearly blinded by the pain I began to fear that I would go blind completely or else demented. What was it? A malfunction of the optic nerve, a sun stroke, or are my nerves so shot by now that I'm on the edge of a breakdown? This captivity is ruining us all mentally, concentration has become impossible,

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we already have people here who are certified lunatics! In Liverpool, they say, some 30 men have already been confined to the madhouse.

At the moment, I'm feeling a bit better, the mood is good and physically I'm okay. But there must be peace! – At the moment, I'm having the cell all to myself during the day because Hayer is busy building his beach hut. I hope he doesn't lose interest in it! – The first steamer from New Guinea has arrived but without mail. The second one is due to arrive in Sydney today. So there's hope. Every day I wait for mail from Germany, I hope I don't have to wait much longer. – I haven't been working on my big letter to Mother lately, but I intend to resume that. (11.45am)

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Wednesday 24 January 1917

The path to Hell is paved with good intentions. I would probably achieve more if I began some work, an activity. But in the past 8 days I've managed a mere 2 letters although yesterday I did work on the big letter to Mother. Just as I said, the intentions are there but I don't have enough energy to force myself to work.

The situation is dismal again. No mail from either Germany or New Guinea, even though 3 steamers have arrived. No word of peace anymore! Were all my hopes in vain? – In New Guinea they organised another collection for us. £100. By the time they distribute it, it will be no more than £1 per man. Although I don't need it desperately at the moment, it's a pleasant matter. – Internal affairs: Grand assembly with a big stoush. Afterwards, Burkhard ambushed Täufert and lit into him with the riding crop! Very noble! – It has been raining non-stop for the past 3 days. The boredom drives you to despair! If only it all ended. (10am)

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Monday, 29 January 1917

The weather is beautiful again, almost tropical. Have been swimming with Stegmann every morning, along with water wrestling and putting the stone. Yesterday I was down there alone. In the afternoon I wrote; partly 2 letters and partly, on the typewriter, my long letter to Mother. Spent the evenings reading, but once I attended a rather

interesting lecture: "German south-west Africa and its animal species". Mail from Germany still outstanding. Received a card from Eckmann in Rabaul with Christmas and New Year's greetings; the other gentlemen keep mum. On Saturday I received my grey suit and overcoat from Eysen, the singlets and the white suits he had announced seem to have gone missing. I brought the grey suit to the tailor today to have it altered, i.e. taken in. Thus I'd be well prepared for a departure. But it doesn't look like an imminent peace. Saturday: the Kaiser's birthday marked by a celebratory mass – I fled to the beach. In the afternoon a brand new money game: Germany against Hanseatic Towns, which I lost glamorously. In the evening: grand speech by Lt. Gerdes, very modest and conversational. Then a concert, but I sat in the cell and read. Nothing else.

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At the moment I'm studying: Professor Preuss: "The coconut and its cultivation". Jerssen has borrowed it and so I always have to wait until he puts it down for a moment. (3pm)

Tuesday 30 January 1917

Nothing new! It is extremely muggy, and now the sky is overcast. Cleaned out the cell and then went swimming with Stegmann until 11am. At 12.30pm, studied Preuss's coconut. After lunch, we rolled the dice for coffee, then read the newspaper: fresh German attacks on Verdun. The Australians will not, under any circumstance, hand back New Guinea after the war. A speech by the former governor of East Africa, von Rechenburg, about a grand German Imperial colony in Africa! Would that mean New Guinea will be claimed back?! Off to the library and the canteen. Now diary and other entries. Last night I studied Preuss until 9.30pm. (5pm)

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Monday 5 February 1917

For the past 3 days it has rained, and rained, and after the crazy heat it is now ridiculously cold. For the past 3 days I have been cooped up in this cell, with the door shut, and freezing all day. The same at night, even below 2 woollen blankets. Oh you blessed land of Australia! God's own country! Indeed!

On the home front nothing new. Read for 3 days; one evening I gambled and promptly lost; another evening I went to the theatre. "Philippi: Benefactor of humanity". No mail from anywhere. Received my "monthly" yesterday from Burns, Philp.

An item in the "Sun" has caused much agitation and excitement in camp: that there would be an exchange of civilian internees in the near future! Wow! People chattered, speculated, brought out their suitcases, dusted off their suits. And all pictured themselves back home, as soldiers in the trenches, or at the very least in an ordnance

factory or so, all busy for the fatherland. We pictured the reunion with our loved ones.
We

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saw us returning to our mothers, maybe for a few hours, maybe for days. – Now however, nobody believes it anymore, because Germany has made a new announcement to America, to the world: Our enemies have rejected our peace proposals and so they shall be fought to the finish! The U-boat war shall continue relentlessly! We will sink without warning all vessels, including neutral and passenger ships, found outside the free zone stipulated by Germany. America "is allowed" to send one ship a week to Falmouth, which must arrive on Sunday and set sail again on Wednesday!

There is greatness in a nation who, after more than two years of war and greatly outnumbered by her enemies, sends out such a threat to the world, not only declaring it, but also standing behind it and ready to follow through with it. And yes, we can and we will! Bittmann and Hindenburg have said so and, as Germans, they will keep their word.

What will America do? There's hue and cry in the anglophile American press. They demand that America declare war on Germany, that

[Page 190=sic, the diarist goes from page 179 to page 190]

[German ambassador] Bernstorff be expelled. In my humble opinion America will do nothing, will wait and see. Wilson keeps mum so far, as does his secretary Lansing, despite all the clamouring from people like Roosevelt.

I suppose Germany could not act differently. I don't really know enough about the state of affairs back home, but without determination and decisiveness the war could go on for years, which our country could not sustain, so that's why: a fight to the finish!

Of course, if America did enter the war, it would beg the question whether we'd be able to defeat yet another enemy. Yet if the enemy, i.e. by now almost the whole world, would defeat us, it would be a Pyrrhic victory, because even our defeat would be a triumph of our might. The more enemies, the greater the glory!

Damnation! I'm sitting here inactive, can't do anything but fantasise, and have to endure constant humiliation from the Australians. (3pm)

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Monday, 12 February 1917

"If we keep up this speed, we'll have peace within 2 months." We hear this comment here every day umpteen times. Let's hope, and Krishna may help, that the people are right.

