

(33) Shropshire,  
15-6-42.

Dear Mum,

It has just occurred to me that I wrote 'Shropshire' at the top of this letter when for all I know this may be Cheshire, but never mind - it must be one or the other. You see, we are no longer at Tern Hill, having shifted temporarily to a subsidiary aerodrome a good distance away to finish the course. It is, if possible, even further from the middle of nowhere, being plump in the centre of a large amount of green countryside with not a town of any size within striking distance. Not that that matters, since we do not get any leave worth having in any case, as it is about an eight-day week at the moment. However, we should not have very much longer to stay here.

This is what they call a "dispersed" station, with bits and pieces all over the place. It means a long walk to breakfast, a long walk to a bath, a long walk to work - in fact, a long walk to everything. Still, it has its compensations, and if country air is really good for one, I should be thriving.

I had a letter from Tom to-day, from which it seems that he is settling down very

contentedly to fly "twins" again, but I am still very pleased I put in for singles. I also had a letter from Peter Dunlop, a lad from Barbados whom I met in Harrogate; he appears to be having a good time at some place in Scotland.

We have pretty good quarters here, considering there is a war on, the main disadvantage being that there is no "h. & c." laid on - hence the long walk for a bath. Nevertheless, we are next-door neighbours with large numbers of cows, and just across the way is a canal which would be picturesque if it were not so dirty. There is quite a flow of barges on it, some still pulled by horses just as you see them in the picture-books. Some, in fact most, now have a small motor of some kind but none of them get up more than a steady walking pace. They are long, narrow and deep tubs which must be able to carry quite a load, providing you are in no hurry for the goods at the other end.

This week, you will observe, I have not included any photographs as I cleverly left them all behind with the rest of my baggage at the main station. Next time I hope to be able to remedy the matter.

Every so often we get copies of "N.Z. News," a paper run by New Zealand House in London,

I believe. The last issue contained news of heavy tea-rationing at home, so I have been wondering just how you will get along if the Government starts clamping down on your "little cupper tea." What will you do without adequate supplies of your mainstay? Am I not lucky? Tea rationing here doesn't worry me in the least; what a pity I can't send you the ration to which I am entitled. One thing I do miss here, though, is a little piece of chocolate, as I haven't seen any in a week or more. Wonder if it is short in New Zealand? Shouldn't be if only milk were needed, but unfortunately sugar and cocoa go in it as well. Anyway, I don't suppose the country will ever go short of butter and so on. Not as long as Stotford Lodge keeps going on a Wednesday!

My mouth has just been watering at the thought of big, yellow Hawke's Bay peaches, and luscious strawberries with cream. I think it had better be the fruit season when I get home. Also some swede turnips, mincemeat and potatoes cooked to a turn by my mother would go down very well. That's something you can't send by parcel post.

Peter Day, who arrived at this station a course before I did, has finished his course

here and has just moved on to operations training, still one jump ahead of me. He has had an air-mail letter from home dated April 20, so maybe something is on the way for little me. There are no gaps in my correspondence to be filled now, so anything that comes now should be up-to-date. It's hard lines being so far behind with the news, as all sorts of things must be happening, about which I shall hear nothing for maybe two months. Just in passing, my pen will have to do a little exercise this week in an effort to catch up with my back correspondence.

Well, that's about all the news the censor would let through, I guess - have to be pretty careful not to offend that gentleman these days, otherwise maybe I could produce letters with a bit of interest in them for a change. It's a bit of a handicap, this long-distance correspondence in war-time. By the way, I wonder if there is any way I could find out anything about Auntie Harri's Norman? Trouble is I have forgotten the rest of his name, which was not a very intelligent thing to do. Well, well, it canna be helped.

Love from  
Annd f.