February 24, 1999

Dear Rachel,

In reading my old Breed diary yesterday I saw with interest your request for information from us veterans of Melbourne following our Guadalcanal campaign. As a member of H Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Division stationed at the Cricket Ground I can tell you that the 8 plus months I spent in your beautiful city will never be forgotten. Melbourne itself can be very proud that you helped us to get from the Guadalcanal campaign so that we were able to go back to the other islands of New Guinea, New Britain, and New Guinea with fond memories and hopes that we would be seen back again.

Although we were not then fortunate to visit you, your city will never forget our time here.

First and foremost of my memories for the wonderful people who made us feel as if we were in our own country. To be complete strangers to you, and to be welcomed as we were just was not done in any other country in the world according to my many friends.
who served in other theatres of war.
many of us were taken into hospital homes as sons and fathers and treated as such. Even though your own men were fighting in the middle east and new zealand and your hearts were heavy, you kept up the spirits of thousands of us from each young man.
the members of such places as
2nd. house station, st. paul's
cathedral (which I attended) yarra dury, st. matthias, fitzroy gardens, and my favorite restaurant, navarretas, which I understand is no longer, 4th general hospital where I recovered from malaria, the melbourne cricket grounds but most of all were the people who showed us such a grand time and made us feel welcomed to this country, city and homes.
we have returned every year and most of the talk isn't of the war, but of melbourne. even though we are gradually drifting off the old guard duty in heaven we are still the same young boys who have always felt as if melbourne was our second home.

in this same issue of news was a request from a lady in california who never saw her father who was killed september 18, 1944 in oklahoma and wondered if anyone would write to her
if they had known him. As he was in our company I wrote to her right off and in all the years since I joined the First Marine Division association it is the first time I had seen a man I knew. I remember him telling me he had a daughter born in Melbourne but I never gave a thought to the fact that this girl would make a request because she never got to know him. War is so brutal.

This briefly, is my memoir of Melbourne. I have a buddy who lives two houses down from me that served in our 11th regiment and was stationed in Bali. I'll try to get him to drop you a line also because he too feels about Australia as I do and hardly a day goes by while we're having our 9:00 am coffee, that the Backstreet doesn't to Australia.

One last thing, something you probably won't be able to do but I'll ask it anyway.

I had a very special girlfriend while in Melbourne. We corresponded until about a year after I was discharged. Nine days after I was discharged I met the girl who became my wife a year later. However I always wonder about my
girlfriend in Melbourne. In fact, when I met my wife-to-be, she reminded me so much of "Hock" in coloring, size, figure and feel of feet that she almost seemed a double. "Hock" had a brother in the Middle East whom I met when he came home, a younger brother at home and a sister who worked in Sydney at MacArthur head quarters. Her name was:
Dorothy Colson.

She called me "Archie" for some reason. I was just wondering if this was any way to find out anything about her. Probably not, however.

If I can be of any further source information, please let me know.

Respectfully Yours

[Signature]

Sergeant H-2-1 W.W. II

Please excuse the writing. I don't do much of it lately.