And how about this woeful phrase "owing to the blockade"? The German submarines are doing a tremendous job and almost casually sink 60,000 to 70,000 tonnes every day. There's something to the belief and hope that England can't sustain this much longer, and that these operations will force about peace. – America doesn't seem eager to enter the war and, after breaking off diplomatic relations with Germany, seems content to sit back and wait. Of course, the press and the people, at least the anglophile ones, agitate for war, but to no avail so far. The crews of the ships that are being detained in America and Honolulu, etc, have destroyed all machinery and engines, and the damage is irreparable. So in the event of war, America won't be able to use those ships, which they would no doubt have commandeered right away to use for their merchant fleet; this means they will have nowhere near enough ships because their merchant navy is much smaller than everybody thinks. – The newspapers are full of

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"submarine campaign" reports, hardly anything else except every now and then a small item about a famine or rebellion in a German, Austrian or Turkish town. We hear nothing about the various war fronts, but I guess the action has slowed a bit owing to the fierce winter. – Our blockade has probably stopped the postal service between Australia and Germany, so we might as well stop expecting letters and parcels from home, or even write letters ourselves. – Since yesterday we are allowed to keep the light on until 11pm; the extra hour should benefit me, but I hope not for much longer. The weather is good, a bit less hot, and sometimes even a bit nippy, summer is on its way out! I'm dreading the upcoming winter. Every day I have been going to the beach with Stegmann right after breakfast or at least at 11am, swimming, putting the stone, running and walking. Except for Sunday and yesterday, I've been working on Preuss's "Coconut palm", and every afternoon I have been walking for an hour, and another 1/2 hour in the evening after dinner around the block with Lembach. Afterwards I've been reading until 10pm, yesterday until 11pm, and then off to bed. I've idled away Saturday and Sunday. (10.30pm)

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Monday, 19 February 1917

All week long fabulous weather; always at the beach, a walk in the afternoon, reading in the evening or else some conversation, and at 11pm off to bed, mostly tired, and have slept beautifully. Until Thursday, I have studied English in the afternoon, on Thursday I attended Pupke's lecture on civil law. Friday was spent doing nothing. On Saturday, much to our delight, the New Guinea donation was distributed, "33sh 6 pence" per head, which I thought looked very appealing; secondly, Jochen celebrated his birthday with a grand afternoon party at the beach café, with cakes and coffee. In the evening, however, we had the general assembly. I don't know if I should laugh about the rampant stupidity here, or deplore it. All year long people have been clamouring for a cinema; now a man comes forward who is willing to buy a film projector, at his own risk and cost, and only asks for use of the theatre to show the movies! Oh you holy Anna, now these idiotic people erupt in protestations and lamentations that could make you sick! We don't need a cinema, they say, we must economise, it is unpatriotic, they say, to give the Australians

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the chance to make a profit selling us a film projector, and lots more of such nauseating gibberish. The actors, to a man, second the protests of Messrs Jebesen and Widmann, and Flambeck's motion is defeated. No sooner is the assembly over than everybody starts arguing about the result and want to have a cinema. So they start circulating petitions to reverse the decision, which splits the camp into two sides – cinema here, theatre there – and at least the people have something to talk about. That's how we live! Yes my son, you're in a loony bin!

Otherwise it's excruciatingly boring and there is no point expecting mail from Germany. New Guinea, too, keeps silent. The newspapers turn weird: The U-boat blockade was a non-event, no ships were sunk. The proof is simple and irrefutable: no ships were reported. As to the other war fronts, the press is equally unrevealing. Despite it all, we go on being optimists: "A dead event? Hey, that's suspicious! I won't be quoted on this, but in 2 months we'll have peace!" And we believe in this peace,

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like kids believe in Santa Claus. Deep down we nurse a doubt, but we know it has to happen eventually. Oh, if only time didn't creep so! So far, peace is not tied to a date, unlike Santa Claus. (3pm)

Wednesday 21 February 1917

Our second-rate Australian newspapers keep pussyfooting around the war events; today a German success on the western front, tomorrow an English victory on the very same spot. But do mind the subtle difference between "success" and "victory". The U-boat blockade is a flop, they write. But today the "Sun" wrote that maritime traffic from

England and the neutral countries had badly decreased; this was solely because the neutral countries had stopped maritime transports, which was why the blockade was so unsuccessful. However, whether England, too, is holding back her merchant fleet or whether English ships have been torpedoed is a question that remains unanswered! – In a lengthy article yesterday,

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someone lamented the high costs of administering New Guinea! Well, the wise man budgets for it (Stegmann, however, says the wise man sells down). Should the Australians have to hand back New Guinea, they'll certainly say: "Hey, we're happy to be rid of it, the whole thing was too expensive anyway and not worth a penny." – The main discussion in camp still revolves around cinema and theatre. Meetings every day, but no outcome. – The weather is fabulous. Mornings I go to the beach with Stegmann, then read, write or work; after lunch we roll the dice for coffee, as usual, then I read the paper, or write, or study English. 5–6 a walk. After dinner more reading if not Walter, Schmidt, [indecipherable], Hieber, Schröder, Stegmann or some other "block" [bloke] drops in for a visit. –

At night and often during the day I dream of home, of Father, Mother and the siblings, of Rosa and the child, of the student union and the great student years, of colourful caps and costumes. Of Munich, Halle, Leipzig and Berlin, of Unterwässen, Taubensee, Grafrath and Hauern, of the mountains and the Isar Valley.

But from nowhere I'm getting any mail, not from Ernst either, and I probably won't hear from him for a long, long time!

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Sunday 25 February 1917

Sunday afternoon: excruciatingly boring. Even if I think of the Sunday afternoons spent in freedom I am assailed by sudden tiredness and boredom. At home, I and mother stared out the window, often for hours, and there's something pathetic about a crowd dressed in their Sunday best and desperately trying to have fun only because it is Sunday. On Sundays in New Guinea, we'd be lying about in easy chairs, languishing in scorching heat, yawning until the jaws ache, deadened by the early drinking we're not used to, only kept awake by the cigarettes, and looking out on the blinding ocean or listening to the monotonous swooshing of the palm trees. Sundays in captivity: the crowd is dressed less Sunday-like and fails to be amused, the early drinks are missing, we're less tired but the ocean and the palm trees are even more monotonous, and all we hear is the sound of the dice! Stop it, Lord!

