



NELSON AND NORMAN DOW

WWII CORRESPONDENCE TO THEIR MOTHER



**Dow Brothers' WWII era Correspondence
to Mother Irene (Christie) Dow (1891-1986) / Father Cliff (1888-1950)**
(excerpts)

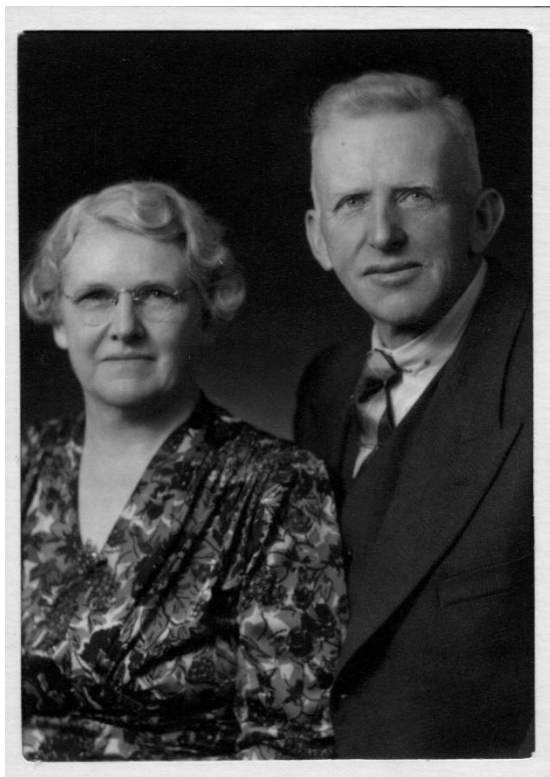
Text Legend:

WWII events related to Canadian participation

Royal Canadian Navy facility or fleet information

Nelson correspondence

Norman correspondence



Irene (Christie) Dow and Cliff Dow



Wartime correspondence pledge from the sailor/soldier to the censors:

The following Certificate must be signed by the writer:

I certify on my honour that the contents of this envelope refer to nothing but private and family matters.

1939

September

3: Passenger ship *Athenia* is torpedoed, killing first Canadian of the war: Stewardess Hannah Baird of Quebec

10: Canada declares war on Germany

16: First Canadian convoy of merchant ships sails for Britain

November

13: Canadian officers arrive in Britain

December

17: First Canadian troops arrive in Scotland / start of Air training in Canada for pilots and crew
1940

April

9: Dep't of Munitions & Supply

June

12: 1st Brigade of 1st Div. lands in France – forced to leave days later

Preface: 'speculation on why Uncle Nelson went mining at this time...??
INCO's Sudbury nickel mines were critical during WWII

1941

15-Apr-41 Sudbury: starting life as a miner: equipment, commuting, day shift: working 5200 ft down: mixing cement for elevator or conveyor shaft

23-May-41 Crawley & McCrackens: a.k.a. "INCO Hotel": Creighton Mine: to Miss Dorothy: Victoria Day fireworks, Munroe supper= Colquhouns bringing cows in midafternoon, Elsie looking for special wedding dress / doesn't expect to make it to wedding because of travel time: 2 days each way. Working as carpenter's helper.

16-Jun-41 "INCO hotel" Creighton: Glad to see Harold & Elsie: did they have more flat tires/what route did they take home? Working graveyard shift, making concrete forms.



15-Jul-41 "INCO Hotel", Creighton Mine: hot: trouble sleeping / fans are expensive. INCO hiring all from 1400 laid off at aircraft factory. Stook threshing? Norman will be 21: maybe called for training? Answer: cool in mid-level mine, but warm and humid at lower levels.

12-Aug-41 INCO Hotel, Creighton Mine: Participated in wedding: one gent on each side of bride left her in car in rain! Minister was late: mixed up on location. Drilling in mine and losing hearing for days.

06-Sep-41 Creighton boarding house: "got back OK" woman chased him out to make bed. Has nose infection.

22-Sep-41 Creighton mine: Did Norman go to London to sign up or change his mind? Hitch-hiked to Sudbury for show with roommate. Worked on underground mine train with loaded cars, but ground level had motor failure so waited around down below. Sold "the old Essex for \$20" - what he paid for it. Stopped writing, because "mad" with swatting flies in the heat.

15-Oct-41 Parry Sound: moved around: Got job at Nobel. Lots of recruitment issues. Two pair of white combo overalls. Met foreman of *guncotton department* where he will be working. (This was a CIL munitions site) No place to stay so spent night on bench in time office. Boarding place was run by same company as Sudbury, but 4 men bunking to one room, with bed bugs. Dinner worse than lumber camp: salt & pepper in dishes, pinched by hand, sour milk, bad tea and bad pie. Start @ 47 cents/hr. - less than mine, but better work. Easier commute to boarding place he was lucky to get at Parry Sound. Is Norman plowing at matches? Lucky (mother) not hurt worse: how are bruises? "Longest letter ever!"

Nov-Dec

Canadian troops stationed at Hong Kong: attacked by Japanese: 1975 troops either POW or killed

RCNVR Half Company Port Arthur: Nov 1941: re-named HMCS Griffon: commissioned as a tender to HMCS Naden [HMCS Griffon / Pt Arthur](#)

(Photo used w/o permission. DD)



26-Nov-41 Parry Sound: "got my call to the navy at last" - supposed to be in Pt. Arthur 4 Dec. Costs \$13 to come home, and not much time, so will pass, expecting to get ~5 days for Christmas, like army & AF. Have to pay own way to SS Marie, then rest is covered. Sending down a wardrobe trunk and suitcase.

5-Dec-41 Pt. Arthur: "HMCS Griffon" (land training base): 16 in bunch from Soo on one train and 13 more on another. 24 hr train trip from Soo. Five-hour layover in "dead-hole" Franz. Filled out papers one day, then got kit or equipment another. Dental inspection.

(Eloquence from Uncle Nelson follows! DD)

"The uniforms are the damndest things I ever had anything to do with. The trousers fit pretty snug around the waist, so we don't use belt or braces. Then there is a black wool sweater and the jumper goes over it, and believe me its snug too; you can hardly get them on & off as they have to come over your head. Then there is a separate collar with the blue & white stripes on it & a black silk ribbon that goes around under the collar and down the front and it is tied with another ribbon & there is a little white rope that goes around your neck too. We have to keep all that stuff clean and pressed and it looks as though it's going to be some job...It sounds kind of silly but the barracks is considered a ship and they use nautical terms for nearly everything they say for instance when you come in the door, you are on the quarter deck and you have to salute as you come in. It's a 3-story building; the basement is called "below deck", then next floor main deck and top floor upper deck or top side; then there is for & aft, star & port and all that stuff. When you go out you go ashore; when you come in you come aboard and if you don't get back, you're adrift and all that sort of stuff."

