

21. Westbere Road.
West Hampstead
London.

N. W. 2.
18th April 1941

Dear Cousin Tom,

This is a letter I have been meaning to write for a very long time indeed but somehow it has been put off - anyway here it is at last.

I expect it will come as a surprise to you and I think I had better declare who I am straightaway.

I am Douglas Dovey, your Father's Sister's son, (a very ordinary bank clerk in London). I feel I know you very well as I have heard all about you from Aunt Jess & have seen the snaps & read the letters she has received from you. Also I have thoroughly enjoyed your stories in 'Blackwoods' & envied you very much when you talk of the log cabin & taking the canoe & guns for some shooting.

well as I expect you can guess there is only one main object in front of us and that is the war (we talk war - think war & eat war all day long then get reminded of it again at night by the Jerry bombers). I feel at a time like this we, in various parts of the Empire should communicate with one another and I'm afraid that before the war many had ceased writing to one another. I think that the Germans made a big mistake over this, they thought the Empire had drifted apart and calculated it would disintegrate immediately war was declared - instead there was the amazing response which is so heartening to us all over here.

When the war started in September 1939 few of us thought we should see such momentous events as have happened this last year. First there were the long dreary months of waiting until the spring of 1940 with only few episodes such as the Battle of the River Plate & the capture of the Altmark to put any colour into the picture & to spur us on, those deadly months

of complacency & over optimism on our part - months of feverish activity & preparation on the part of the Germans for their blow at Norway & then France & the Low Countries.

Many were the shouts that everything was going well but how could they have been (as indeed most people realised).

We were only just gathering up our arms after years of the most fatal policy possible. As you know we had disarmed - our actions in foreign ^{policy} were weak &, on the Continent the gangsters held sway - to almost everyone it was plain that we were heading towards war rapidly. The rest is known the world over, the collapse of France & the victories of the Hun. But we feel that we know now exactly where we stand we have no one to let us down & we are free from the treachery & intrigue which was rampant in France etc:

The R.A.F & The Navy have taken great toll of the enemy & while the Navy & our Coastal Command aircraft fight the all important battle of the Atlantic to keep our trade routes open & to insure that our

supplies from overseas reach us safely, our bombers strike at the heart of the enemy.

The army too has done wonders in Africa in smashing the Italians, but the Germans are the real foes. - unfortunately they have managed to get troops & equipment to North Africa & have retaken some of the ground we won from Italians but they will not get very far. The greatest credit is due to the Greeks for their magnificent fight against the Italians & now alongside our troops against the hordes of Germans attacking from Bulgaria & southern Yugo-Slavia.

In Greece we are at grips with the real enemy. The same savage war mongers - the same breed, the ravagers of France in 1870 & 1914 - the Huns who; right from the early days ^{when} Atilla & his hordes sacked Europe have sharpened their swords for the periodical war. It is not a new thing we are fighting or is it just the leaders who are 'goading' the poor 'misguided' people to war. It is a

nation of ninety millions people, bloodstained and with a crazy lust for war & world power. They have been hardened by years of training & equipped to the last detail by years of preparation & ^{now} flushed with success they are striving to finish their last real enemy - Britain. This is the foe we are up against but the knowledge makes us stronger & more determined than ever to crush them once & for all & encourages us to greater efforts in factories & in all our tasks - It was never the enemy that was the danger - but complacency.

I expect you have heard plenty about the 'Battle of Britain' & the threat of invasion & the bombing which has been going on. Well the Hun made another bad mistake in trying to break us with bombing. The bombing is totally indiscriminate & the weight of the attack has fallen on the civilian population whom it has only angered & made them more determined than ever to win. Meanwhile our defences are taking a steady toll of the raiders - our night defences doing exceptionally

well lately.

we have had some lively times here in London but am glad to say all the family have come through unharmed & must say I have enjoyed being in the thick of it.

I joined the Home Guard about a year ago & we have been "sharpening up our swords" ready for any invasion attempt, which, ~~would~~ ^{people think} would be a complete failure, so strong are our defences.

Have just had a medical exam for the R.A.F so I hope to be doing something a little more active before long.

Everyone was very pleased & heartened by the passing of the Lend Lease bill in the U.S.A. What a change has come over the 'YANKS' - months ago people here would say 'oh let us get on with the war while America does the talking', but at last they are making up their minds and getting a move on.

