

Russian Digger's Suicide

"FED UP WITH RAGGING."

The death of a soldier of the A.I.F. Peter Chervin, aged 26, a native of Vladivostock, was inquired into on April 23 (says "The Sun," Sydney) by the City Coroner (Mr. Hawkins).

On April 16 Chervin's body was found suspended by a rope from a beam aboard the troopship Anchises, by which he was returning from the front.

Lieutenant-Colonel Bond, S.M.O., said that the day prior to the Russian's death, he (witness) examined him and found that he was very depressed and moody. He told witness that he was "fed up with his life, owing to the "ragging" he had been subjected to through being a Russian." The ship's hospital was empty, so Chervin was placed in there in order that he might be kept apart from the other men.

"Only the Usual Teasing."

"About 11 p.m. on April 15," said the officer, "he was reported missing, and a search was begun, but as it necessitated turning out all the troops, the adjutant did not consider it advisable to continue. About 8 o'clock the following morning he was found hanging by the neck."

In reply to the Coroner witness said "he did not take the Russian's statements about the "ragging" seriously. From what he could gather, Chervin

From what he could gather, Chervin received only the usual teasing that most foreigners were subjected to, but nothing more. There was no quarrelling.

"Afraid of Brisbane Bolsheviks."

Private Percy James Roberts said that Chervin seemed obsessed with the idea that the Bolshevik movement was strong in Queensland, and seemed to be afraid of landing. He thought he would be looked upon as a German spy.

There were arguments at one time aboard the ship about Bolshevism, and there was some "tagging" of a friendly nature, too; but Chervin appeared quite happy. During the last two or three days, though, he became very depressed, and said he was frightened in Queensland.

"The Boys Will Tell You."

Copies of letters written by Chervin were exhibited. One, addressed to Mrs. B. Ryan, Brisbane, read:

"Thanks for all your gifts. By the time you receive this I will be out of the world. But do not think I am a coward, not for a battlefield. If you see the 49th Battalion boys ask them about me, and they will tell you."

Another letter, addressed to a girl in Western Australia, said that it was all because of the writer's weak will and nervousness, and asked: "What is the good to be in the road, useless?"

The Coroner recorded a verdict of suicide.