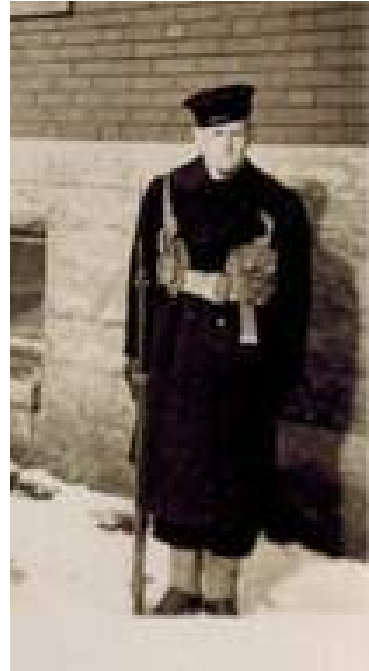
Don't stay at barracks except every other night with watch duty, when sleep in crowded quarters on hammocks, but not too bad. Otherwise stays at boarding house for \$1.10 a day. Navy allows \$1.45 / day, but have to buy own soap and such. Don't expect to get home for Christmas.

15-Dec-41 Port Arthur: Allowed \$1.45/day for room & board / getting his for \$1.10. Trouble passing arithmetic exam. Exercise drill outside in freezing with shirt and shorts: 3 or 4 miles. Girls are bussed in every Tuesday for dance at barracks, then bussed away after dance. Received church box of food and Family Herald paper.

22-Dec-41 Pt. Arthur: Sloppy weather / getting barracks ready for Christmas / received cards from relatives and sent none. Merry Christmas!

2-Jan-42 Pt. Arthur: Froze an ear white while skating and didn't realize. Has been serving as shore patrol/naval police a few times on street and dance halls. Got Christmas eats and pajamas ok/thanks. Socks? Can only wear black, so could use medium weight black.

13-Jan-42 Pt. Arthur: "HMCS Griffon": missed either mother or Dorothy's birthday? Dorothy is getting married? Sending \$5 for a present. Put in gym gear yesterday for 4-mile run / temp: 14 degrees = cold. Got back to take warm shower, but no hot water, so still cold. Didn't try arithmetic exam because didn't expect to pass, but got 100% in knots and splices. Some dances are not obligatory, so 2x more girls than sailors. Tonight obligatory, so will write letters.



26-Jan-42 Pt. Arthur: "HMCS Griffon": Been in hospital for 5 days with flu and sore throat. How did wedding go?

4-Feb-42 Pt. Arthur: "HMCS Griffon": How are the mumps? Norman must have had them bad. Missed 2 drafts because of hospital time / had watch duty on and off since.

20-Feb-42 Pt. Arthur: Been cold. Landlady Mrs. J Holomego offering hollyhock seeds. Thanks to Mervin's letter, saw him at train station. Looked fit. How are Mumps? Dorothy said it's hard to keep house warm.

7-Mar-42 Pt. Arthur: Sent pictures, including one in frame. Received a nice ring from League. How are mumps around home? One guy has them.

16-Mar-42 Kitchener: Army truck picked them up from train. Sleeping in bunk beds. Should have left some "junk" in trunk home: described kit: 2 suits of battle dress, 2 shirts, 2 suits underwear, 1 pr combos for rough work, 1 great coat, 1 winter cap, 2 pr heavy boots, 1 pr track shoes, 3 pr socks, 6 different brushes, 4 wool blankets (all of which was lost when supply ship was sunk in convoy, on way to Sicily. DD) "P.S. I don't think there is much chance of getting out. The grub isn't bad."

17-Mar-42 Kitchener (Post card): Confined to barracks because of shot in arm. Some fainted. Will hitch hike home Sat or Sun afternoon: off from dinner to midnight. "...I think unless dad can get me off, I will go Active..."

18-Mar-42 Kitchener: Trying out free YMCA writing paper. Each got a knife, fork and big spoon: that is all the silverware at table: you just dig in, and "soupe" own stuff off in big tub with bunch of greasy cloths and dry or not as you wish. Has to go on hut duty because of D for Dow early in alphabet. "Be home Saturday, I think."



20-Mar-42 Pt. Arthur: Surprised to get a letter from Norman. Army seems OK for him so far. Appreciated receipt of socks. Leaving for west coast on 29th, so will send coat and suit home. Have you tapped yet? Did you get flower seeds (from room and board lady?)

26 Mar 42 Kitchener: (Post card) Guess he's in the army: received badges for Signal Corps as driver. Hoping to be home for supper Friday, but not sure: there was an order for confinement to quarters, but it was lifted soon afterwards.

1-Apr-42 Vancouver BC post card: arrived OK / takes 5 hr to go to island.

April 4: RCAF spots Japanese fleet en route to Ceylon (Sri Lanka)

HMCS Naden: Esquimalt, BC: Naden 1: Land base barracks: [HMCS Naden info](#)

4-Apr-42 HMCS Naden: Esquimalt, BC: Boat ride from Vancouver and dinner was nice after so long on the train. Trip through Rockies was wonderful. Took 5 rolls of film. Charge 50 cents/roll, so costs a bit. All cameras taken away at barracks, but get back when go ashore. Nice place: grass, flowers, trees. Saw Mervin at Calgary station. How's syrup? Don't see how you will have time with other work to do. Thanks for birthday present, but shouldn't have: didn't send anything to you or Dorothy.

(Separate letter from Pt. Arthur landlady Mrs. J Holomego: Newspaper picture clippings of "draft" leaving for Esquimalt. She boarded over 300 servicemen during war time!)

12-Apr-42 Packed up and ready to go with 350 signalmen to Barryfield. Had good luck hitching back on Sunday: crossed street after Shakespeare drop-off and he and a corporal got a lift right to Kitchener.

14-Apr-42 Sick in barracks: sore throat & fever. "see you Friday night"

22-Apr-42 Esquimalt, BC: Naden 1: Got cake from Nellie, but seems foolish to have paid 40 cents to send a piece of cake. (Don't tell) Roger married @ Roy's. Harold & Elsie cut loose - Harold should be OK with Case L. Norman not feeling good? (Going on 20-mile march with full kit: understood.) Participated in Royal Guard for

Governor General barracks inspection, because of his 96 rating. In gunnery classes now, with seamanship next. Sending \$20 for insurance. Where in Sudbury are Roger and Bernice going?

April 27: Conscription authorized

1-May-42 Kitchener (post card): Got 3rd shot. Applied for long weekend, but may not get at all.

10-May-42 Esquimalt, BC: Naden 1: good that seeding is done early. Norman wrote Harvey disced field behind barn in 5 hr: must have been going a good clip. Norman not crazy about shorts for summer uniform. Finished boat work class - in seamanship now / exam in rigging coming/ exam in something every week or two. Got paid for the 2 days on train before leaving Pt Arthur, but then they took it off pay.

18-May-42 Vimy barracks: Kingston: still not too satisfied with the joint: not paid yet, and down to last 10 cents. Straw mattresses for bed. Driving truck. Had tear gas and nose gas training as well as machine and tommy gun. Had PT (physical torture) training. Not sure if he can get farm leave / might go with some others to try hitch hiking home on weekend.

21-May-42 Esquimalt, BC: Naden 1: Norman moved away from Kitchener - won't be able to come home weekends. Is Harvey's tractor red? Ken's is green? Practiced steering ship. Finishing seamen course and moving to torpedo next week - not sure how fast will be drafted after that. No hope for leave any time soon, because have to serve 6 months aboard ship first.

25-May-42 Kingston: Busy train ride through Toronto; added cars for troops and was still standing room only. Applying for leave, but learning about paperwork needed. A bit ill, but maybe OK.

