

6 September 1943

My dear Haze,

Many thanks for your airgraph of 25th June. I haven't written lately as there has been no news, and I know just how you must feel receiving letters from me containing either not news at all, or bad news. I think I told you that four bodies have now been recovered, the last one only having been reported early in August. Nothing since...

Am enclosing a snap of John. Actually the wee snap I had it copied from is much clearer and nicer, but I only had the one and had to have it copied as the man who took it has now returned to the States so I couldn't get the negative. As it is the latest one of John, I thought you'd like it. It is just how he was. Strange that you should mention that you should feel that your mother's spiritual being would be so strong that nothing fatal would happen to John. An uncle of mine over here who is a firm believer in spiritualism, interviewed someone who told him his mother has been watching over him and kept him safe, but from everything that has come to light since, it would appear that she must have been sadly wrong as Haze there isn't a hope in the world left now. Even had a few of them been saved by some miraculous means, and been kept in French territory, by now they would surely have managed to make their way to freedom, so every conceivable hope has been covered.

I had a letter from your Aunt Maggie the other day, Haze, and I will reply to her.

Has an airmail letter from Westie today dated the 21st August from Nairobi so that isn't bad going. He writes fairly regularly and is feeling very browned-off just now, as he says that although at first they had a very worthwhile job of work to do, he now feels he is in a backwater. He certainly hasn't had a fair deal of things whilst he has been in the Army, which has been for the duration of the War, and I'd like to see him have a break of good luck before it is over and get where he wants to be.

I'd sure like to see young Robert Haze. Guess he is a bonny child now and full of attractive ways. You are very lucky to have him – I wish I'd had a baby, but it is too late now to wish along those lines.

I was up at John's old RAF station last weekend, and stayed with the people who were so fond of him. They were all very kind to me, and although it was sad in lots of ways to return to where I'd had such happy weekends with John, I was nevertheless glad I'd gone. Very few of the old air force crowd are there, but a few of them I knew.

Haze, I haven't thanked you for looking after the K.K. [Katikati] property. I know John would be very grateful, and I suppose the only thing to do is to let it go on as before. I do so hope it doesn't mean a lot of extra work for you though, but I am certainly thankful that you are there and do appreciate what you have done.

Haven't heard from Het lately, but I suppose she and Rob are still carrying on. She was very worried about Bill for a while, but I believe has heard from him several time now. After all, as Bill hasn't met them, I suppose he finds it difficult to find a lot to write about.

I don't see a lot of N.Zers over here. Saw Cardo Evans – do you remember him and his brother Tom? – yesterday, although I believe he has been over this part of the world for a very long time. A large number of our boys from the M.E. have gone home on Furlough I believe, so I suppose you are now seeing a lot of returned soldiers in the cities.

By the way, Haze, I believe the mother of a girl over here who was Edna Ginn, now Keating, is a friend of yours. One of the girls in the office with me, Anne Fairey, knew her husband very well, and has since been very friendly with Edna and simply adores the baby. She has apparently not heard anything of her husband since he went missing about two years or so ago. I haven't actually met Edna as she lives up north, but Ann Fairey told me all about her.

Haven't yet decided what to do, Haze. Am still as unsettled as ever, and feel that until I find something to do that will make me feel it will be worthwhile, I'll just carry on. Somehow everything seems so empty and useless now, but one of these days I may really decide what it is that I want to do.

How are Rae and Quit? I had a letter from Quit in answer to an airgraph I sent her, but I haven't heard how Rae is doing. She isn't engaged or married yet by any chance? I suppose Rae is about 25 or 26 now.

I'm wondering just when I'll see you people again, Haze. I think that if I don't hear any good news of John, I just couldn't bear to settle in N.Z. again, but in any case I would go back after the War is over because I must see my people. I may change my mind about staying there, but at the moment I feel as though I'd like to go to some other place entirely, though 'twould be very lonely for a while. As one gets older, one is inclined more to stay where there are friends – still I mustn't talk about age yet as I've just turned 29.

I'm sure this wouldn't be a proper letter unless I added a little bit about the weather, which at the moment is absolutely wicked. You've no idea how miserable one can feel over here if there is no warmth for weeks on end, which is what often happens even in the summer. We've had one week's summer this year.

Well, Haze my dear there isn't much else and I do want to get this off, because it will be quite long enough on the way. I'll send copies of the same snap in later letters for various people, so that you'll all have a copy, but I won't send the lot together in case this letter gets lost.

All the best to you all, Love Joan [signed].