I think, when we think of the vast area & varied population of America we can understand & excuse them & we shall be very

glad indeed of the help they can give us -
As our magnificent leader Winston Churchill
said 'give us the tools & we will finish the job.'

As you can guess I could go on for
ever about the war but you no doubt
hear quite enough of it.

Have found some time to do quite
a bit in the garden lately and already
the gardens are losing their bleak
winter appearance & are sprouting well.
The days too are lengthening & the weather
is getting warmer all of which helps to
make life more pleasant. This year the
flower beds will be growing vegetables
& the lawn producing a crop of potatoes
as food is an important problem - anything
we can do to relieve the strain on our
shipping must be done - they must be
free to carry munitions and important
raw materials.

Although there is so much going
this seems to be all the news as how one
doesn't get about quite as much as one
used to, although I spent a splendid
week's holiday on a farm in Somerset about
a month ago.

We are all in grand spirits over here & we are not short of anything except of course luxuries which we can do without.

I was interested to hear you had broadcast & wish we could hear you over the air. Hope your efforts to get into uniform have at last succeeded.

Must finish up now if I am to get forty winks before I go on guard.

Of course it may well be that both you & I may be fortunate to meet one day in our travels.

I hope you are all keeping fit & with my very best wishes to you all & of course all love from my mother & father.

Remain

Your affectionate Cousin.

Douglas.

P.S. Enjoyed your article in the American mag & also the life history of the very tough gentleman in the front - very many thanks from Aunt Jess & us all:-

5.
ould your
ife's brother have
e opportunity - it is quite
easy to get here from any
station.

21. Westbere Road.
West Hampstead
London N.W.2
10th August 1941.

Dear Cousin Tom,

Very many thanks indeed for your interesting letter and many apologies for the delay in answering. Yes, I am the son of your Aunt Bess, one of the lesser branches of the family tree.

At last I am in the R.A.F!
I had my final tests this last week and am now on four days leave to finish up all the many little duties etc, as you can guess I am as bucked as anything, over it.

Your account of the Canadian and American war effort was very reassuring and we all know how great is the effort being made, it is a great encouragement to the people here.

By the way we shall be very pleased to welcome your wife's young brother (the six-footer) if he can manage to look us up at any time.

Well this war certainly seems full of surprises, of course, now everyone is watching the gigantic struggle on the eastern front with Russia - I think the Germans have had a very nasty shock and are suffering heavy casualties but it will take much more than that to defeat them.

While not agreeing in any way with the Russians as regards policy or their way of administration & the 'blessings' of communism, I must say their weight in the battle is very welcome & a chance not to be missed, while the success of their resistance has been a surprise to all.

The weight of our air attack on Germany and the occupied countries is growing and must be dealing them very heavy blows indeed and it is significant that we have taken the offensive in daylight & are operating well

into enemy territory.

It is through overwhelming air superiority that we will gain the final victory - it is just a question of time; our men have the skill & the spirit & the machines are coming fast; machines that will shatter the Germans. They will have meted out to them what they have delighted in doing to others who couldn't hit back. This time they will have the war right on their doorsteps - right into the heart of Germany, something which has never happened before, a war in their own country.

Back to something more interesting (I think these Huns get too much publicity) it is always 'what the Germans are doing'

- we have a fine crop of vegetables here in the garden - they have taken first place in importance in the garden now, but must say we would enjoy some more sun than we have been getting - ^{to help our tomatoes along.} it has been overcast ^{with} plenty of rain.

would like to have been with you on your fishing trip though am not very thrilled with the idea of being

introduced to the black-fly etc:-

My going in the Air Force means of course giving up my Home Guard duties; I had my last parade with them last Thursday, I am of course in one way sorry to give this up as I had made many friends & we had a grand time, but shall be glad to do something a bit more active. When I left them amid much rowdyism, they of course informed me that the country had enough trouble without my going in the R.A.F.

Lately we ^{have} had quite an easy time as regards air raids but guess they will hot up again later; still we are quite ready and they will never achieve any success.

Must end my rather hurried & scrappy epistle as time is getting short.