31-May-42 Kingston: Maybe get leave/still learning the application part. Been feeling sick / not eating / something going around, but feeling some better. Started driving trucks - not doing bad. Missed picking up parcel at PO - didn't know to ask if there was one.

31-May-42 Esquimalt, BC: Naden 1: Finishing 10-week course including torpedo with Comox shooting next. Wes Mahaffy/Ken/Bill tractor talk. Letter from Wilma said she wants him to "send her down a good looking 6-footer" Nothing special on "the 24", with gas and tire shortage.

3-Jun-42 Kingston: Not eating much: bouncing around with 9 others in back of truck with 55 psi in tires and some drivers who never drove anything before. Still not sure about leave. Received parcel from Mitchell with socks and sweater he has been wearing - coughing since home. Had letter from Nelson / radio said some excitement on west coast.

8-Jun-42 Comox, BC: "Naden III": Finished the torpedo, but won't know if he gets course until back at Naden 1. On guard duty 11PM - 2 AM, raining most of the time. Had teeth checked: OK. Met Alexander Graham Bell from Winchels, who knows Johns family and others at home. Has plenty of heavy socks - could use lighter ones, but can buy too. Send knitting yarn of any colour and a big needle: yarn sold there not good for mending.

12-Jun-42 **Kingston: Started haying? Good weather there / doing more truck driving with 2 to a truck - not doing bad according to corporal. Take a sandwich lunch on all-day drives. "...write soon."**

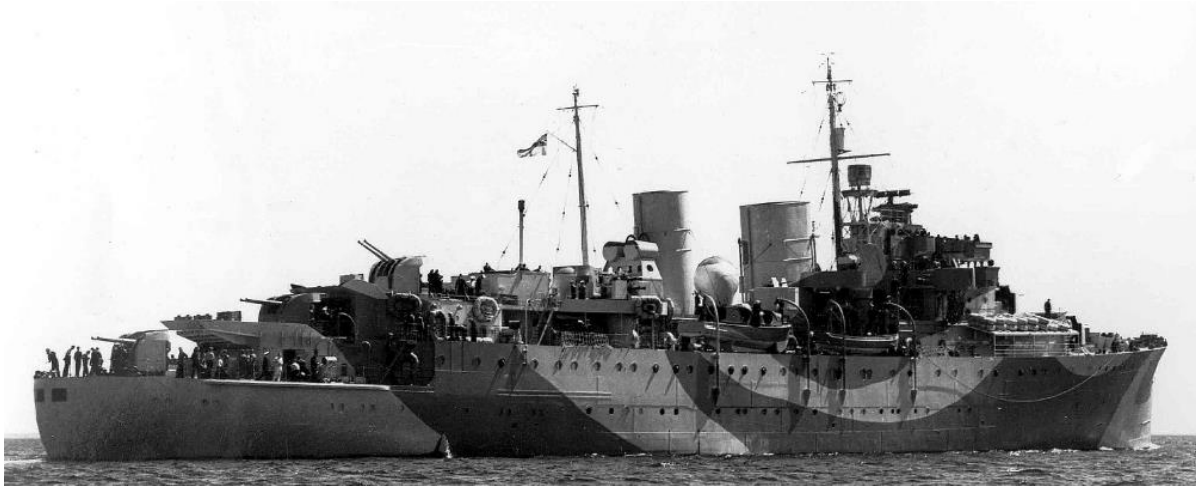
15-Jun-42 **"Esquimalt. B.C.: How is the pet bunny? Got back from Comox Sunday. Boat trip was rough. Got a badge for good shooting: of 75 or 80, he was one of 3 who got it. After 5 shots to adjust sights, he got 4 bullseyes out of first 5, then got shaky. Newspaper showed Harvey Killens B.A. - what good is a B.A. - what line of work? Just got back from Comox (again) and got draft notice to ship this morning. Those who signed up for gunnery and anti-sub detector got their request; he didn't know of others who signed up for torpedo course. Needs 4 months' sea time for service. New address: HMCS Pr. Robert"**

HMCS Prince Robert: (Armed merchant cruiser for protection of west coast of Canada): she and sisters were most powerful ships operated by RCN until later in war. Converted at Esquimalt BC and commissioned to RCN Sept 1941. Originally built for CN as refrigerated passenger and cargo ship during the 1930s. Could carry 1500 passengers for day trips. After entry of US into war in 1941, Pr. Robert and sisters Henry and David took part in operations at Alaska. Converted to anti-aircraft cruiser in 1943.) *lots of detailed info on web*

(no permission to use photos at this time...DD) Original peace-time configuration:



After conversion / mid 40's! [Prince Robert conversions for warfare](#) [Pr. Robert crew photos](#)



20-Jun-42 Kingston: Haying in process? Sending money order so he only carries \$12, so others don't want to steal or borrow. Took weekend off and downtown in Kingston; if you hang around base, get put to work. Will maybe go to show then back to base. Still hoping for leave, but not sure. Will be mad if not approved. Hopefully will be there on weekend.



Sir John A. MacDonald monument, Kingston City Park: Summer parade/outing uniform

1-Jul-42 Kingston: while leaning out train window waving to you, somebody called name from platform: Gladys Walkolm. Slept some / arrived 4 AM. Hay get wet in rain? Another long weekend on books - maybe a mistake, or maybe leaving soon. Had letter from Nelson: he is on a boat -seems to think it's all right / did well enough on range to get a badge.

4-Jul-42 Kingston *RCCS stationery* Slept most of the way from Stratford to Toronto. Had another birthday suit parade for medical. Had more gas chamber practice. Did a march, but were allowed to take tunics off, so not so bad. In tent alone, because no room in writing room, so bought some envelopes and a pad. A fellow who was in our class is instructor and had been to BC and saw the making of the movie Nelson "was talking about".

7-Jul-42 Kingston: Haying must be good and heavy if east mow is full. Have to pass trade test before any weekend home approval, but might be ok. Maybe have ride arranged to Mitchell. Practicing night driving.
9 Jul 42 "Vimy" Kingston Parks Canada info about Signal Corps history at "Vimy"



It looks like he won't be home for a while, so need to write. Last time was a scare but this is worse. Had inspection of kit before trades testing was complete. They passed everybody anyway "to get enough". The guys from the west are feeling blue and sore because some of them haven't been home but once in 6 months. "I hope you don't blame me for not coming home... So long til you hear from me. Goodby."

9-Jul-42 HMCS Pr. Robert, Esquimalt BC: Been at sea a lot / monkey on ship - building a cage as it is wild. (had been to New Zealand for RN/US/Aussie support)

24-Jul-42 HMCS Pr. Robert @ Esquimalt: What can we write regarding what the ship does or goes? (Answer) Sent from the ship: next to nothing. Can mail when ashore and take chance of being caught: fairly severe penalty, but about half the letters are sent from shore. (No censor indication on this envelope) Recently, only patrol work and short trips. Were away 2 weeks. Supposed to be refit this summer, so might get leave. This ship has done a lot of travelling in the past: to Hong Kong, Australia, Pearl Harbor, Dutch Harbor and a few places around South America. It captured a big German merchant ship near start of war around Mexico. Sister ship Prince David is making a movie just now: "Commandos Strike at Dawn".