The days are mild, the weather fabulous. From the beach I enjoy the view of two mountains that blend into each other; mountains covered in meadows at the foothills, in forests in the middle, and

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in nothing but rocks at the top. At the foothills, 3 small houses. A footpath and a picket fence meander through the meadows, and there are colourful cows, all capped by a brilliantly blue sky and a bright sun. The mountains make me sad every morning because I cannot reach them, barbed wire and Australian rifles prevent me. To be walking just once on this footpath. No, not this footpath, another one, one in the mountains back home that takes me through lush meadows and rustling springs beech groves, past silvery creeks and across boulder-studded alpine meadows sprinkled with colourful cows, right up to the cross atop the peak. Will I ever again wander through German groves and climb up German mountains with my parents, my siblings, German men and German women? Oh nostalgia! Oh fatherland! Oh freedom! It's not easy to be imprisoned when the sun beckons and mountains and meadows promise merry walks – even if it is a Sunday. (4.30am [sic])

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Wednesday 28 February 1917

The sun smiles, the sky is blue, I have mail from Germany and England is not faring well. Yes, life is good! But wait, let's start from the beginning.

So, while I was at the theatre with Stegmann on Saturday, watching for the umpteenth time the play "The Honour", the formerly much-hated and much-maligned mailman brought a letter from New Guinea that did not improve my "Honour"-savaged mood, containing as it did the company's statement regarding my finances. My debts have now happily reached the 1000-Mark barrier. Well, there's no point griping about it, I'll just have to see later how I'm going to work this off! On Sunday, I received a present in the form of a letter from Lisel with her Christmas greetings; I was overjoyed since I had already begun to despair about the absence of German mail. On Monday, another joyful event: a postcard from Father, who wrote, among other things: "The main thing is that you're healthy and fit to work after the war." This line greatly boosted me and a few of my mates, given that we have all become rather

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pessimistic and tend to gripe a lot. To top it all, today at lunch time I received a letter from Ada who reminisced with pleasure about our jaunt to Grünwald. If only he knew how often I, too, think of that excursion and have not forgotten the least detail – how the legs of the "forest man", of Ada, were hurting in the end and how we bought up a

chocolate storm for the bed-ridden Richard and how overjoyed he was! My last few days back home! I have this expectation that I'll find everything just as I left it. And yet it will be totally different! Edy no longer is! Ernst is far away! And we others have all aged. They say they're already looking forward to our reunion, but how far off will that be, especially if I go to New Guinea first?!

Life in camp is still the same. I go to the beach every morning for 1 1/2 hours, go for a walk in the afternoon for 1 1/2 hours; the rest of the time I spend in my cell reading, and ditto in the evening until 11pm!

What do the newspapers report? It's still not much,

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really; but: "Heidi!" Things have taken a turn: now even the British gents have their hunger rebellion, their food, too, is becoming scarce! Hurrah! Another two months of blockade and we'll see where we're at. The speeches of the noble Lloyd George have become a bit more humble, and given his ego that means something! Of course, the English are easily comforted: the famine in Germany is much, much bigger than theirs and Sir Douglas Haig continues to win wherever he goes. (3.34pm)

Wednesday 7 March 1917

When we are sitting in our beautiful prison cell we often debate how the poor bugger of a criminal must have felt who used to be locked up here. And we come to the conclusion that he was worse off in one aspect only, in that he had a little less freedom of movement. But in many ways he was decidedly better off than we are; he had to work, which seems to me an advantage because the time flies. Secondly, he had

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a room to himself where for the most part of his captivity he was left alone, whereas two of us have to squeeze into a room of 5–6 square metres; it's awful to have to be considerate of someone even at night – if only it were somebody of the opposite sex – you're never alone, you're always within earshot of 4–5 neighbours, when doing your ablutions or changing your shirt or underwear you always have 3 interested onlookers! But the biggest advantage the criminals had was that they could tell themselves: My dear Billy, you have to serve out your one or two days, or years, and then you're out of here. Or they knew: so many more nights here or so many more working days. We, however, sit here pondering, speculating and deluding ourselves that we have figured it out: peace in two months' time! The months elapse, now what? We start calculating and guessing again, okay, there was an unforeseen event, have to add another 3 months now, but then there will be peace! The 3 months have come and gone, there's no talk of peace, we are still here. Spring is over, so is summer and still we're here; autumn has

gone, it's winter and still we're here; battles are fought and victories won, and still we're here; kingdoms fall, who cares,

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still we're here. People die and people are born, and still we're here. We'll still be here in eternity, we'll be here until we have forgotten that outside these walls, outside this Australian fortress, there is another world, there is work, there are other people, already we have forgotten what women and children look like; we'll be stuck here until the last little bit of our grey matter has shrivelled away. – For the past 4 days it has been raining, that certainly lifts the mood. Can't even go swimming, and so for 4 days we sat in the cell, unable to do mental work, we would read the newspaper and after 5 minutes we'd throw it against the gorgeous granite walls in utter frustration over the gibberish and lies the newspapers deem fit to print. – But today the sun is out, all a bit wet still, but hope returns and let's get out of here! (9.45am)

Thursday 8 March 1917

The dominant fact of the day: exceptional sloth. After breakfast and shaving I returned to bed and slept until 11am. From 11am to 12.30pm, at the beach. In the afternoon, I read the newspaper, which again has produced absolutely nothing new; it does seem, however, that trouble is brewing in England, but again they are masterly

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obfuscating the facts. A similar situation in America: Willson [sic] wants to arm his merchant ships but the Senate doesn't agree, so good old Willson can't do it, but all the more he talks big, saying that he will go ahead regardless! Let's see what becomes of him! Lately England and her friends have been gleefully saying that China will break off diplomatic relations with Germany, but nothing doing, the president doesn't agree and the premier, who advocated it, has resigned. – Sir Douglas Haig unashamedly continues to win but doesn't get anywhere with it, and today even a little German victory at Verdun made the news.

