

2 July 1944

My dear Haze,

I don't quite know how I stand in my replies to your letters, but I feel that I should write, and in fact want to!

Am wondering how the new baby is progressing [Patricia Rae Anderson]? I think I wrote and acknowledged the snaps of Robert John. A darling child and I'd so like to see him before he grows into a school boy. I just wonder how many children you'll have before I get back to N.Z... though at the moment, although things look pretty tough generally, we're getting on top and once we really break through to any extent, I feel we'll move quickly. It is so very bloody at the moment, and the scenes of war in Normandy must be ghastly, but we knew it had to come, and there'll be much more of it. We're taking a bit of punishment at the moment as the doodle-bombs are doing their damndest to knock London about once more, but we're coping, although right at the moment I wouldn't mind being home and out of it all [Doodlebug: V-1 flying bomb first launched at London on 13 June 1944 after the Battle of Normandy].

The summer so far hasn't been summer, except for a few odd days, but maybe it is to come. The weather has been against us from the first – we really have been most unfortunate in that respect all through since 'D' day, but surely it must turn in our favour shortly ['D' Day: 6 June 1944 invasion of German-occupied France through the coast of Normandy].

I've heard from your aunt, Mrs Wood, about Harry being missing, and apparently she still entertains great hopes of his safety. It all depends of course, whether he was picked up by a German or a Jap submarine. If it was German, there isn't a hope that he is alive today, but if it was a Jap, there is quite a chance. I don't know where the ship was when she was hit, so I can't guess. In your last letter you mentioned that he had joined the R.A.F. but after missing his wings, he went back to the merchant navy. I think M.N. casualties rank second highest, - R.A.F. first.

Glad Eric's business is going so well. He has been very fortunate to have been able to stay put.

Yes, Haze, I agree that you did the right thing by handing over to the Public Trust the Katikati property. It was very decent of you to carry on for as long as you did, and as you say John did not give you "power of Attorney". One of these days I guess I'll be back home to straighten out everything, but in the meantime I certainly think you were wise to hand over to the Public Trust. I haven't heard from Merv or years, so I don't know how things are. I feel so helpless being so far away.

So Rae is still in Auckland? I wonder if she will continue to prefer a social life, or whether she will soon settle down with a nice husband. Still, she isn't very old yet – 26? I seem to be pally with a number of unmarried girls of about 33, and I just can't understand why they remained single as they would all make nice wives and are attractive in their various ways. Guess it is the modern outlook, and once a

girl has a number of years of complete independent living and good wages, it is quite a break for her to settle down to a sober married life.

You asked for Westie's address – it changes so often I hesitate to give the latest one I have – although I feel sure a letter would eventually reach him. It is C/O D.C.R.E. Moshi, Tanganyika Territory.

I hear every now and again from my mother. In her last letter she said that Marj. had left her husband and gone to Auckland – I presume she has left him for good. It is perhaps the best thing as I don't think they should have married, but I personally didn't think Marj. would ever admit she had made a mistake. I don't know all the circumstances as I haven't seen her for six years, but I don't think he would have changed a lot. I only hope Marj will make certain of things in future.

It is Sunday today and I'm on duty all day upstairs in the office. I keep moving away from the window when I hear the rocket bombs overhead as if it falls near enough to shatter the glass in the building, I don't want to catch any fragments in my eyes or head. There are more eye injuries through flying glass than any other, and I dread the thought of such an accident. Of course if we got a direct hit here, we wouldn't have a dog's chance, so all we can do is to keep our fingers crossed when they zoom over. One gets very matter-of-fact and fatalistic after a while, and believe me it is the only way to take things, as if one went underground every time a bomb sailed over, I guess such exercise would wear us all out and keep us down there all day. I'd rather take a chance up in the fresh air, although many folk stay in the tubes all day and night. It is pitiful to see the kiddies down there, but they don't mind really as it is all excitement and a change for them, but it must be most unhealthy.

I think I've mentioned that Westie's young brother is over here in the R.A.F. He is a nice kid and often pops in to see me. He has seen Mr Jordan in an effort to get Westie sent home or over here after being in Africa for so long, but he doesn't give out much hope as there are so much more important matters on hand. I think it is a darn shame, as other men get home after a couple of years or even less.

I suppose Edna Ginn or Keating rather, is safely home and I'm sure her people will be pleased to have them safe. I never met her, but I heard enough about her and the babe.

Harold Morey is off again, this time with the Toc H, all the way to India [Toc H started as a soldiers' club during WWI at Talbot House, Poperinge, Belgium. London branch during WW II]. He couldn't stick civvy life after having a few years in the army, and that is where I don't blame him as a man feels that he is out of things when we are so close to the war. He is a nice chap, and I hope he gets along with his Toc H. After all I think they do good work and have the best of conditions.

Won't worry you with more chatter just now. Hope that everyone is well, and that the wee daughter is progressing in the approved style.

Love to everyone, Joan [signed].