Hoping you and all of your family are fit & well and with all our best love to you,

I remain,

Yours,
Douglas.

P.S.
A Jess is very well and spending a week or two in Cornwall on holiday:-

P.S. The letter from
home which you
forwarded to me has
just arrived - many
thanks - Doug.



AIR CORPS TRAINING DETACHMENT
TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

Tuscaloosa.

13th May 1942.

Dear Cousin Tom,

I am still here at Tuscaloosa getting more & more involved in the many different subjects which they are thrusting upon us.

I have been called many new and interesting names by the instructor but have managed to avoid flying through any houses or such structures.

Last Saturday after the morning parade I set out for Birmingham and managed to hitch-hike - it was an interesting & enjoyable trip. After a short walk round the main shopping centre I rang up Cousin Nell and got my directions & then made my way to her house.

I spent a thoroughly enjoyable week-end there and I certainly feel as if I have a second home there.

Nell, her husband Max and the two children were all well, what two little "devils" the children are - they certainly are more than a handful.

Max's mother was there and we all went to church on the Sunday morning - my R.A.F cap caused me a certain amount of embarrassment as it drew far more attention than it merited.

Was pleased to see you had some of your stories in the American mags - I have read several and think they were grand.

The weather here is very humid as we all feel it rather - it makes us tired and heavy - at the moment a magnificent specimen of a storm is hanging in the offing. I hope it clears by the morning as we have had rain interfere with flying on two days recently.

- Have just come back from putting all the aircraft in the hangars for the night - we were called out in a hurry as they expect this storm to be pretty fierce.

I listened to Churchill's speech on Sunday and it was grand to hear him speak again - I was pleased to hear his confident note and his promise of a heavy weight of bombs on Germany.

I must finish now and tackle some meteorology.

All the very best to you & family.
Cheerio.

Doug ...

TO: T. H. RADDALL, ESQ.
 BOX 459.
 LIVERPOOL
 CANADA. NOVA SCOTIA.

637500

Write the message very plainly below this line.

Sender's Address 135664 F/O DOVEY. 40 SQUADRON. R.A.F. C.M.F.

15 April 1942.

Dear Tom,

Just a line to say I'm well and still getting a kick out of life here what with sightseeing & arguing the price of goods with the locals in $\frac{1}{2}$ Italian $\frac{3}{4}$ English plus plenty of signs.

The weather has turned warm & sunny and make full use of our days off in the local countryside either walking or hitching to some new spot or exploring. Don't hope to get some days off to reach the coast to get some swimming in as I think that ranks as my favourite pastime. Cannot find anything favourable to say about the Italians - still say they are the delectable bunch I have ever set eyes upon. In the local town they have now organised a club where we can spend some spare time as it is very well fitted out. We also visit the shops put on by E.N.S.A. & the American Red Cross which are invariably excellent. Two Italian opera companies put on one or two of the more popular operas some days ago. Believe they were quite good but unfortunately could not get along as duty did not permit. Of course we are still doing justice to the oranges & apples which are plentiful. Relations were supplemented the other day by pork one of the fellows had machine gunned a pig - "accident" of course. Well. Cheers for now. I do hope you & family are keeping fit. All the best, Davey

This space should not be used.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE ADDRESS IS WRITTEN IN LARGE BLOCK LETTERS IN THE PANEL ABOVE



TO - T. H. RADDALL ESQ.
 BOX 459
 LIVERPOOL
 CANADA. NOVA SCOTIA.

M. D. D. 1944

619931

Write the message very plainly below this line.

Sender's Address: 135664 F/O DONEY 4th SQUADRON R.A.F. C.M.F.

27.8.44.

Dear Tom,

A long overdue line just to let you know that I am alive, sticking & thriving on the fresh air & food here in Italy. I am not very thrilled by the Italians, I think they are the 'sawdust' bunch I have ever seen & the regulator!!! boy oh boy! The weather also leaves a lot to be desired, it has been cold & wet but we hope for an improvement shortly. Fortunately we can get a hot bath in the local town so we can scrape some of the mud off.

All these things however seem very small & are easily outweighed by the fun we get out of the life. A crowd of soldiers or aviators are not long without a laugh. Have been out on some very enjoyable sightseeing expeditions & the other day did some mountaineering - the mountains weren't very large but I realised how 'old age' is catching up with me. Guess you are as busy as ever still with writing well to the fore of your activities. Oh as you can imagine we are having quite a bit of fun with the language especially when trying to beat the shopkeepers down in price.