Because Pupke's lecture about civics was cancelled so I continued my big letter to Mother until 5.15pm, telling her about my adventures in New Guinea. No sooner had Stegmann and I set off for a walk than the rain came back. So back to the diary: tonight a monster concert, but who cares!

Last night I observed a lunar spectacle unlike anything I had ever seen. It was nearly a full moon surrounded by a dense band of clouds, and around that was this huge aureole of the most brilliant light, surrounded in turn by clouds. It was a very beautiful image, like this: [there follows a neat little sketch complete with captions]. (6.30pm)

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Monday 12 March 1917

Lately the war and my captivity have really bored me stiff. Could be that nothing much is happening out on the battlefields, or maybe we are just not told anything and sit here like a bunch of dumb beasts, waiting for something grand to happen that might eventually free us. – One could go bonkers here; we've had this absolutely gorgeous, crystal-clear autumn weather which makes you want to climb right up into the blue horizon and look far out across the sea without being blinded. [Indecipherable] and mountains and meadows and groves beckon and you can't go there! And just when the scene promises to reach its beautiful climax, when the sun is about to sink from a cloudless sky into a sleepy sea, when the silvery light of the moon starts dancing on the waves, exactly then they lock us away behind the prison walls, and so we sit here and rant, growl and hiss like wild animals caught behind bars.

Went swimming every day, studied some English, wrote a little, read in the evenings, went for hour-long walks every afternoon, attended a lecture on

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agriculture on Friday, rolled the dice, had a few laughs, amused myself or else was frustrated, and so it will be today, tomorrow and in the next several months, because peace is not likely this [northern hemisphere] spring and summer.

To our great delight, war action is threatening to come closer to this fabulous land of Australia. Since the "Emden" episode people had little to fear, but all the more worried they are now: a German "raider" was seen operating between Aden and Colombo and then disappeared, so Australia's government now fears for its beautiful ships. Hopefully, Australian society finally gets a fair dose of war. (Here everybody is shouting: Go and get 'em!) – I wouldn't be surprised if once again they interned our countrymen in New Guinea! (10am, OW)

[added later, in a different ink:] In Liverpool, after in a short period of time, they have shot dead 2 men who tried to escape! The second one was a farmer's son from Queensland!

Monday, 19 March 1917

Another week gone in which I have accomplished next to nothing. The first 3 days were so ridiculously hot and muggy, especially in the cells, that the whole area reeked of sweat! Then a thunderstorm and lo and behold, the next day the teeth rattle from the chill, at the beach

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we hop up and down like madmen so as not to shiver from the cold, and in the evening we had to shut the doors in the cells to prevent icy draughts. I suppose nobody would deny the amusing and health-enhancing weather here; what a becoming climate and country! – Earlier in the past week I studied some English and otherwise spent the mornings at the beach; rolled the dice after lunch, went for walks from 5pm to 6pm, in between and in the evenings I read, that is, Lembach and I walked around the building for 1 to 1 1/2 hours. Attended lectures on Thursday and Friday. Monday at the theatre: "Typhoon." This morning Hayer started work on the reservoir so I have the cell to myself from 8am to 1pm and hope I can finish my letter to Mother in the next 8 days. –

Yesterday when the newspaper came a mad roar erupted, a cheering unlike anything, because the "Poster" laconically reported: "Tsar abdicates. Revolution in Russia". Finally a revolution in Papa's Empire! Finally the event we have dreamed of for so long and which the Allies have dreaded so much. But please, just look at what the English newspapers have to say: The unrest has been quelled. The whole revolution was but a temporary eruption of people's passion about the

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lack of rye bread. At the moment, there is an abundance of food in Petersburg. They have installed a new regent, he and the new government led by Rodzianko will guarantee law and order and continue to abide by England. Peace [with Germany] is not an issue, they say, they just want an end to the old dawdling [sic] and all political currents are anti-German. Thus spoke the Englishman. From public accounts, such as the telegrams from Berlin to Sayville (U.S.A.) [Sayville is a hamlet on Long Island where the Germans, in 1912, had installed a wireless transmitter to broadcast to Germany. On 6 April 1917, upon declaring war on Germany, the US government seized the transmitter.] and the original reports, we hear of shootings, heavy artillery, machine guns, ordnance factories, arsenals were ransacked, thus the food surplus, etc, etc. The old tsar takes refuge with his troops, and the only power besides neutral Sweden that receives telegrams is Germany! – At the time of a similar setback, the battle of Jutland, the English trumpeted their misfortune to the world on the very first day and afterwards had great difficulty changing the tenor; they have since learned something and now ponder each event and try to turn it positive while keeping it secret for 10 days! – Whatever the case, for us it's great. "Utterly calamitous," said Schlich, "but ha ha, not for me." And the

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camp's optimist pronounces: "Revolution? Sure, that leads to a separate peace; after Russia, or even before her, Italy will yield. France and England on their own? France must drop out, England opens her big mouth one more time and perishes stertorously.

Hey kids, we're soon out of here!" The pessimist, meanwhile, moans and whimpers. But we all have to wait and see, and today there is no newspaper. (10.15am)

Thursday 22 March 1917

It's my dear mother's birthday! How will she celebrate it? Edy no longer is, Ernst and I are in faraway lands! Father will probably buy flowers and Lisel and the little brothers will bring some presents and good old Mother will enjoy it and will lovingly think of us. Oh if only I could be with my mother; as it is, I have to think of her and hope that she has received my birthday letter. Out there, however, a war rages and how much longer will it last? Since yesterday afternoon I'm rather downcast and without much hope.