(Info on web site: navalandmilitarymuseum.org/archives)

Pr. Robert was to have been the ship, but got switched. Pr. David has been repainted and all personnel are dressed up. In a way alright to get it, but on the other hand too fussy. A couple of Robert guys were watching: some sailors dressed in big duffel coats shivering, but today was quite hot. "A lot of bunk", but likely good looking in a movie. My job is lookout at sea; in port: painting *or* chipping paint off! 'Silly scrubbing decks sometimes 3x/day and always twice, but guess that's the navy. Going to sleep in Victoria tonight @ Sally Ann for 25 cents: nice to be in a bed, once in a while. Hope all are well: guess you will be glad of end of haying, but likely harvesting when this arrives.

24-Jul-42 Kingston: How is threshing going? Probably done. Mostly killing time since got back. Arrived 4 AM and got a little sleep on springs of a bed he found. Farm leave of 45 days was cancelled as all are cancelled, but at least the paperwork went through. Don't expect to try coming home again next weekend, because "just a round of good-byes again and once is enough in a week."..."I might try to get my ring fixed up

...I believe maybe I'll get my initials on it yet, as the boys say you can't wear a ring overseas with the signal crest on it."

27-Jul-42 Kingston YMCA: Feel better now: just had a swim in pool. Handed in summer clothes and are scorching in battle dress, so looks as if they will be leaving soon. On weekend, went 70 miles away to B Wilson farm and helped with haying. Had ring done and picked up: 50 cents, and did a good job. Last night out of camp, so lucky to be able to pick it up. Bought a used box camera for \$1.75 and will try to take a roll of pictures to send for development. Heard it's 17 days to cross to England. Took us to sports field this morning and padre preached a farewell sermon and band played a couple of Sunday pieces: sounded like a funeral. Will drop a line again with news "if we're allowed to".

6-Aug-42 "Somewhere in Quebec" (Envelope marked "TRANSMISSION DELAYED FOR PURPOSES OF SECURITY." Started last night and have been going ever since and it's now 9:30. Jerky, so hard to write. Breakfast was good. All the fellows he knew were in same car, so could visit. Too jerky to write much / not sure how he was going to mail it.

11-Aug-42 HMCS Pr. Robert, Esquimalt BC: Been at sea for 10 days: foggy: didn't see much except sister ship Pr. David signaling. Not sure when refit will be. Handy at "Sally Ann" canteen: writing room and beds are on same floor.

15-Aug-42 (Date (?) and location/ship censored: snipped off) Writing from boat: only sick on second day and yesterday: both pretty rough. Weather in general not good / maybe normal. Lots of chocolate bars on ship - bought some because scarce in England. If you send apples, that might be good. Don't know if letters written from train in Quebec got there? Tried to pass it through window to a kid, but captain saw and snatched it, so don't know if it was ever mailed. probably done harvest by the time this arrives. (PM Staffa 15 Sept.)

19-Aug-42 England: Arrived in camp: all right so far: people friendly and try to help. Liked the Scotch. Country looks nice in spite of usual rain. Hope telegram worked: had choices of 3 sentences that were ok to use. All we can say is write us and we are fine, so that's about it for now. Will try air mail to see how that works for arrival compared to this.

August

19: Dieppe Raid 5000/6000 Allies invade France: defeated: 1946 POW & 916 killed

25-Aug-42 Raining again. Met Charlie Nemar who had pictures of Christies, so had a good visit. Went to church - was a half hour, then 5 of us that sleep together walked into small town to look around. Not much doing. Amused by small trains. Haven't tried air mail because no stamps - don't be surprised by a few cablegrams - might try just to keep in touch. Mail from home is slow.

28-Aug-42 HMCS Pr. Robert, Esquimalt BC: Where are Mervin & Norman? Hawk captured duck, after accident, was adopted on ship: now have monkey & hawk!

3-Sep-42 Rainy, so able to do some writing from tent. Don't be surprised if he sends cablegram / not sure if he mentioned before. Clippers to trim neck would be a nice gift so doesn't need to go to barber so often. Getting plenty to eat / "boy can they make puddings." Getting used to currency. Would like to get some mail sometime soon.

10-Sep-42 No mail today at all, so didn't have to stand in line and see others getting mail. Some others from Kingston have not received anything yet either, so not alone. Had a good raspberry flavouring desert.

New bunch of fellows from Kitchener - recognized some and was good to visit. has written over 20 letters, so should stir up some replies. Shaving with cold water - should toughen up for winter. Damp climate. "still waiting for word from you."



England: 1942

13 Sep 42 HMCS Pr. Robert (Postmarked "US Navy, Naval Air Station", with 6 cent US stamp)
 Gather the crops have been good. If Mervin gets home on furlough, find out where he is stationed. Norman didn't spend long in Canada / gather from Wes Mahaffy he may not like it much over there. Send his address whenever it is known, so he can write.
 Refit of a ship is not about clothes; it is an overhaul like a car. As far as clothes go, their kit is supposed to last a year, with some allowance upkeep that supposedly is enough. Thanks for the snaps; they are nice to get.

20-Sep-42 (?) "Hurrah! Whoopee! At last I got 3 letters just now! And boy does it make a fellow feel good." Discussion about "snaps" of buildings at Vimy/Kingston. Lots of others excited to respond to a flurry of mail arriving from home. Has been gaining weight. Would like a photo of Nelson. Will reply every time he gets a letter.

7-Oct-42 "(*10 pages*! 'probably glad to fully report on something he was doing that would not be sensitive for censor....)

Back to camp after leave: went to Glasgow - stayed at YMCA. Saw art galleries and couple of shows, then to Edinburgh. Stayed at Victoria Club. Went to zoo - met a member who showed him around and eventually invited him to supper. Then back at Club, there were free tickets to a dance in suburbs put on by a girls' laundry group. Had fun, learned to dance their way. Two girls to every guy: busy on floor. Good lunch at 10, then back to Club in blackout black at 11:30. next day Edinburgh Castle. Had heard that at the Club could volunteer to help at local farms. Checked out and left at 4 for a sheep farm near the border between England. Widow farmer: husband was a captain in army who died a couple of years ago. 500 acres: 200 in grain. This was Mrs. Goodson, of whom he spoke well and visited later. Appreciated presence of maid, cook and full staff and private bedroom and bathroom. Good breakfast ready at 8:30. Helped pick apples first day, then after drier weather, on second, helped draw stooks by horse and cart to a stack. His help was well enough appreciated that Mrs. Goodson invited him back in future, even if there was no work to do, which was good, in spite of no wages being offered. On train wait on way back to camp, an English soldier and he were invited by a girl to tea. She was a nurse at a hospital the English soldier had been at and she knew he would be passing through. Was a good tea. Was late getting back after missing train in London, and they had made mistake in giving him 1 too many days leave, but worked out ok. Still waiting for a letter from mother/folks - hoped there would be one when he returned, but not..."

8 Oct 42 (From Mrs. Goodson of Marlefield, Roxburgh, Scotland. Opened by Examiner)
Mrs. Dow, your son was her from Saturday to Tuesday 3-6 October, having been on leave too Edinburgh. The Victoria League Club has her name and they called to see if he could help with harvest. He was a great help, and good forker. He is in good looking shape and said rations are good and he has gained weight. Thought mother and father would like to hear. He shared pictures and stories of how they farm at home. Hope to see more of him. He is in south of England, driving truck.

