

Paul Ping Describes Aussie Life

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Private Paul Ping Writes of His Experiences in Australia and the Money and Language Differences

Private Paul Ping, who is on M. P. duty in Australia, writes his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Claude Ping of near Willow Hill: "I get a kick out of some of the Aussies' words and phrases, such as calling a sidewalk, a footpath, a drug store a chemist's shop, and a fruit tree a "fruitery." If they are going to the movies they say they are going to the "pics" or "flicks." When they agree with something you have said they say "goodo" or "righto." When saying goodbye it is "cheerio" or just "ta."

"I could go on all night about that though. However, since I'm on the subject, I might as well tell you a little more about the people and their country. Almost all the cities and nearly all the larger towns are on or very near the seacoast. Since much of Australia is in the subtropics, you can easily see why this would be so. A sea breeze is a most welcome thing in the tropics.

Towns Are Scattered Out

"The towns are scattered out, so they look twice their actual size. Most of the houses are frame. There's little brick, and they are built well above the ground to discourage termites. Streets are usually rather wide, except in the older sections of the large cities, and are usually paved with asphalt.

The Aussies are great meat eaters—steak, veal, mutton and lamb. Potatoes are next. I've eaten meals where I was served both mashed potatoes and French fries. They care very little for vegetables, although the Yanks' constant call for these have had a tendency to add vegetables to the cafes' menus. They eat a tremendous amount of butter and bread.

"I love their bread. It is coarse, white bread like our homemade bread. They don't care much for dessert, or as they say "sweets" but they do go for ice cream in a big way.

Standards Are Lower

"Living standards are much lower than in the United States. In peace times, ordinary jobs seldom paid more than four or five pounds a week, \$13.00 to \$16.00 in our money. Food is simple and cheap and rent is low.

"While I'm on the subject, perhaps I should compare the Australian money system with ours. The pound, as our dollar, is the measuring piece of the system. It now amounts to \$3.20 U. S. The smallest coin is a half-penny; then the penny, next the 3-penny bit, sixpence, and shilling which is one-twentieth of a pound or 16 cents U. S. The sixpence is 8 cents and 3-pence is 4 cents.

"The next highest is a florin or two bob, 32 cents. Then there are crowns, worth five shillings and the guinea, which is rare. I have only seen one. It is a gold coin worth one pound, one shilling or \$3.36 U. S.

"The notes are ten shilling, half pound, pound, five and ten pounds and a few higher ones, utterly uninteresting to a soldier. If a meal costs four shillings, three pence, the check will be 4/3.

The People

"Now a word about the people. They are much like the Yanks, in size and general appearance. They are shrewd, tough, and resourceful, but lack the proper amount of initiative that makes our nation outstanding. They, are a conglomerate people like ours. It is nothing to walk a few blocks in a city street and see men and women of Irish, Scotch, German, Swedish, Italian, Japanese and Chinese descent, and some half castes with more than a little Japanese in them. Best of all in the Australian aborigine, black as coal, saying "Cheerio" to some friend, with a cockney accent.

"Enough about Australia for tonight. I suppose the country is all right, but I've been away from the states too long to feel very friendly towards it."