The last newspaper we received came on Sunday, telling us about the Russian revolution. Monday was spent in suspense and

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dark rumours wafted through camp. Something was in the air. In the evening, suddenly a general assembly; Bedford told us he been instructed that we would no longer get any newspapers! The excitement grew and speculation was rife. Firstly, the "raider" was in Australian waters. 2) Peace with and unrest in Russia. 3) Internal unrest in Australia. 4) Uprisings in Liverpool. On Tuesday, lunchtime, Bedford summarised the "Herald" as promised: nothing new. In the evening, this report suddenly emerged, whose author should be beaten to pulp: Russia and Romania had made peace with the Central Powers! Some men insisted they had actually read such a report. We were more than happy to believe it, rejoicing and exulting, and making plans. Then on Wednesday, Bedford issues a new bulletin: no word of peace, on the contrary, we are retreating frightfully far on all fronts. All reports of peace nothing but conjecture and lies! Peace seems less than likely. Today, the top mufti is here, Colonel Holmes. But he doesn't tell us much either, and no bulletin has been issued so far. But some people,

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more reliable ones this time, tell us that the German raider is indeed in the neighbourhood and that the Australians, who easily lose their nerve, are withholding the newspapers because of it!

We had a lot of mail from Germany yesterday, but nothing for me; a few days ago also much mail from New Guinea, but no letter for me! The Rabaul people are probably behind barbed wire again if the raider is indeed here. – Hayer has abandoned his job. The weather is gorgeous, have been swimming every morning, sometimes alone, sometimes with Stegmann. Writing, reading, studying English, walking, etc fill my days. (3pm)

Wednesday 28 March 1917

It's been more than a year that I have been scribbling in this book, a whole year of lamentations and longing for peace! How much longer?

I guess a declaration of war from America is not likely anymore. The "Seagull" has scuttled 27 ships and is safely back in her home port, a great feat! Since the day before yesterday we're getting our newspaper again,

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which is all about the eastern and western fronts, that is, if it's not regurgitating in great detail the tragic denouements in the Australian parliament, which do not interest me in the least. In the west we are still retreating and so far back that one could start to panic, but we are convinced it's only a tactic-strategic move, we have great faith in Hindenburg. An American newspaper is saying that the German "movements" are being executed like peacetime manoeuvres. But according to Australian newspapers, the English and the French win battle after battle after battle, the Germans have finally realised they're losing and are retreating for good, but ransacking and destroying farmland and cities in their wake, being brutal and ruthless, and wailing and keening can be heard everywhere. – The situation in Russia is serious, even according to the English press. I cannot figure out what exactly is happening in Russia and with this revolution. But today we were surprised by a report that the Russian commander at the Riga front was warning that the Germans were about to breach the front and seize Petersburg. It was also being advised that Moscow be made the capital. If only we could achieve

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a success in Russia and then make peace. –

Not much news from this front here. The "daylight savings bill" has been rescinded and we're living in regular times again. From Sunday we are to be granted a small extension of the borders with access up to the hill were Adam is buried. Once again the committee is weary of office and wants to step down (in reality, the gentlemen will want to be praised in writing and will then continue once more). The weather is still very beautiful and I go swimming very early and mostly alone. In the afternoons and evenings I go for walks, read, write, etc. – Finally I have had mail from home: 1 letter from Schuh, 2 from mother. Thank God, they are all well and optimistic, although Christmas was a bit muted by Edy's death and Ernst's and my absence. Many of my friends have died at the front, among them Hoffmann, who saw me off at the station, and the 3 Stadelbauers. Schuh is somewhere at the front. But last not least [diarist's English]: Mail day–joy day!

Mirko Schmidt seems to have hit the jackpot. Bedford informed him yesterday that he could make a request to return to New Guinea if his conduct here was impeccable. Since there are no complaints about him, he might

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well be able to "steam" back to Rabaul. I'm happy for him, but I also envy him. A man needs luck, I just don't have it. (3pm)

Monday 2 April 1917

Still the same old! We are retreating on the western front, and the English and French talk themselves into a victory craze. Nothing much happens in Russia even though the newspapers keep reporting rumours about a separate peace. In Palestine, the English have taken Gaza. I, for my part, still hope in impending peace, and a separate peace with Russia. Here in camp it's the same old routine, too. One of our comrades, Eckert, died in a hospital in Sydney. He was a planter from Colombo and my cell neighbour; it's terrible to have to die in this godforsaken country of all places. The committee wants to step down, finally, tonight we're supposed to have a general assembly. Yesterday [there was] a mediocre [indecipherable] concert, the day before an even more mediocre play, Bernstein's "The Thief", translated by one of the camp inmates. The weather has been beautiful, went swimming every day except for yesterday, when it rained all day long and it was quite cold. It seems to brighten up again.

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I received a letter from Father, New Year's wishes, hopefully they come true. Mostly I am miserable and malcontent, if this doesn't stop soon I'll go crazy.

Today the border extension comes into effect; but all we gain is a hill from which there is no view, so I can't see myself going there often. (9.30am)

Tuesday 10 April 1917

Easter has come and gone! Weather-wise it was the only holiday that had a faint resemblance to the holidays back home. It was warm and felt like spring, brilliant sunshine and crystal-clear sky, the sea glittered and gleamed, a mirror-like expanse without any waves. At home it's spring! Spring in the city, spring in the country, spring on the battlefields; in France, in the Balkans the first timid blossoms and leaves; in Russia, the ice is melting! Here, however, nature bade us farewell at Easter with a brilliantly blue autumn sky. Today, it's all grey; the soil, the sky, the meadows and trees are all the colour of lead and it's freezing cold. The vegetation

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is never very colourful anyway, the trees and meadows lack the victorious green, the freshness. For the past 8 days I have been climbing the hill that is now within our borders; and one does indeed have a spectacular view of the camp, of the ocean, of the glorious bay. – Easter! My Easter consisted in me sporting a tie, buying some expensive cigarettes and eating three eggs. I could only dream of colourfully painted eggs, chocolate bunnies, Easter lamb, festive people, the sound of bells, songs, spring longings, catkins and the first violets! – But even the dreams are so long past, nothing hear smells of violets or Easter incense, the odours are much coarser and there is only one bell, and it has a desperately similar knell to the death bell, when it rings it says: To bed, to bed, you ratpack! – And now another winter threatens, full of cold and unbearable boredom. I wish I were a bear or some other blessed animal and could build my winter cave and start my hibernation, envied by all the other

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beasts! – Almost 2 years of captivity! Blessed those who can forget what is not theirs to change. And yet, I cannot get over it. I received a card from home, from Alma Spagl, with New Year's wishes. Other than that, nothing doing, New Guinea is silent and Schmidt is still here! In this cold I'm beginning to long for [indecipherable].

