

OMEMEE BOY WRITES

Sept 2, 1942

TO FOLKS BACK HOME FROM SANDS OF EGYPT

Flight-Sergeant Fred J. Weir is the son of Mr. and Mrs. David W. Weir of Omeme. In civilian life he was a school teacher at No. 9 Ops and at Eldorado, Ont. He enlisted in the R.C.A.F. in Sept., 1940, and trained at Eglinton and Malton. He received his Observer wings at Jarvis and completed his course at Rivers, Man. He went overseas in August, 1941, and was transferred to Egypt in June, 1942. He has three brothers in the service: Sgt. Harold Weir, Equipment Depot, Toronto, Ont; Gunner Burt Weir, 45th Field Battery, R.C.A., somewhere in England, and A.C. 2 Arthur Weir, No. 9 B. and G. School, Mont Joli, Que.

F./Sgt. F. J. Weir, R. 72088

R.A.F. H.Q. Middle East, Egypt

I have just sent an Airgraph to you. Hope it arrived O.K. We are all fine, getting a sun tan and trying to keep cool. It is lovely at night and mornings until noon or so. However, in the afternoons we just lie and swelter. Your body

feels as if you were in a Turkish bath and you perspire all over, even though you are lying in the shade and the breeze. We surely appreciate the evenings, short as they are. There is no twilight here—the sun goes down and it is night. We have been to the cinema quite a lot. All the pictures are years old but it does help to put in the time. The big reason we go to the pictures is to see the girls. We have seen only two white girls since we arrived. There is one in the camp who is manager of the laundry. I think she is Spanish or French. She isn't exactly white but I don't think there is much Egyptian in her. The other white woman we saw was at a church canteen, where we attended a funeral service. I think she was the Padre's wife. You can imagine just how nice it made us feel for her to say "Good afternoon" to us.

We have been trying to learn to speak Arabic, but so far have just been able to master two words—Sa heeda, meaning Good Morning, and Enshai, meaning Go Away,

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Omeme Boy

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in slang. However, it is fairly easy to make oneself understood to the "Wogs" here. The Wogs are our Egyptian servants. Most of them speak very good English. We had quite a talk yesterday with Ahmed, our tent boy. He told us he was 13 and intended to get married in another two or three months to a girl 10 or 11 years old. That is quite common out here. One of the Wog lads at one of the other tents who is only 14 has been married for over a year. Some of them are very lacking in facial expression but the ones we have in the mess seem to be fairly intelligent. There is one chap in the mess, and I have yet to see a more diabolical grin on anyone's face. It is positively evil, but at the same time he is quite a decent chap. He has only one good eye, and the other roves around and quite often come to rest on some point on the ceiling, although he may be looking right at you with the other one. He will do almost anything for you. We always ask him to get us hot water for coffee. Being an R.A.F. mess, tea is served 3 times a day, so we Canadians bought a can of coffee and have our own. Ahmed cleans our shoes, fills our water jugs and water bottles, airs our bedding, sprinkles the dust on the floor, tidies up the tent generally and makes our beds. I think I'll bring him back to Canada when I come.

You have heard the Nile spoken of as the Blue Nile. I really don't know why it is so named, because I've seen no part of it as blue. It is muddy. The Delta itself is very interesting. You see all kinds and shapes and sizes of farms. I think that most of them are vineyards and date palm groves but you also see big fields of sugar cane. Have been swimming and find the water

very salty and buoyant. It is very easy to float. I can quite well understand why the Pyramids are still standing when I see some of the other buildings and how they are built. Incidentally, I've seen the Pyramids both from the ground and from the air and it was a big thrill.

Please don't send us any parcels as we get everything we need here. Breakfast this morning consisted of porridge, sausage, toast, marmalade and coffee. We can buy nearly anything we want but we have to be careful about eating fruit bought from the natives. Before it can be eaten it has to be thoroughly washed and disinfected, as nearly all the natives have various diseases which can be passed on very easily. The natives certainly are not very particular about being clean or keeping shops and streets clean. They lie down to sleep on the sidewalks or sit in groups in front of the shops. You can smell them even when passing through town in a truck.

There are 6 of us in our tent, 4 Canadians and 2 New Zealand boys. Have some real arguments over our countries. The New Zealand boys have a slight advantage over us, in that they have seen parts of Canada at its worst (January), whereas we haven't seen New Zealand yet. We are hoping to go to Palestine for some leave soon. We have heard some very good reports on the country and people. It would be lovely to go to Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth and Jordan.

Well, it's about time for the mail to be collected, so will have to quit. Hope your weather has been a little cooler than here and that you are getting more rain than we have. We haven't had any. I'll be so glad to see the next rain storm I'll probably sleep in it.

Well, cheerio and keep smiling. This old war won't last forever, and then we will all be home again.

Lots of love to all.

FRED.