10-Oct-42 HMCS Pr. Robert, Esquimalt BC: most sailor leave is only every 1.5 yr., and don't expect any soon, because of where they are. Hoping Hazel's birthday is beginning of November, because he sent a card.

24-Oct-42 HMCS Pr. Robert, Esquimalt BC: Mervin must have good meals if he gets turkey once/wk. and chicken twice. We get Turkey once a month and no chicken yet. Quite a help if Harold does plowing with tractor. Monotonous? Picture show every night in harbour, and when at sea, on watch, eating, sleeping or working. Looked all around Alaska and can't find island where Mervin is stationed.

4-Nov-42 HMCS Pr. Robert, Esquimalt BC: glad to be back at port. Received Christmas package: pleased with "dandy pair of gloves". Don't know about getting home for Christmas.

6-Nov-42 In different location: pretty good: not as muddy as last place. Scrubbing floor for inspection: a guy wanted to borrow pen: OK once he helps with floor: that worked. Hasn't got around to visiting London yet. Getting fat. Still working on \$10 brought from home, so haven't drawn pay for a month. (arrived Staffa 11 Dec)

10-Nov-42 HMCS Pr. Robert, Esquimalt BC: Norman moving around: has been to Glasgow and Edinburgh. Elsie home again? Found island where Mervin is stationed: is small.

14-Nov-42 (Air Mail) Bought to try to see how fast this arrives. (Staffa PM not legible) A fellow from Listowel that he knew at Kingston arrived - he was glad to recognize somebody in bunch of strangers - they

had a good visit. Take pity on dad: don't be telling about what they had to eat when out visiting, or about plowing matches - he wishes he had been there to defend his cup. Weather has been good - going to London for 48 hr next week on leave. Will be watching for a parcel, but feels guilty opening in November. Merry Christmas in case mail is slow.

19-Nov-42 HMCS Pr. Robert, Esquimalt BC: How is Elsie - back in hospital? What to get Gordon for Christmas? Got Irene slippers, but not sure right size.

29-Nov-42 After shopping in town and buying a writing pad, there was mail call and received a parcel from Roy's with pad and envelopes, and home letter too. Received first letter from Nelson since arrival in Gr. Britain. How is Elsie? Hope it turns out OK. Sorry the Christmas cards sent were not fancy, but wanted to get them sent. Had a colonel riding in truck yesterday: was good duck. Dialog about socks and exchange of worn ones for new at QM stores. Keep the letters coming, no matter how plain the news.

1-Dec-42 Received letter today dated 11 Oct, so mail is jerky both ways. Getting some letters: enjoys replying after not getting any. Roy's Church ladies sent nice writing pad and envelopes. Still getting by on \$10 brought from home; didn't spend much working on farm on leave. Don't need razor blades right away. have to use coupons to buy soap and use most of it for laundry. Dropped watch and damaged, but paying local jeweler to repair - might take 3 weeks. Had a letter from Nelson.

8-Dec-42 (Air Mail) Thanks for clipping: was mad to see his plowing match cup go to somebody else and nothing he could do about it. Half pound of tea from church was ok but hard to handle on the move. Can get tea fairly easy; little bag mother sent is handier. Appreciated parcel; another in a month would be nice. Fellow from Listowel was glad to get his and shared chocolate bar because dad had shared something before. Has had letters from Billie Hocking, Doreen McPhail, but nothing from Harold and Elsie, but how is she doing? Hazel writes about every week, and he replies, so that keeps that going. How are chores / new calves must be looking good.

13-Dec-42 Strange getting letters back about his last leave when he is almost ready for another. Not sure about it though - busy lately driving truck. How is Elsie? Good they have Mary F to help. Have used up everything in last parcel except canned stuff, and that is likely to be used soon. Please look after insurance bill due soon. Will be winter there, but hopefully big wood pile will serve well.

24-Dec-42 Christmas Eve, but doesn't seem like it: rainy although fairly north, (near "Mary's people") and no lights or decorations. Expect to be working Christmas Day. Contents of 4 parcels are pretty well used up/thanks. Noodle soup appreciated and tin of chicken was kept but finally enjoyed. Getting ready to wear winter underwear, but not needed yet. Has 4 sets instead of standard 2, because he didn't turn in last year's from spring when summer issues were returned. (Post marked departure 26 Dec, but Staffa 9 Feb)

25-Dec-42 HMCS Pr. Robert, Esquimalt BC: Missed sending letter and card because set to sea before mail. Didn't think to send telegram last night. Had good turkey dinner and Christmas cake on ship. Shipmate had letter from Edmonton where it was -50. Warm at BC port. Letter from Norman with photo of him and another soldier - said he was getting fat / did look some bigger overall. How is Elsie doing? Hope your cold gets better, and hope to get leave and see you soon.

5-Jan-43 Need to write, because has received a good amount of mail and some parcels. Some mail gets home faster than what comes over. Has received a nice bunch of Christmas cards: has 10 pinned over his bed. Received a card from Nelson, who was hoping to get home for Christmas, but gather he didn't. Seven parcels lately were appreciated. Mrs. Goodison (leave farm lady in Scotland) sent a plum pudding, which arrived

Christmas morning. NCOs served a Christmas meal today: feeling quite full. Must have about \$400 saved up from what has sent home. Investing in bonds OK. Raise coming: \$25 from \$20. Need to send home instead of being known as somebody who has money to lend, given all the good parcels of socks and food.

10-Jan-43 Hasn't had letter from home since beginning of December. Mervin said in letter that when he was in Halifax, he heard Grandma had died. A surprise. Mervin seems to be getting along ok and getting to dances. Only about 40 miles away, but coming leave pass is only for Scotland, so may not get to see him, or Olive Hackney, who is about 15 miles from him. Heated water for clothes washing and maybe a bath later, after YMCA church service, where there is some singing of local pieces before free show. Has \$40 to take on leave: should be enough. Maybe a raise coming. Beginning of month, he gets \$15 and mother \$25. Sorry to hear about Grandma: she said she wouldn't see the end of this war, and was right.



21-Jan-43 (8 pgs.!) Just back from leave with lots of news, and received 15 more letters waiting. Hadn't received telegram yet: Mervin's letter told him about Grandma's death. On leave, partied almost every night. Dumbarton first to see Mary's people, but didn't stay long since they had young ones to look after. Went to Glasgow and stayed what was to be one night at Overseas club, but dance party was good: decided to stay another. Stayed whole leave there. Friday a couple of nice girls asked him to invite a chum to meet them in town Tuesday at 5:30. Not sure what would become of it, but they were there, and invited them to folks' place, where supper was ready: chips and powdered eggs and cookies: was good. Maybe not much, but about all city people there can get. He showed his photos, then wondered if they would like to go to a show. They agreed: one nearby: there, they wanted to buy the tickets, but he did. then back to their place for cookies and tea. They saw them off to streetcar, with invitation to return, which he will do, if back there. Another night a girl from club took him to a nice orchestra dance and paid his way in before he caught on. On Sunday, went to Boswell Castle: 800 yr. old. Bill McPhail wrote to meet, but doesn't know location. Mervin too, but he can catch me. Perth's are nearby, but haven't visited them. Has plenty of socks, but could use shorts he bought in Kitchener. Has a bit of a cold - hope hers gets better.

