

57.

Bombay.

16.8.45.

Dearest,

Pardon me, one lib' moment whilst I get a drip off me chest - it's rather choking me at the moment. There's no doubt about the Navy - they've cornered all the flannel in the world - there's no body like the dear old Andrew for sewing out the purest, unadulterated trips for consumption by its devoted slaves. You may have heard that there's been a V.I. Day - the King said so, Mr. Acheson said so & Mr. Acheson also said that as a slight reward for the grand & glorious victory we, the Services in SEAC, would have today & Friday as a holiday so's we can celebrate. You'd imagine that the Navy would get to hear of things like that, wouldn't you? I mean, it's world wide knowledge that the Japs have jagged in & everybody's pretty happy about it. But I tell you solemnly & truthfully, & with bitterness in my heart, that not only have we been entirely ignored, not only have we been left in entire ignorance of what's going

on, not even a minor officer coming along & saying "the war's over, chaps, jolly good. In what?" But, knowing that we've got years' pent-up war-weariness to get rid off, the dear old R.N. have told us, without further explanation, that today & tomorrow we shall follow normal daily routine. There has not been the semblance of a flag or a cheer gone up around this place, & only by dint of great pressure have we got down to open the beer bar tonight for two hours. But the spirit has been squeezed out of us by official indifference to men's feelings, & there'll be very little celebrating - certainly not by us or any around me. Missing the two days' holiday is nothing, but the humiliation of being ignored, & treated as so much cattle, too insignificant to warrant the trouble of calling together to announce the end of the war & the reason why, (if there is a reason - I can't think of one), we have to go on working when everybody else is celebrating, is just a bit too much to stand.

That's that off me least baby, & now, feeling better, I can continue in the normal stream.

Of course, apart from the above, I, in my heart, feel like a kid again. I have all the impatience of a child waiting the few weeks before he's taken to the sea side. I'm as jittery as hell & all I do all day is discuss the deodor question & visit the cabins of the fellows whose group numbers are low enough to cause them to start packing. We discuss what to take home & what not to take. I want to know what they've bought to take home to their wives & what they've learned about restrictions or stuff taken into the U.K. It's an awfully complicated business trying to keep track of all the regulations concerning moving from here to home & as the chance will probably never come again, I want to take advantage of anything that's going. I saw a smashing box of paints by Windsor & Newton bought in Bombay - I thought of you & your painting aspirations & I thought you might like a set - they're awfully good. Shoppers are buying suitcases like sweets & packing 'em with everything they can

afford to buy - they all really feel that they don't want to be caught with their draft note + no rabbits. I'm not panicking about the business but in the next two months (I don't think I see more before then), I shall gradually accumulate stuff, also I may decide to send it home by post & not have the irksome business of lugging it about on draft. Then again, it all depends on how the money holds out. Exciting, aint it?

Geo. & Jim talk a lot about their house & what they're going to do with it when they get back. They make me very envious - of their position, not their house - & I like to try & pick up a few tips on this & that. Especially how you can learn by other people's mistakes. They also talk about their gardens & they make me sweat with tales of labour long & arduous. They might be making too much of a job of a garden, but I can see that there's got to be a little planning done in Westaway Tower to make the garden look its best by

the least amount of work on my part. Not that I'm lazy, sweet, but I just begrudge the hour of digging, weeding, etc. that a well-kept garden needs. I suppose the station is a jobbing garden once a week & that'll be money well spent. I hope that we can get a Potal because the small amount of ground around it will give us some experience of what is in store for us. What news of flats, baby? Usual, I suppose. Still, the position must improve later - as you say, the large blitzed houses in Blackheath will surely be built up into flats & maybe Mrs. Gifford will let us in on one.

In these slap happy days I get the impression of you more intensely than before. I now visualize your presence more vividly than ever before. I always get that feeling of expecting to see you round the corner, or in the cabin when I get clear from work. After the supper that the hairy ~~post~~ provides I come back lay back, & imagine the supper that you'll

provide me with. Last night's effort was particularly bad & I returned with a longing for some cheese & aleys a la Claire. I could quite clearly see that cheese & aleys & I would just as easily feel the atmosphere of the supper table with you presiding. I long for the attention that only you can give me - in fact, if I take too much notice of my present feeling, I get the impression that for ever more we shall be in that large living room, eating cheese & aleys, with intervals of conversation & love. What an empty life without you! I hope you can cook cheese & aleys, sweet.