America has declared war on us! Will this lengthen the war? Will America support the Allies with money and troops? What will Japan and Mexico do? These are the crucial questions of the near future. The local newspapers indulge in asinine fantasies of victory. We seem to retreat further on the western front. Quo usque, Hindenburg? In Russia there are new unrests, and at [indecipherable] we seem to have had a great success! The Allies are now touting less their cultural values, etc., than democracy and people's freedom, and they obviously want to bait the Germans with this; I hope they don't succeed, because if there should be an international congress of the proletariat during the war, we would certainly end up with peace, but

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whether that would be to Germany's advantage is questionable! But we haven't reached that state yet. I see to black! [sic = diarist's English phrase, meaning "I'm too pessimistic"] (10am and 3pm)

Monday 16 April 1917

One minute it's hot and I sit happily and contentedly at the beach in paradisiac attire, have a swim and smoke cigarettes and simply feel good, the next minute it's freezing, the wind is howling past my ears, and crankily I sit in my cell and quarrel, or read and read and read, I read so much; the cell door is closed and I stink up the room with

tobacco smoke. Cigarettes comfort me, help me pass the time, they're the only thing that help me forget the joys of life, the women, the booze! I'd want to sing a hymn to life. But no worries, I'm no good at singing, and no sooner do poetic impulses grab me and push my pen towards the passion of literary creativity than some prosaic moment brakes the flight, where I'm presented with a bill or interrupted by an unwanted visitor,

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or else I'm suddenly assailed by tooth or head or some other ache! O me misere! [Latin for "poor me"] Always prevented from studying, from writing! No energy, no patience and mostly no money left! – I want peace! I long for it, I wish for it, I hope for it! I demand peace! Peace and a job! It's been almost 2 years that I have waited for the blessed day when I can leave this country; but hoping and enduring will only weaken you more! (That's right, Charlie). And all this waiting and hoping turns you (not me) into a mean-spirited, spinster-like, ill-mannered, insidious bastard, a right old bloody ape! There you are, sonny! And when you end up strolling around with a face contorted by frustration and world-weariness, you can be sure some jester walks up to you, taps you on your shoulder (may the devil fetch all the shoulder-tappers) and, lo and behold, from his cavernous mouth the lovely words erupt: "Jailbird, what? Straitjacket, what? Ring in your nose, what? Show Papa where your boo-boo is ... Heads up, sonny. It can only get better. I know, 'cause I've been here a year longer than you!" And again he taps you on your shoulder, grins smugly and struts off full of himself and his wisdom. You, you stare after him in disbelief and come to the stunning conclusion: "Poor guy,

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you're even crazier than I am." And what a solace that is! I live my days in loneliness: at 7.45am I rise swearing, do my ablutions, wake up Stegmann and Lembach, have breakfast, clean the cell ill-humouredly, clean the lamps and the cooker, followed by another major ablution, then shave and brush my teeth. It's 9am! Then I read or write until 10.30am, have a little snack and go to the loo. At 11am, I either go to the beach with Stegmann or for a walk until 12.30pm. At 1pm, lunch followed by a game of dice for coffee and lots of hooting and hollering. From 1.45pm to 3 pm, I read the fantastically veracious Australian rags, which do little to lift my mood. From 3pm-4pm more reading, mostly in English, accompanied by a steady intake of more coffee. From 4.30pm to 6pm, another walk with Stegmann, sometimes with Walter. Twice up the hill, because on the hill you taste freedom! At 5.30pm, the big roll-call and then we fetch dinner. Afterwards an evening constitutional with Lembach and Stegmann: 7pm, up and down the Alster [Hamburg's river], here: up and down the cell block. Afterwards I read until 9.30pm or play "Binocle" [sic] with Hayer and Broadbelt. Once a week I go

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to the theatre, last week it was "The Journalists". At 9.30pm there's always a little snack. Every Thursday, from 2pm to 3pm, a lecture on agriculture. Every 3rd of the month off to the office to receive 30sh.

At 9.45pm, evening after evening, I climb into bed. At 10pm the lights go out. At 10.30pm I silently but steadfastly gripe about God and the world; ponder things and hatch out plans until I nod off sweetly. The next day, it all starts again and will continue doing so again and again ... I'm getting sick!

To my great delight, it looks like my pride, my beautiful pivot tooth, crafted masterfully by Jacques Kronauer, is about to break apart, to vilely fall out. The danger is great because the 2 neighbouring teeth will fall out as well from sheer empathy. But 3 missing teeth would make me look a treat and probably years younger. the only solution is to buy 3 porcelain teeth! Oje. Who's to pay for that? Take your grievance to the Lord! Well, he won't pay either. Oh how beautiful this life is! Oh Suspaña!

(10.30am)

[added later, in a different ink:] proofread, 18 April 1917, OW

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Friday ~~18~~ 20 April 1917

A rainy day! Cold, humid and grey, and all that comes with such a day! The past few days it was seriously cold and I've stayed in my cell most of the day bar two hour-long walks in the morning and afternoon. So there's nothing remarkable to report. It's reasonably quiet in camp. There won't be any more general assemblies and other silly things. At the last, and stormy, general assembly, His Excellency Mr Berblingen decided to stay on as ruler of the camp and even got the men to re-elect him, whereupon he picked as his 2 co-leaders the worst of all, two absolutely farcical figures, Krüsemann and Weinbrecher. These 3 [indecipherable] will now head a committee of 17 men to run the camp's affairs. Each company was to elect 4 men to the committee. Berblingen did not shy away from nominating the candidates himself, but at least our company crossed his plans by nominating our own candidates, and