26-Jan-43 Worried because I said I might go away? Not yet, but may have reason to worry later. Went to show and met with others he knew. Camped under tin sheet and on concrete with a couple others. It worked to keep dry while it rained. Glad another parcel is coming: not much left of last one. Nelson got home finally? Communicating with Mervin.

4-Feb-43 Still in same address, in case you wondered from news in papers. Good weather, but froze this morning. Went to visit Bob Flood, Stan and Wes Ballantyne at their camp; they have a canteen and he doesn't: had 3 rounds of tea, cakes and also chocolate bars / he doesn't have any; hasn't had parcels lately and out of eats. Starving an hour before supper, but on duty. Glad Nelson got home; pictures look like father is working too hard. Glad new grandchildren are doing well.

9-Feb-43 "HMCS Naden 1: Esquimalt BC: (He wrote date as /42, but envelope censor stamp is 10 Feb/43, so inserting here, which seems to match flow. DD) Went to Sudbury by train, on way out west, and visited with several including Roger and Bernice and baby. Some lost time and confusion about reporting / concerned about mix-ups because he was supposed to be there to take torpedo course. Straightened out, so expects to be there about 9 weeks."

11-Feb-43 Haven't had any mail for couple of weeks. Took a machine shop course. Went to visit the Perths. John Drown gone to reinforcement unit and may get home: varicose veins. Didn't want to leave: was Cpl and well liked. Since he was at course, missed 15 minutes of church and 3 hr of parade. But planning to go with another fellow to local Baptist church, because fellow is good speaker. Good way to pass an hour before nightly tea. Has room to self because others are away. Not lighting fire; doors are open at 5:30: not bad out.

22-Feb-43 One of few to receive a parcel lately: much appreciated. An orange lost its wax in the shuffle, and started to spoil, but he split it with another and they enjoyed it anyway, because they haven't had one in a while. Soap ok as long as they are not running short. Appreciates canned soup and chocolate drinks; they have a little gas stove in truck to make a brew when they get a break. Has been on the move: drove all day yesterday, slept a bit and moved again - was sleepy driving. Got in at 7 AM this morning. Would rather be doing that than nothing. Had bath and washed clothes after supper: ok again. Finally wore winter underwear, not sure what was up and glad he did. Would like to have seen Mervin, who wondered about visiting on Sunday: only day not studying, but wrote him he was on the move. Weather has been nice: neighbour was mowing lawn! Told he was taking a course on Sundays: that's off: school was in way of a blitz; 2 teachers killed too.

Pay raise statement: from \$20 to \$25/month

27-Feb-43 HMCS Naden 1: Esquimalt BC: Elmer getting clamps out of his leg. Pictures of ships mixed up. Taking exams in spite of not feeling well.

2-Mar-43 Seven letters arrived: good to catch up. Also, duty driver for the day and is grounded for that into the night. Has to go get their officer at 11:30; he is girling. Couldn't go to canteen for usual night tea, so brought bread from supper and made stew from parcel canned chicken and rice and little sack of chocolate, on a borrowed electric heater. Supposedly for 4, but had it all. Tinned meat went on last move / had bought a loaf of bread from bake truck. Parcels are really appreciated. Nice place: kitchen downstairs, with 2 of best cooks in outfit. Place was a mess when arrived, but cleaned up now. On kitchen duty in morning. Has been in army a year now. No wonder those who have been in it 3 years get impatient. She had figured out pretty well where they were around Christmas. Getting more grey hair. Glad to have received snaps. never received telegram about grandma's death. Some fellows still waiting for Christmas parcels. On the move on Sundays too lately.

7-Mar-43 Worked his turn in kitchen: peeling spuds, washing up and sampled fresh buns. Have been eating the best ever there: bacon and eggs for breakfast, pancakes, apple pie. Visited with Brigade sanitary man, responsible for checking for cleanliness, at YMCA. Compared in army for about a year and chatted:

eventually found he was from Exeter and knew some acquaintances. Weather has been unusually good for there: cold mornings, sunny days and only rained once in the past month. Glad of snaps from home / never received telegram about grandma, and you guessed where they were at Christmas.

10-Mar-43 (Airmail "Airgraph") Many happy returns on anniversary. Sent cablegram, but not sure how fast they go / had tried one in January. Farmers are seeding already there.

11-Mar-43 Esquimalt, BC: Naden 1: first exam - a month to go / went OK, and might have been hardest part. Damp, cool weather.

18-Mar-43 3 drivers on leave at once left only 2 so busy. Also, in kitchen every 4 days or so. Helping in kitchen not bad / good to know the cook. Had a bit of flu lately, but OK now. Missed seeing Mervin lately - will put him first next time. What happened to Elmer - bush accident with Calvin? Did you get cablegram with congrats for anniversary? Would you please send a well packaged bit of maple syrup in next parcel?

25-Mar-43 Had a 48-hr. leave, and went to visit Mervin and then they called on Olive Hackney at her hospital too. 'Was all a good visit and some pictures coming. Glad your winter is over and sure would like some syrup.



1943

31-Mar-43 Naden 1: B.C.: How's syrup making? Thanks for the card: arrived about right date. Hard to keep track of dates. Finishing course: got 75% on first exam, but 72 on second. Oral exams. 22 in class; only 2 had higher marks on first.

8-Apr-43 RCN Hospital Wm. Head: Have mumps! Isolation hospital 20 mi from Esquimalt / 3 days. Must be busy with syrup with so many trees tapped. Wish had bought more 1 cent stamps / 3s won't last long. (Arrived with 2-3s and marked "2 cents due"!)

12-Apr-43 Got a bit of mail, and the only parcel in recent delivery was his, from home: thanks much; it's all useful. Leave coming up: likely go to Glasgow again. Getting \$1.50/day, and maybe 25 cent increase for trades pay: content with not so much that others want to borrow. Concerned that he sent dress uniform to town cleaners, for 10-day return, and now a month later, they reported to others they don't have it. Got pictures from family, with Nelson home, looking strong. Too bad how they mess up nice houses when they stay there. Put 500+ miles on truck: getting around. Haven't had most clothes off for about a week: need a bath.

14-Apr-43 Thanks for parcel / much appreciated.

22-Apr-43 Received a swell parcel from Nellie. Quite a dialog about a leave with chum around London with good weather, visiting nurses and invited to neighbours and a party. Had to borrow oxfords, so will you send set over, even if need to buy new?

