

14 December 1940

Dear Haze & Andy,

Your Xmas letter arrived today so I have two letters to reply to now. I was thrilled with the mail today as I had a letter from Muv (the first for weeks or months), one from Auntie and Quit. Quit's photo thrilled me too – isn't she a beautiful looking kid – still has the look of a little devil. I gently spoke to her about her admirer so she might open up now. Am glad she has taken such an interest in tennis – Auntie says she's pretty hot.

Thanks very much for the parcel which hasn't so far arrived and which I hope Hitler's torpedoes miss. It sounds as though it will be very welcome because although I can't quite remember our allowance of butter, I think it's only about 2oz a week. I get none of course – we all have mayonnaise – the fella has a couple of little pats over the weekend only and mayo the rest of the time. She of course is living a school girl's existence at this school and has no occasion to cook, but food can always be used somehow or another – I'm anticipating us being in a Helluva jam by this time next year.

Don't worry about a cake Haze, it's a nice thought, but it may go west or go bad on the way over – shipping losses are very serious at the moment and I'd say the most serious aspect of the war. The scrap in the near East is vitally important too but there is every reason for optimism there although as yet it is early to predict. Nevertheless I think Italy will be out of the war within a few months unless of course a very different attitude is taken by Germany towards her. And we'll be giving her all the trouble she wants in a few months. The issue at stake though, still, is the near East and the Balkans.

I can believe it must be good to see Unc trooping off to bowls – I like the game and may take it up myself when I go home. Muv's flat sounds a good scheme – thank God she is away from that place some of the time and I do hope it has the expected reaction on her health. Bill has something to do with the T & G – in my opinion it is a pity he is messing about in those sort of jobs but I guess I can't complain as I did similar things – the only difference is that I am older and realise its handicaps.

If the chap McIntosh is the chap I have in mind, you are quite right about him – I was not impressed. So Betty James is in Wgtn [Wellington] – is there any truth in the stories heard – I ask that because I had one or two difficult questions put to me in London two or three months ago and would like some information. So there has been more bereavement in the McC's ch – Auntie did not appear over wailful, of which I was glad of course.

What the Hell is this you are talking about us in the Sports Post – who the Hell could have found some tripe – I wondered if it could be Gwen but she's Free Lance and what is more knows my views about such things. It must be worrying for her over Gordon – I don't give much hope now and it is

tragic if he is killed – no more so than anyone else of course but when one knows the circumstances and the people concerned well, it brings things home.

I've scored 4 days Xmas leave – a chap gave me his time as he thought it more right I should be home – damn decent of him as the firm is running a big party at the school where the girls are evacuated and the fella would be probably lonely as she doesn't know many of them and the others will chiefly have friends so she would feel a bit out of it. They are bound to put on a fairly good show and I guess we'll get drunk at the pub first – they are open till midnight on Xmas Eve. She has only one day off but that doesn't matter so long as I'm there on the Xmas day.

We had Dr Beamish at the 'drome today presenting medals to the Czechs. A N.Z. Squadron arrived the other day and stayed one day only – I didn't see anyone I knew but there are over 2000 of us so it's understandable.

Did I tell you the fella's firm offered to give £1 for every £1 the staff gave for fighters and a bomber – the staff gave £18,000 so the firm had to meet a fair bill didn't it.

When on leave a couple of weeks ago I saw the N.Zers play the Welsh Guards – the fella and I were excited about it. I chased up and down the sideline giving my boisterous support – we won 20-11 and I saw one chap McLean from N.P. [New Plymouth] whom I knew – there were All Black's in the team too. The match was played on a little ground not far from Weybridge so that's how I happened to hear of it.

I find I have only ½ your previous letter with me so can't say what I have not answered and as it's 4.30am and I'm on duty 3 miles from the 'drome I can't very well get it so will say cheerio to you both wishing you all that is possible in such unsettled conditions.

Love, as ever, John [handwritten].