

Extracts from Dad's last two letters to Mum

Letter written on New Year's Eve 1945 on board HMS Rajah, just east of Suez, waiting to go through the canal, posted at Port Said.

...by golly it's been cold for the last two days! We ran from tropical heat, out of Aden, right into a belt of low depression which could be seen & felt.....tonight it's perfectly calm, but the slight breeze is very cool.....no more sweating, no more tropical sun, no more prickly heat, no more pimples – a good riddance to the lot!

Gradually I'm beginning to realise the import of all this journeying west.....I said ,didn't I, that I'd felt all along that such bliss as demobilisation wouldn't happen to me- it was all a wonderful dream....slowly that tight feeling of coming events is creeping into me and this voyage is becoming a trip to the Promised Land.....I do believe that the weather has a lot to do with it...as the wind gets cooler the blood is forced to race around faster and faster and the brain is sharper – one has perception again instead of the procrastinating effect of the lotus leaf – East is certainly East, and they may have it for my money.

....in two weeks I shall be on English soil – the Rajah will dock not so very far from you, my sweet, wherever you are.

This is possibly the last letter I shall ever write to you in the Navy, and when you come to think of it it's quite an occasion, eh sweet? The first was about July 14th 1942 and since then I've laid myself bare in a series of writings that have done as much for my morale as they possibly have done for you. You must know, darling, that I've never written anything to you that I didn't mean, or that wasn't the truth.....Maybe I've changed my views in some instances – damn it all, the circumstances made mental somersaults the order of the day! – but you're up-to-date with any such changes – that's what the letters were for, to keep me by your side all the time so that no part of me was hidden from you. And your letters, dearest- ----!!! Gosh- they've kept me alive, and have given me courage

through years of terror and misery and parting. For the rest of my life I shall remember the intense feeling of joy that every one of your letters gave me – I've got every one and I'll never part with them.

I forget how I finished up my first letter, darling, but I bet the theme was – "I'll always be in love with you"

Lez

Short airletter written on Thursday 10th January 1946 from the Rajah as it sailed across a stormy Bay of Biscay. They were to dock briefly at Plymouth the next day, where this letter would be posted to give Mum final notice of arrival on Saturday in Pompey (Portsmouth)

.....Yes indeed, things is humming merrily towards their appointed end. Ol Pappy Neptune is having a final fling at us in this yere Bay of Biscay-o, and this ship's doing everything but fly.

I's a-coming Honey

Ol' Lovey-Dovey hi'self

Lez