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he won't be happy with them (Hering, Schlüter, Dr Defregger, von Ricklinghausen). B. once again badmouthed the New Guinea people, but we did manage to stymie his dictatorial ambitions! – Other than that, absolutely nothing is happening: no mail, either from Germany or New Guinea. Mirko Schmidt is still here! But I have to thank him that I can afford to visit the dentist. He deserves all the praise! Yesterday I had the pivot tooth extracted and tomorrow, I guess, he'll do the rest. –

The situation in Russia gets less transparent by the minute. One can only guess what's really happening there. Generals (Kuropatkin) are being dismissed! Cabinet members are being ousted! Reportedly, German and Russian socialists are holding a conference in Stockholm. And Austria has proposed a separate peace to Russia! We here hope that a separate peace will be achieved, so that a start is made for overall peace. America doesn't act but reportedly has all the more plans. On the other hand, the British, the French and not least the Australians win and win and win. They claim to have launched offensives at Arras, Lens, Reims, Soissons and in the Alsace,

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to have captured immense numbers of prisoners, booty and cannons! The Hindenburg line is being breached daily in umpteen places ... but so far no man has breached a thing. From German, and sometimes even their own, communiqués we learn that the English, the French and even the Australians have sustained heavy losses; that's what we want to hear. – If the Russians indeed made peace with us, we would probably hear the most hair-raising tales from the western front. But overall, we're a lot calmer, a lot more certain of victory and peace, this year than we were last year at the time of the glorious English offensive. (12 noon)

Saw Ibsen's "A Public Enemy" last night at the theatre. Nothing against Ibsen, but the acting was awful! "The strongest man is he who stands alone" sounds just corny when spoken by Lühring!

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Wednesday 25 April 1917

Last Saturday, Schmidt-Mirko departed via Liverpool to New Guinea. Lucky man! You have to envy anybody who has work and gets out of here. Anybody who sits in the tropics and no longer freezes. He actually left me five pounds, which I will dutifully take to the dentist. I'm being treated every other day and hope to have my teeth fixed once and for all. These frequent trips to the dentist are the only new movement in my daily routine, all else stays the same. Just for a change, I played Binocle [sic] with Hayer and Broadbelt last night. All day long it was freezing cold and it rained non-stop, so there was no chance of walking, let alone swimming; today, the sun is shining again. Our previously granted border extension up the hill has been rescinded; there aren't enough soldiers to keep watch! Let's hope it won't be too long before we regain the hill, for one, or better still, won't have to look at hill or Trial Bay any longer!

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The battle is raging on the western front. That is, according to the English rags, it's only the English and the French who rage; they're winning gloriously, they conquer cities to

the right and left, they capture 10,000 men every day, they seize 40 businesses every day, they destroy 10 aeroplanes each day. The Germans, on the other hand, are fleeing, or surrendering regiment by regiment. However, the few German dispatches that we are apt to see report that the enemy just cannot breach our line. But from Germany itself, we hear of unrest and strikes on all sides! Stoushes are reported from Austria-Hungary as well. One day we hear that Austria wants to break away from Germany, the next day we hear that it is seeking a separate peace with Russia! The same with Russia: one day she is ready to sign a peace treaty, the next day she declares that she will fight on. The submarine war seems to be effective, even just judging by the fact that England doesn't disclose any losses! Yesterday, a German ship raided Dover. – It's impossible to gain a clear picture about what's happening: first we hear that Germany is down and broken, but yesterday Lord Derby and Curzon declared that even though [the Allies] were having successes at the western front,

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Germany was far from beaten and was stronger than ever. – We here just hope for a definitive peace before the year ends!

Re-reading these diary entries recently, I was surprised at how much of a jeremiad this journal has become. I must have used the darkest hours to write, while I enjoyed the joyful moments to the hilt and then promptly forgot them. I had thought that I might give these pages one day to Mother or someone else to read, but I better think again!

I will start a new journal, but let's hope that it will soon burst from joyous annotations, from thoughts conceived in freedom!

Today, however, I will end this "Book of Job", this "Book of Lamentations", as I may well call it since Job himself could hardly have done a better job of trumpeting his woes to the world than I did. (10.15am)

[Completed] in the jailhouse of Trial Bay (in the right wing, cell No. 30) in the state of New South Wales of the land of Australia, the fifth and most sinister continent, on the 25th day of the month of April of the year 1917.

Otto Wortmann

Otto Wortmann (loose page at the end of diary)

7 July 1892	[born] Duisburg on the Rhine
?	Munich, Maistrasse
3 September 1898	Munich, Herzog Wilhelm elementary school, grade I. Teacher: Goetz [or Gretz]. Friends: Bulle, Ochsner, Thiele Otto. Residence: Häberlstrasse 15a I
3 September 1899	Stieler school. Grade II. Teacher Bupp
3 September 1900	Stieler school. Grade III. Teacher Bupp. Near the Prinzregenten [Theatre]! [indecipherable]
18 September 1901	Grade I. Theresien-Gymnasium. [Class] 1e. Dr Gretze. [indecipherable] [indecipherable] 34. Entry exam! Lohmeier religious studies. Bulle [indecipherable]
18 September 1902	Grade II. Theresien-Gymnasium. [Class] 2e. Dr Wolff. Dr Braun: mathematics. Ernst to be a seaman? [indecipherable]
18 September 1903	Grade III. Theresien-Gymnasium. [Class] 3e. Wahlen. [mostly indecipherable except for:] Wednesdays: drinking sessions
18 September 1904	Grade IV. Theresien-Gymnasium. [Class] 4a. Thurmaier. [indecipherable] soccer, etc. Dr Herrmann religious studies. [indecipherable] Sophie Zorn. Gretel Schönmann.
18 September 1905	Grade V. Theresien-Gymnasium. [Class] 5. Rustermann. Josefstal. Rosa! [indecipherable] soccer. Jetti Greiner.
18 September 1906	Grade VI. Theresien-Gymnasium. Hauri. 5a. [indecipherable] every lunchtime. Jetti Greiner. [indecipherable] Confirmation [rel.] Sartorius. [indecipherable] Rosa at my place. Billetting of [indecipherable].
18 September 1907	Grade VII. Theresien-Gymnasium. Eckert. 5b. [indecipherable] Rosa. [indecipherable] Hess.
18 September 1908	Grade VIII. Theresien-Gymnasium. Maierhofer. [Class] 6. Wildemuth. Rosa. Family Mayr. Willi. Marie Springer. [indecipherable] stealing fruit. Brändli Tavern [rest indecipherable]

Otto Wortmann (loose page at the end of diary; back side)

18 September 1909. Grade IX. Theresien-Gymnasium. Dr Arend. [Class] 7a. Excursion [some logo-style abbreviation] with [indecipherable] Apartment: Bavariaring 35.

