

(27) Bournemouth,

4-5-42.

Dear Mum and Dad,

I guess the most important item of news this week is that another of your letters turned up; it was no. 18, written a fortnight earlier than the last one from you which reached me a week earlier. The fun and games we had at Levin are starting all over again now, as three cables arrived at the same time and were handed over to me; however, they were for Jack Christiansen, who is on leave at the moment. It might be a good thing if he and I were posted to the same station, as otherwise our mail may go chasing both of us all over the country, unless the Post Office officials here can be convinced that we are two different people.

At the time of your writing this letter no. 18 you had not received any of the photos I posted from Saskatoon, so maybe it is as well it arrived last, or I should be getting horribly agitated. I have spent a phenomenal amount of money on photographs since I left home — about  $\frac{3}{4}$  times as much as if I had just bought postcards, I suppose — but real photographs have always seemed much more fun. The little 35mm miniature camera I have now costs me a good deal to run, but I am getting good results

and it hasn't bankrupted me yet. There is only one trouble - I can't find anyone else who makes a very good job of snapping me with it, but perhaps that is due to the unfavourable subject. However, I am enclosing one or two so that you can at least see I am still alive.

I have had fun photographing several of the boys who wanted snaps to send home, of themselves in their new uniforms. They just won't look natural, but stiffen up like so many boards. A professional photographer has my hearty sympathy.

I imagine our mail may get here a bit quicker when it starts coming direct to England instead of going via Canada and chasing us across the Atlantic. I don't know what sort of an air-mail service there is between here and New Zealand, but I sent a couple off last week "on spec," as Hazel would say.

In spite of its bad reputation, the English climate has been giving us a real treat for well over a week now. There has been a whole string of perfect Spring days with clear skies and sunshine just like they grow back in Hawke's Bay. And while I'm talking about the said Hawke's Bay: if I get just one more letter describing all the peaches, grapes, plums, apples and pears you have been having this season, I'll scream. Since reaching this country five weeks ago I have had

one withered last season's apple; and that is one withered last season's apple more than most of the chaps have had.

The food here must be agreeing with me, all the same, because I was surprised to find, a week or so ago, that I had gained  $\frac{1}{2}$  a stone in weight, so that is a step in the right direction. Perhaps it is due to all this real Spring weather after snow and ice for four months in Canada.

I am wondering if you have ever heard from a Mr Johnson, who would probably arrive in New Zealand from Washington in April. He was to have sent messages to you and to Peter Day's and Ray Stellop's people, but perhaps he was kept back in Washington after all.

Tom and I got out to Stonehenge last weekend; it is only 8 or 9 miles beyond Salisbury, which is a couple of hours by 'bus from here. It is quite a sight; those huge old stones look as if they might have been in position since Time began ticking. I suppose all this will arouse Father's sight-seeing blood, which probably not even petrol restrictions can entirely quench. Well, I have all the photos and I'll bring them home with me, as the mails are apparently not altogether to be trusted.

That's all for now, folks, so  
love from  
Arnold J.