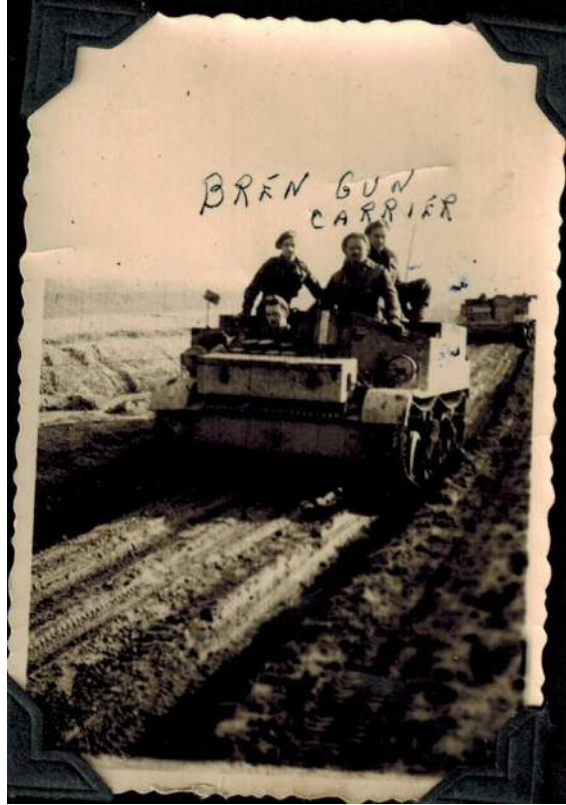
26-Apr-43 Yesterday was Easter Sunday; church parade was cancelled due to bad weather, so tried to find a church service, but missed timing, but after supper landed on one on way to a show. Went to show too. Discussion about pay being sent home. Asked for oxfords to be sent from home because need coupons there and don't want to ask civilians for extras and have them end up short.

21 Apr 43 Naden 1 B.C.: Just got back from Wm. Head 2 weeks after entered. During absence, his kit was fumigated apparently from steam pressure, because everything including great coat was wrinkled and hard to correct. Another guy at hospital entered for measles and then when over caught mumps too, so will be there another 2 weeks. Commander announced that until further notice there will be no more farm or mining leave, so don't expect to be able to help in near future. 'Gather it was a good spring for syrup. Thanks for stamps. (Letter had 1+3 = 4 cents.)

2 May 43 Naden 1 B.C.: Hope you are getting over flu; he and others there have had colds. Working "Part ship", which is odd jobs for those awaiting courses or draft. There was a parade in Victoria for Victory Loans. It was good, with Navy, Army and Air Force all with bands and floats afterwards. He was watching from third floor window of a store and could have taken good pictures, except somebody swiped his camera 3 weeks ago. Can't buy them or film around there: no supply. Hoping to get moved soon.

4-May-43 Spring there: good weather and things greening up. Strange to go to supper, show and then shave by daylight: up north.

20-May-43 Nice weather: getting wash done. Eating fine, including turnip and apple pie. Learning to drive a Bren Gun Carrier: enjoys something new. War news: must have been interesting when they (Dam Busters) flooded Ruhr Valley. May not need the shoes he mentioned; dancing is improving: can even fox trot.



30 May 43 HMCS Stadacona, Halifax Has been rainy since arrival there. Went to Halifax to check it out, but no hurry to go back. Have encountered others who were at Pt. Arthur, and one who is going on leave after being overseas. Received parcel from Uncle Roy's but no other mail. He has been slow to write too.

HMCS Stadacona: E block (Shore establishment) Halifax: [HMCS Stadacona, Halifax](#)

1-Jun-43 Hope seeding is done / must have been late. Hoping to get maple syrup parcel soon. Having good visits with Scottish "lassie". Hear Gwen is "step around" - guess ok, since he is too. Married soldiers are free with their times / what would they think if their wives were too?

7-Jun-43 Hope the flu recovery is going ok. About to be haying soon? Only 4 hr of blackout, because so far north: come home after dance in daylight. (1/3 page scissored out) hope maple syrup parcel arrives soon. Rainy and muddy there.

11-Jun-43 Concerned about Elsie's illness. Invited to private dance through last girlfriend, but afraid to go and get wet and muddy shoes: raining often there.

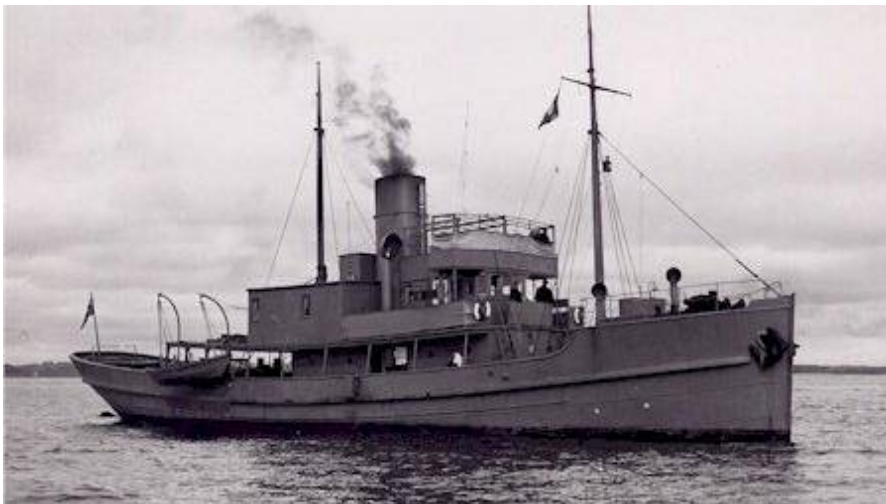
***May:** Battle of the Atlantic winds down: > 1200 Canadian & Newfoundland merchant seamen had been killed.*

12-Jun-43 HMCS Stadacona: E block (Shore establishment) Halifax: Hope Elsie is getting better / lots of trouble lately. Fed up with this place / going marching downtown. In a new part of building, with other torpedo sailors.

(??No date?? Post marked ~27 July 43) Glad Elsie is doing better. Only 1 letter so far? Has sent 2 since arrival there. Had letter from Mervin via west coast, so need to write him and Norman. A few fellows he came with have been drafted, but dozens arriving. Was led to believe Navy needed torpedomen, but there seem to be lots and it has been a month since he got there and no sign of draft. On duty watch soon: need to get ready. Hope all are well.

HMCS Andree Dupre: W03: Examination vessel: Halifax: built as trawler 1921. Acquired by RCN 1939. After war was sold for use as tug in France. [HMCS ANDREE DUPRE](#)

(Photo used w/o permission, so far. DD)



28-Jun-43 HMCS Andree Dupre: Halifax: Drafted in a hurry: notice at 5 PM - out at 7 PM, so didn't get a chance to check for any waiting mail. Not crazy about job / would rather be going somewhere, even if it was more work. Ship stays outside harbour or port and checks all coming and going ships. If any try to go in w/o permission, it is fired on by big guns on shore. Pretty soft job: out 3 days and then in 3, while sister ship goes out. George Pelling is on the other ship. Won't have a chance to practice anything learned in course, so can forget about it for now. Only 9 seamen on ship, rotating for leave, so potentially 14 days every 6 months: might get home in summer. Raining as usual, but first 2 days were nice, and got sunburn on deck with shirt off.

29-Jun-43 "Can't give the date, but < month to birthday. " Worried about Elsie. Nice weather for a change. Mrs. Goodison would like a visit, but not likely now. Girl he went to a wedding with sent him a letter and wedding cake from event. Suppose wet spring made heavy hay - concerned about all the work there. Too late for him to go help. Some ex Mounties boiled some clams - tried one. Has wash hanging out to dry.

Pay raise statement: from \$25 to \$30/mo.

2-Jul-43 (Not dated / postmarked in Egypt 24 July)

At sea, often sick, but sunny and maybe sunburned on deck. Showed with warm sea water. Worried about Elsie. Glad to be doing something compared to England."

"Operation Husky begins: British 8th army + Canadians invade Sicily.

