

Mother I am Coming Home: The Return of a Swazi Soldier from the War

About 3,000 Swazi soldiers volunteered to serve in the British Pioneer Corps during World War Two. They were mostly recruited during 1941-2. They received a rudimentary training in Bremerdorp where they learned to march and to obey orders. Then they were shipped by train to Durban and subsequently by ship to Egypt where they received further training and a gun.

After the war was over in 1945, they were repatriated to Durban where the final paperwork has done and they were given a train ticket home together with a £5 postal order.

During their 4-5 years of service they had little if any contact with their families at home.

No 548 M Dhladhla

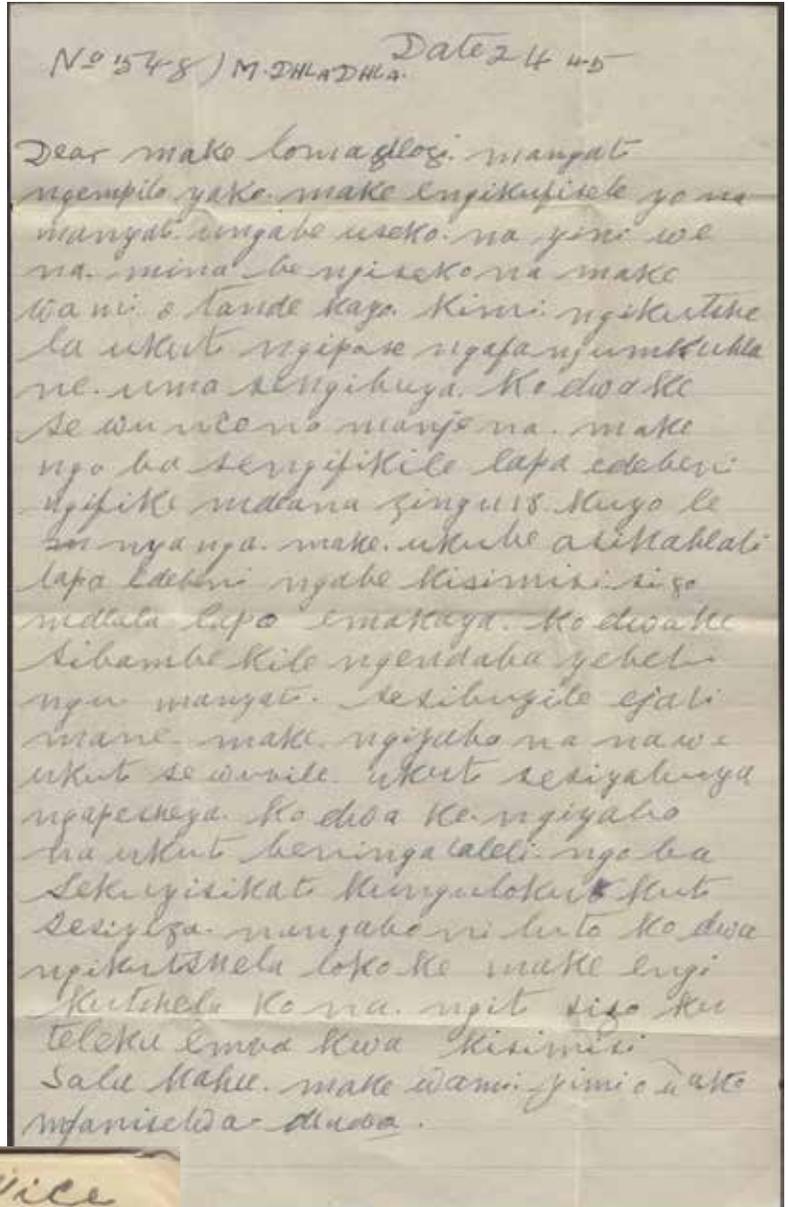
Date 24 45

Dear Mother Lomagilozi Manyat.

Wishing you well Mother Manyat. Are you still there, I am still alive my dear Mother. I am informing you that I nearly died of flu, on my way back. But I am better now. Mother I have arrived in Durban this month on the 13th. If it wasn't the fact that we are staying in Durban, we were going to spend our Christmas at home. But we are still occupied with the work of employers, Manyat. Mother we are back from Germany. I think you heard that we are back from overseas. But I see that you could not believe that because it's been long we were saying that we are coming back, but nothing happened, but I am telling you now. We will be home after Christmas.

Good bye my mother.

Yours Mfaniselwa Dladla



Swazi soldier No. 548 Dladla wrote this Active Service letter from the Imperial Forces Transshipment Camp Montclair (Clairwood) at Durban on December 24 after having returned from the war. He tells his mother that he had nearly died during the transport and that he would not make it for Christmas, but that he would come soon.

The letter also reveals that he was not sure if she still lived at the old place or if indeed she was alive.

This is my favorite cover because it tells the story of the Swaziland soldiers that served in World War 2 at the same time as it reveals the postal arrangements.