So hope you & family are keeping fit & in good spirits. Cheers & all the best.

Very sincerely
 Doug

This space should not be used.

MAKE SURE THAT THE ADDRESS IS WRITTEN IN LARGE BLOCK LETTERS IN THE PANEL ABOVE

AGF



WRITE IN BLOCK LETTERS TO THE ADDRESS BELOW
The address must NOT be typewritten.

TO:- T. H. RABDALL, Esq.
Box 459
LIVERPOOL
NOVA SCOTIA
CANADA.

217678
2000
1944

OK Boway

Write the message very plainly below this line.

Sender's Address 135664 FLT SWEY. DN. 381 WING HQ. R.A.F. CMF.

Christmas 1944



Greetings from *Boug*
Hope the family is well.

ALLIED FORCES

LAND, SEA AND AIR

This space should not be used.

135664 FLT DOVEY. DK.

236 WING HQ.

R.A.F. C.M.F.

21 July 1945.

Dear Tom,

At last here is the letter I have been meaning to write for ages, am afraid it will prove to be a very uninteresting one as life is really dull in Italy these days!

I'm still stuck in good old filthy Foggia, it is easily the worst part of the country being on a flat, hot, dusty, malarial plain. We are in the grip of summer at the moment with the sun blazing down out of cloudless blue skies week after week & life with its dust storms & mosquitoes is a trifle trying. Any spare time we get we spend swimming in the Adriatic, motoring down & making a day's pick-nic of it and apart from an occasional film this is our only recreation.

I spent two very pleasant days over in the Naples area a short time ago and I'm now looking forward to a few days leave which is

due to me, I can't make up my mind whether to go up north say to Venice or just to dash to the sea & spend the whole time in the water trying to keep cool!!

The number one event since my last letter is of course Victory in Europe, my! what a masterpiece the final assault on Germany proved to be. What a defeat for the Hun!!

Strangely enough we were far too busy to celebrate VE day at the time but in the slacker times which have followed since we have done full justice to the occasion.

Mother, Father & Aunt Jess are all feeling much better for the relief of the strain of V weapons etc: and are having a good holiday to buck themselves up.

It rather looks as if I shall be stuck here for some time in any event I shan't be returning to the fair land of England for ages, I'm more likely to end up in the jungle somewhere! Incidentally isn't the war against Japan making excellent progress, the air attack must be devastating!

I am waiting anxiously for the result of the General Election held in England a short while ago, I think it will prove disastrous if Churchill is not returned to power, we must have a strong & capable leader at all costs & I am convinced he is the only man for the job. Hope the Biggs reach agreement too, there's some tricky points to be discussed.

Are you still wielding the pen mightily there? Am looking forward to reading another of your novels!

Have you found time to take a hunting trip or a holiday lately?

Do hope you & the family are keeping in the pink these days also your wife's brother, has he returned to Canada yet?

I'm afraid my supply of 'news' is just about exhausted so will end!

Cheerio and all the very best,

Doug..

P.S. Hope your mother is keeping well. Have you heard how Nell & Max are getting along?

BY AIR MAIL

AIR LETTER

IF ANYTHING IS ENCLOSED
THIS LETTER WILL BE SENT
BY ORDINARY MAIL

C.A.S

J.H. Dovey



J. H. Raddall. Esq.

Box. 459.

Liverpool.

NOVA SCOTIA.

CANADA

Army Form W3077

Second fold here

138664 /FLT DOVEY. J.K.

R.A.F.

December 9th, 1945.

Dear Douglas,

At last I am acknowledging your interesting letter of 21st July, written from "good old filthy Foggia". Many of our local lads were in the West Nova Scotia Regiment at the taking of Foggia, and found it very lively in spots; none of them seemed to love the place. The regiment got home a month or so ago, after almost exactly five years' service abroad. Many of them have English and Scottish wives, and we are witnessing a rather unique switch of female population. The enlistment record of our town and district was very high, and by 1941 there was hardly a man between 18 and 35 left in the place. Most of these men went into the army and air force, and a lot of them married overseas. In the meantime the Navy moved into Liverpool and established a big refit base, with the result that the district was flooded with Canadian tars for four years, during which the wedding bells were ringing more or less continuously. Most of the local virgins (and some, alas, that were not), between 18 and 35, married naval men. And the personnel of the Canadian navy, as you probably know, was recruited very largely from the inland provinces -- there was something about the sea that proved irresistible to the cowboys and the prairie farmers when they decided to enlist.

