

## Soldier Suicides.

### RUSSIAN TIRED OF RAGGING.

#### AND AFRAID OF QUEENSLAND ANTI-BOLSHEVISM.

#### ENDS VOYAGE ON TRANSPORT BY ENDING LIFE.

A soldier who had braved moving dangers on the battlefields and about for many lingering months, only to grow fearful over a chimera, and to end his young life in a moment of weakness, was Peter Chervin, a Russian by birth, who was among the returning soldiers by the transport *Anchises* the week before last. The Sydney City Coroner, Mr. H. Hawkins, held an inquest into the death of Chervin on Tuesday of last week.

Dr. L. W. Bond, a lieutenant-colonel of the A.I.F., and S.M.C. on the transport *Anchises*, said that he spoke to Chervin the day before the unfortunate occurrence. He received a report concerning the man, and in consequence examined him, and discovered him to be very depressed and moody. Chervin complained of having been

#### SUBJECTED TO "RAGGING"

by his comrades just because he happened to be a Russian. He was placed in the ship's hospital, so as to keep him apart from the others. Some time before midnight of April 15 it was reported that Chervin was missing, and that he had been allowed out of the hospital to walk about the ship with a comrade. A search was commenced, but as it would necessitate all the troops being turned out at that hour, the adjutant did not consider it advisable to continue the searching. Next morning, however, Chervin was found hanging from a beam, life being extinct. The man was 26 years of age, and his mother lived at 15 Polezatsky street, Vladivostock. Chervin had said that he was fed up with life, owing to the ragging he received, but he was not taken seriously, and from what could be gathered he had received only

#### THE USUAL TEASING

which most foreigners get from their mates. Certainly there had been no quarrelling over it.

Percy Roberts, a private, said that Chervin was all right for three or four days after leaving England, but

Chervin was all right for three or four days after leaving England, but afterwards he became obsessed with the notion that the Bolshevik movement was very strong in Queensland. He seemed to be afraid of landing in Queensland, and fearful that he might be looked upon as a German spy. The morning before his disappearance Chervin said he intended to suicide, and consequently his threat was reported to the orderly, who took Chervin to the hospital straight away. There had been some argument around the table anent Bolshevism, and ragging of a friendly nature went on, but Chervin seemed quite happy nonetheless. During the last few days of his life the man grew very depressed, and mentioned that he was afraid of what might happen after he landed in Queensland owing

#### TO THE BOLSHEVISTS.

or Bolshevism. However, it wasn't the ragging he received that worried him. Dr. A. W. Dean, who held a post-mortem on the body, it being custom-

ary for the Federal authorities to order post-mortems on the bodies of all soldiers who die on returning transports, mentioned that Chervin's organs were all healthy.

Sergeant A. Beattie produced a couple of letters which were found after Chervin's death. They were in typewritten envelopes. One, which was addressed to Mrs. B. Ryan, Bayview-terrace, Clayfield, Brisbane, ran:—

Dear Mrs. Ryan.—Thanks for all your gifts. By the time you get this letter I will be out of this world. But do not think I have been a coward. Not for a battlefield. I have been a coward to myself, that is all. If you see any of the 49th Battalion boys, ask them about me, and they will tell you. They saw me in the line. Well, best of health to you.—Yours, for ever, P. Chervin.

The other letter, which was addressed to Miss J. Lorimer, Gooseberry Hill, South Guildford, West Australia, said:—

Dear Jessie.—Just a few lines to let you know in time when you get this letter I will be out of this world. But please do not think anything bad of me. I have been a soldier, and true to Australia, but through my weak will and nervousness I'm absolutely an old man now. What is the good of being in the road useless? With best wishes and kisses.—Yours, Peter Chervin.

less? With best wishes and kisses.  
—Yours, Peter Chervin.

The unfortunate soldier was found hanging by a rope from a beam behind the men's wash-house on the well deck on the port side of the troopship just before 8 o'clock in the morning. The so-called "ragging" to which he had been subjected consisted in his sometimes being addressed as "Bolshie."

The Coroner found that Peter Chervin died from strangulation, wilfully caused by his hanging himself from a beam of the Anchises on April 16.

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