

42.

Bombay

18.9.45.

Dadling,

I hate lined paper but I was caught - the last time I bought writing materials + I must use it up. You'll probably catch me writing in larger letters now to use up the paper.

Being one of the lucky ones I had a letter⁽⁹⁰⁾ from you today, (only three came into the mess), but I haven't got the airograph you mention. As it's labelled "airograph" it'll probably go by sea-mail - that's what's been happening to some of the mail lately. Bob's wife wrote to him for the first time in 4 months, (after Welfare people had been contacted who went round to her address to square things up), + that me was sent by ship taking another two months. In the meantime, Bob continued to accuse

her of not writing, & she replied that he didn't appear as conciliatory as she was led to believe & the whole quarrel broke out afresh! They've only just squared it again with the help of Welfare, & we pray in this cabin that there'd be no more make-ups - it's very wearying for us, too.

When I wrote that last letter to you, sweet, I meant to cover therein all the office matters I could think about. But I forgot the matter that started the whole theme, viz - am I due for an increment shortly & how much? Thought I'd mention it - I mean, it's handy, ain't it?

I meant also to have told you about Peggy. Mike told me in his last letter that he'd had a ~~letter~~ ^{letter} that day enclosing a certificate from an orthopaedic surgeon stating that his presence in England was required due to P.'s condition. She strained her back & it seems

that complications are feared. He says that he will stay in London awhile & told him to write to you when it may be possible for you to visit Peggy. I don't quite know what to make of the affair for I know Mike would use any subterfuge to get-out of the Navy, but maybe this is genuine. The lad you met in the Granada pub in Southsea, Bob Perkins, who got out of this draft on medical grounds is now in Malta!

The weather tries very hard to change for the better but it gives up the attempt very easily. Today has been one of continuous rain & as I was fooled enough to send my raincoat to the cleaners I've been soaked about four times today. I suppose there's a reason for it all. The timing is fiendish. I'll be caught just as I leave the

but- for tonight's meal in my fresh
whites + then I'll have to come back
+ change into pyjamas because
I haven't any other dry gear.
I know all this - it's written.

Things have slowed right
down to a stop in the camp +
we all wonder what they're going
to do with us. All the big building
schemes have come to a full stop
leaving giant skeletons standing
in the fields ~~to~~ rot to the
ground during the years. Our
master super-duper canteen is an
echoing "white elephant with
shape + covering but no substance.
The cinema that was to amuse
all our trips about- bad projection
& inadequate seating will have
a mighty orchestra of wild dogs,
bull frogs + rats. We wonder now
if one day all the catering people will
run away with the food, as rats
will leave a sinking ship, &

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we shall find ourselves left in the middle of an encroaching jungle with no hope of rescue. We listen rightly for the sound of the war-drums of the Gompah-Gompah tribe over yon mountains - ne night they'll come nearer - nearer - nearer !!!

Actually one of two things will happen (a) this base will continue in a small way to keep us occupied (?) until our numbers come up - or - (b) It will close down & the whole draft will be sent to (1) V.R. ^{direct} (2) Colombo for draft to V.R. (3) Singapore if our Group number justifies keeping us out here. Without a great deal of guessing, sweetheart, you'll get the notion that (b)(1) is the ideal, but what the chances of that are I can't say. The chances of the base closing down early are pretty certain, but so many things

depend on so many things that
I dare not prophesy. If you marvel
at this unusual frankness of
mine as Naval writer let me explain
that all censorship has ceased & I
assume that I may open up my
buttoned-up lips for the first time
in 3 years & more. The next 3
months many disturbing things will
happen but this time they can
disturb me as much as they like
so long as each disturbance means
a step in the right direction - West!

The R.I.N. is demobilizing all its men
pretty fast & there's a lot of bad
feeling that the Indians should get
out of their personnel whilst the English
are still stuck here clearing up a
mess that is surely as much an
Indian headache as anybody's.
But the Indians regard this war
as definitely over & finished with
& are rather surprised that there
should be any aftermath - in fact

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influential men have stated that they'll be very angry if the Govt. does not bring things to normal in a very short-time!

The camp atmosphere is playing "Whispering"! My signature time - after Roy Fox. One of the articles we'll have to search for after a while is a next-line in Joannae for me + the gang to rap out on. I'll get the st. geetar tiddled up + that'll be in good reserve for a night's work. What I'm terribly afraid of, as the weeks go by, is a 'B' release that'll only leave me with 3 weeks leave + no time for all our lovely holiday or boating plans. Just fancy having to whittle down 2 weeks in Cornwall, 2 weeks running + doing the town, 2 weeks boating, shopping, + flat setting-up, + 2 weeks etcetera, to 1 week in Cornwall, 1 week in town + 1 week panicking round everywhere - ugh!

Struck me just now, baby, that
this fountain pen "Clare 1941" has
done as good service as any in this
war. It must have written
millions of words, & is undoubtedly
~~the~~ most useful present ^{you} have ever
or could have ever given me. None
of us had any idea how much work
it would be called upon to do.
It has never let me down - but,
then, I've taken good care of it.
I'll always keep it in commission, &
when the time comes for it to go into
honorable retirement I shall put it
reverently away as a souvenir of
an era of writing that we shall
never again meet. ^{at the time, when} Now ~~the~~ need for
the pen is finished is drawing near
I feel a little sorry for "Clare 1941"
that it should be relegated to office
work - I think I shall have "War
Service 1942-46" engraved on it in
commemoration of a good job well done.

Goodnight, my darling - Keep my
place warm.

All my love,
Les.

Dr. Aelme Sevier

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25.9.45