I've had no further trouble with my stomach - it reacts quite normally now. I was about the last of the Mexicans to go down with gut trouble (we have a less polite name for it), & I count myself fortunate that I've lasted this long. The trouble is not bad food, but badly cooked & served food. But English stomachs can't cope with the queer diet that go by the name of meat puddings.

Tortoise pudding (!), steak + kidney  
+ others. Vegetables are ruined, & the  
meat is invariably tough. In the  
main, it's eatable, but never enjoyable.  
I suppose I can say that I've settled  
down to these conditions now, but what  
wouldn't I give for some home cooking!

Speaking of food they tell me you  
in England are going to have further cuts  
in your rations! Is that true? I  
can hardly believe it. If it is then  
I must certainly send more food  
parcels from here & you must let me  
know the positions in the east. I ain't  
going to have my kich in kin pull in  
their belts whilst these all this cash  
out here. Tain't no trouble for me -  
all I require is the word from you.  
I shall hold out a month anyway  
but that might not be enough.

The camp's gramophone is blaring  
out quite close here's tonight. There appear  
to be more 'swing' records than that owned  
by more blokes than that. Good, what  
a row! This'll go on til the Office of  
the Day comes up to tell 'em to jax in.  
But they really have an excuse tonight

haven't they? We just found out why  
they've opened the beer bar to indiscriminate  
beer drinking - the nation'll work out  
about 2 bottles per man! But 2 bot  
they get drunk for the same. "I  
Wish I Could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate"  
- they've played that four times already.  
Funny, as a rap to their consciences  
suppose to indicate to all + sundry that  
they can take swing or leave it, they'll  
put on Casuso's "Marta" next - but  
they'll follow that with "Shimmi-Sha-Wobble".

After the foulest week of the whole  
monsoon the weather had broken & it's  
possible to go out of doors without  
getting rain-soaked, in spite of raincoats.  
My poor ol' raincoat is ruined - it was  
never meant for this sort of rain. I  
really believe it's a dilute of sulphuric  
acid that comes down - it rots everything.  
You can always tell when the rain is  
likely to stop for a day or so, the  
natives put their shoes back on - if they  
have any. The temperature dropped too,  
& I've had to put a blanket over me  
in bed at night for the first time since  
I came out here. We get one advantage.



The battering rain seems to keep the mosquitoes away at night - that's quite all right with me for they seem to love my blood.

Parliament met today, didn't they? Well they can jolly well get on immediately with two things (a) early de-amping, & (b) wiping out the purchase tax. Mr. Harold Edmunds has been jabbering out here in a manner that causes much despondency amongst the troops - he reckons the end of the Jap war won't make any difference to the rate of de-amping - it'd better. How the dear old Harbour Port. (I always knew they'd get in), can start in getting the Powers to start in sending out tickets in large numbers - up to 85 anyway. They can also start preparing another budget which cancels the purchase tax and scrubs down that ruinous Income Tax. I know we've got an awful lot of money, honey, but that's no reason why I should pay £1000 for our Bentley when by waiting for the budget we can get it for £700.

I intended to go into Bombay this week-end to see "Henry V" & to start the Copel Bell rolling, but I think I'll wait 'til the middle of next week - the money might have come through by then, & anyway, the weather will make the trip hideous. So I guess it'll be another lazy week-end in the cabin. I still in all there'll be plenty of time for day-dreaming & that's a very pleasant occupation for me - me & my thoughts are just like that. Cleary in cheese - but I told you about that, didn't I baby. You don't have to do anything about my box when I get back, darling, do too sure & secure to worry about, but if you do feel that my lovin' is worth an extra treat to keep up to scratch, just feed me with Cleary in cheese - cos!

Bye for now, baby. Got your back bib in tucker all nicely pressed? Won't be long now y'know - Tiphee!!!

I love you so

Ca

014 Airline Service  
MARITIME



Mrs. Les Bostman

851A Belle Grove Rd

Welling

Leant

Everland

57

Received  
24.8.45