1910. January [mostly indecipherable, but he seems to relocate a lot, e.g. to Halle and Berlin; his brother Ernst back home; disagreement with a person called Rasch].

1911. February first [indecipherable].... Summer at home. [rest indecipherable, except for one mention of Rosa]

1912. ~~Wilhelmstrasse~~ Breitestrasse suspended. [rest indecipherable, except for the words "deregistered", "drinking sessions" and "theatre girls" and "Christmas at home". Also some more addresses]

1913. [mostly indecipherable except for what seems to be "Rosa pregnant", and then two dates: 28 November and 2 December]

New Guinea / newborn

1914. Rabaul. 4 August war, etc, etc [indecipherable] Kabakaul

1915. Rabaul. [indecipherable] 23 July interned. Liverpool.

1916. Trial Bay

1917. Trial Bay

[added in different ink, upside down:] July 1917, Grade VI Grammar School, Lisette, [plus 2 indecipherable names] [indecipherable] July 17, Grade V, Secondary School for Natural Sciences.

[on cover, in faded ink:] O. J. Bierbaum: Love's labyrinth; Mardi Gras; Insel-Verlag [the publishing house].

Letters [not clear if sent or received]

9-14/VII Mrs. A. Mayr, Munich
returned!

19/VII/16 Eyssen, Rabaul [indecipherable]

22/VII Burns, Philp, Sydney

26/VII/16 Mrs. A. Mayr, Munich

28/7 Else Kertmann [?], Duisburg

2/VIII/16 Mrs. A. Mayr, Munich

5/VIII Pieper Eitape D., New Guinea

18/VIII/? H.S.A.G. Rabaul

20/VIII/? Ditto

23/VIII Mrs. A. Mayr, Munich

25/VIII Willi Schuh, Munich

29/VIII Eyssen, Rabaul

30/VIII Mrs. A. Mayr, Munich

8/~~VIII~~ IX E. Wortmann, Chile

9/~~VIII~~ IX Mrs. A. Mayr, Munich

14/~~VIII~~ IX Burns, Philp & Co, Sydney

15/~~VIII~~ IX Lisel Wortmann [indecipherable]

20/IX Mr. Ferdinand Mayr, Munich
21/IX ditto
? /IX Mrs. A. Mayr, Munich
? /IX A. and Richard Wortmann
?
?
12/X/16 W. Mirow, Raluan
14/X/16 Westphal, Bitalobo
15/X/16 5 Christmas cards Kertmann, F. Mayr, O. Mayr, Schuh, Spagl
17/X/16 Mrs. A. Mayr, Munich + photo
18/X/16 Mayr, Munich + picture
26/X/16 Mayr, Munich
27/X/16 ~~Lisel Wortmann, with picture~~
27/X/16 Beyerlein, Kabakaul
30/X/16 Burns, Philp & Co, Sydney [indecipherable]
31/X/16 Murdoch, Sydney [indecipherable]
9/XI Minister for Defence
10/XI Lisel Wortmann
11/XI H.S.A.G., Hamburg
16/XI Ehrmann, Rabaul
21/XI/16 Eyssen, Rabaul
22/XI/16 Mirow, Raluan
27/XI Ferdinand Mayr, Munich
29/XI Auguste Mayr, Munich
5/XII Johanna Mayr Grafrath
9/XII Frank [?] Meyer
14/XII Ada Wortmann, Munich
15/XII Mrs. A. Mayr, Munich
20/XII Mrs. A. Mayr, Munich
28/XII Ada Wortmann, Munich
29/XII Lisel Wortmann, Munich

Expenses

19/VII Shoe polish, tobacco, matches: 0£ 5sh 5p; Bowling: 8p; repaid Hayer: 2sh 5p;
rolling the dice: 9p; repaid Stegmann: 3p; coffee: 2p; cigarette papers: 3p. total: 9sh 11p

20/VII Balance: 1£ 0sh 3½p. Lent to Lembach: 5sh 0p; coffee: 10p

21st Cold meat: 1sh 1p; bread rolls: 2p

23rd Bowling: 5p; coffee: 2p; laundry: 1sh 1p

24th Coffee: 3p; shoe laces: 2p

25th Bowling: 10p; cigarettes: 3p

total: 7sh 39p = 10sh 3p

26th Balance: 1£ 0sh 3½ p

Income

18/VII H.S.A.G. via Burns, Philp 1£ 10sh

19/VII Balance: 1£ 10sh minus 9sh 11p = 1£ 0sh 3½ p

26/VII/16 Balance: 10sh ½ p

W. [initialled by Wortmann]

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26/VII Brought forward: 10sh ½ p; cigarettes: 1sh; coffee (dice): 9p

27th Coffee, cake: 3p

27th Balance: 8sh ½ p

28th Coffee: 2p; cigarettes: 1sh; coffee: 2p

28th Balance: 6sh 8½p + pay of 12sh = 18sh 8½ p

28th paid back Hayer: 12sh. Balance = 6sh 8½ p

29th Cigarettes: 6p; coffee (dice): 6p

30th Beer, bread rolls: 6p; cigarettes: 6p; laundry: 1sh 5p

31st tobacco: 1sh; coffee: 1½ p

Expenses 29-31/VII: 4sh 6½ p

Balance on 1 August 1916: 2sh 2p

2/VIII cigarettes: 6p; cake: 2p

3rd cigarettes: 6p; cakes: 3p

4-5 cakes: 3p; cigarettes 6p

Balance: 0

OW. [initialled by Wortmann]

[Transcribed and translated from German by Rosemarie Graffagnini for the State Library of NSW]