The result of all this is that the demobbed naval men are now carrying off to the wild and woolly West a large proportion of our young female population; and on the other hand, the returning soldiers and airmen are bringing home English and Scottish women by the score. A general swap, you might say, and a good thing all round. My wife's young brother Terry married a Surrey girl. She arrived here last spring and seems very happy.

I enclose a snapshot of myself, taken while deer hunting at Eagle Lake last October, and badly in need of a shave. The rifle is a Springfield .300, sporting model, a really beautiful gun. We had fine warm weather -- much too fine altogether, because the hardwood leaves had fallen and lay dry and rustling underfoot -- you couldn't move half a dozen steps without making a noise like a busted steam pipe -- and the deer have very big ears. An old Indian told me once that deer have ears in their feet, too. He was engaged in cutting up a carcass at the time, and took his knife and opened the skin in the cleft of the hoof. There is an organ very like the inner ear -- a scent gland of course, which becomes active in the mating season, and he knew it, and grinned. Nevertheless the deer (and all wild animals for that matter) can detect ground vibrations at a considerable distance, as you know.

I spent a few days in Halifax last month when, amongst other festivities, I was made a Fellow of the Haliburton Club, the literary society of King's College. Mother is ailing steadily, I'm afraid, and Doctor Corston told me aside that ultimately she would be bedridden with arthritis. She is still able to get about with a stick, and is very cheerful. We've been trying to persuade her to come to Liverpool and live with us, but she's determined to hang on to her flat in the city as long as she can look after herself. Hilda is staying with her. Her husband is in the fleet air arm out East, and does not expect his discharge until far on into 1946.

I'm busy on another novel, this one a sea tale of the late 1790's, when Nova Scotia privateers hunted far down in the Caribbean with a yo-heave-ho not to mention the bottle of rum. "Roger Sudden" was a great success in Canada and the States, and is now being printed in Britain by Hurst & Blackett.

My Canadian publishers brought out another edition of "His Majesty's Yankees" this year. (Blackwoods published it in Britain; and I've given permission to the Royal Society for the Blind to transliterate it into Braille over there.) "Roger Sudden" is now being translated into Spanish for sale in South America. Another book of short stories, under the title "Tambour", came out in Canada last month; most of them had previously appeared in Blackwoods and other magazines. And that, I think, is a pretty full report on my noble works to the present.

The British election was a great surprise to everybody on this side. Of course the defeated government was the government of Munich and of the long years of blindness under that stupid man Baldwin, and I suppose the great prestige of Churchill couldn't offset his party's sins. The Labour Party are naturally elated, and have been making some very nasty remarks about people who believe in private enterprise -- which includes the great majority of people on this side of the water. Hence a certain amount of suspicion over here, especially when it comes to making loans. However the Labour government has just succeeded in getting a large loan from the U.S., and their experts are now in Canada to arrange a similar loan. There is some grumbling that we are being asked to finance a socialist experiment by men who make no secret of their contempt for our way of life, but I think that will pass. Everyone here is anxious to see Britain on her feet and prosperous again.

Much ado in Canada just now over a national flag. Fanatics on one side insist that Canada is now an independent nation and must have its own flag; fanatics on the other side insist that such a move would shatter the empire. A storm in a teacup. Nova Scotia has always been one of the most loyal of the provinces, and Nova Scotia has had a flag of its own for more than three hundred years -- granted by King Charles. It has been flown on Nova Scotian public buildings and on private flagstaffs time out of mind, and the empire hasn't even wobbled.

Winter is now upon us, and the countryside looks like a Christmas card. From what the boys tell me about "sunny" Italy, I dare say you're having plenty of snow and cold at Foggia -- if you're still there. Here's hoping that you're now in England, enjoying the festivities of the season.

All the best to you and yours.

Sincerely,