*July 10: British 8th army & Canadians invade Italy.
10 July - 17 Aug 1943"*

11-Jul-43 (No date / PM 16 July Staffa) You will have to guess at date. Rained - soaked all day yesterday. Has wash out in rain. Worried about Elsie - wrote her anyway. No mail received for couple of weeks - re-reading previous, found in clothes. No addresses with him - mixed up one for letter to Velma. Carrying > \$30: nothing to spend it on "over here". Has a tommy gun now.

15-Jul-43 HMCS Andree Dupre: wheat cut and harvest going? Norman's letter was cut up. (This one was censor snipped, where he mentioned where a fellow was on one of the__(censored)__. Food is not bad. Can make a sandwich whenever, and had steak for a change.

25 Jul 43 Canadian Pacific Telegraphs Sans Origine (hand written)
"All well and safe. Letters received Many thanks Best wishes and good health"

28-Jul-43 Eating well. Hot during day. Never rained since they landed. Lots of action. First "vehicle" (carrier?) he had is gone and lost his photos with it. Wonders what news coverage there is of the battle at home. Feeling useful with the action going on, and a fairly important role he can't disclose. Saw Marshall Dearing from home, and a Roland from Mitchell, but not recognizing others. Clothing is brief and functional: boots, socks, putties and shorts rolled up. Could use razor blades and soap. Glad Elsie and you are doing better - was worried.

29-Jul-43 Sent some money home, as nothing to spend it on there, except cablegrams. Had shower with electrical storm. Hope this campaign will be over soon to get things in shape again.

1-Aug-43 HMCS Andree Dupre: (W03: Examination vessel: Halifax) Could use more heat for summer. Forgot about Norman's birthday until Hazel mentioned in letter.

2-Aug-43 HMCS Andree Dupre: been on watch from midnight 'til 5 AM / off at 6, hoping to go boating around Dartmouth. Shared Sudbury newspaper clipping about good host for Soo sailors in training at Pt. Arthur - where he stayed.

2-Aug-43 "Central Mediterranean Forces" Received air letter dated 12 July - seem to be coming ok. No parcels yet, but don't need oxfords now! Last letter had chuck cut out? Maybe ok. Has photos back: can't tell the whole story, but glad to have them to look at. Almost lost the last letter before he had read it. After action, went back to look for it on road to camp. One of the fellows met him with it: had found it on the ground. OK for chocolate bars: ration is 1 bar + 7 cigarettes / day, so trades for bars, and glad he never started to smoke. Lots of trade offers. Had first full night's sleep in a while. Glad haying is done.

4-Aug-43 "Central Mediterranean Forces" Got to swim in a bath pool of a "Don", with about 20 others in birthday suits. Having a rest. Kit bags caught up to them, so has razor again. Air mail is arriving, but no maple syrup parcel. Hope nobody else got it. Had plenty of grapes lately and tried oranges that were not ripe. Good to get some clothes washed. Still no trade pay, but may be able to take test and get the 25 cents. Guess training in England wasn't wasted, have some Ontario infantry to be proud of, without too many losses. Getting used to sleeping outdoors.

6-Aug-43 "Central Mediterranean Forces" Finally got to buy things at canteen. Got soap, razors, chocolate. Beer rationed: 1 for 2 men, so traded beer for chocolate. Bought cigarettes allowed for trading

material too. Eaten more almonds than ever before in life. Maybe oranges will be available soon. Canadians seem to be doing well, thanks to infantry. Harvesting there?

13 Aug 43 Canadian Pacific Telegraph (Sans Origine)

"All well and safe have sent you five pounds Best wishes & good health"

August 17: Conquest of Sicily completed



20-Aug-43 HMCS Andree Dupre: Finishing harvest? Hopefully cutting at least. Going on watch: a letter to Cliff Norman: said it looked like it had been through a cutting box. 'Had more trouble with that since coming east than before__(censored)__. Too bad Mervin and Norman haven't been able to connect over there.

25 Aug 43 Central Mediterranean Forces: (Air mail) Need to write: in the picture, and feeling pretty fair. Has been to Catania a couple of times ; seems modern compared to some places. Sent \$50 and a telegram to report it, because nothing to spend it on there. Suppose they will be stook threshing again this year. Had swim in the Mediterranean; it was warm, and was surprised how he could float in the salt water. Don't forget to send an air letter once in a while; another guy got one within 2 weeks.

27-Aug-43 HMCS Andree Dupre: still hoping for leave / harvest about done? Hoping to fly this time / have checked it out. Mervin getting along fine: top man in courses so far. Trying not to say much, so censor doesn't cut it up.

September 3: Four years since Britain & France's declaration of war on Germany: Allies invade Italy

"The Pursuit from Reggio: 3 Sept to 29 Nov 1943"

3-Sep-43 *1st Canadian Infantry Division was part of the first Allied force to land on continental Europe. 63 days later, the 8th Army would have traveled 450 miles. 1195 casualties: 316 fatalities. Near Ortona, the forces on both sides were about equal. Part of the Allied strategy was to draw off as many Germans as possible from what was to become the North-West European battlefield.*

4-Sep-43 Big day for them: boys crossing on to mainland, with little resistance. Driving a carrier again: heard on radio 8th Army moving into Italy. Heard Russians are doing OK too. Sitting in a lemon grove, but they are sour. Has had good variety of fruit lately. Parcels and mail have caught up: received maple syrup, oxfords from home and maple sugar from Uncle Roy's. All appreciated, including the smell of Palmolive soap.

7-Sep-43 On continent now, with little opposition. Rainy like Scotland. Had first ride on a motorcycle lately. Using pencil / another said he had ink, but when he looked, it was only enough for 1 letter, so left it for him. No mail received since 19 July. Doing ok.

Pay remittance: \$50

10-Sep-43 HMCS Andree Dupre: Just over radio: Italians have surrendered. Month since heard from Norman: last letter: "Sans origine": w/o location.

17-Sep-43 Hasn't written in a while because they were moving. Yesterday started driving carrier at 6:30 AM and finished today at 1:45. Slow start, but 146 miles total with last 46 by moonlight over strange roads. Some drivers spelled off, but he is the only "blitz buggy" driver, so stayed at it. Eyes get tired and dusty, but sleep helps. Received 8 other letters lately and 300 cigs from Mitchell, which he will trade at pay day. (Don't tell) On your letter of 25 July, you were right about where he was. Was getting his hair cut by roadside, when a guy came along and asked if he was Dow. It was Wilfred Scott from Cromarty: reinforcement for one of regiments. Will probably see him often, as they pass troops marching occasionally. Tell his dad "he is with the best infantry battalion in the Canadian Army" in his opinion: "made up mostly of farmers, who never know when they have had enough." They have been mentioned a couple of time for what they have done. Still waiting for photos from Sicily: will be disappointed if they don't show up, as they were good. Glad you are getting the work done / hope to be there next year to help: seems possible. Has been with section a year now: considered an old hand - not scared as a year ago. Still hunting for Jerry - seems to keep out of reach. Found a can of maple syrup he had set aside: was good!

"19 days after landing, City of Potenza is captured.

Gen Simonds was stricken by jaundice, about as prevalent as malaria. Brigadier Vokes took command of 1st Div." (WN Dow drove one of them in the carrier at one time or another.)

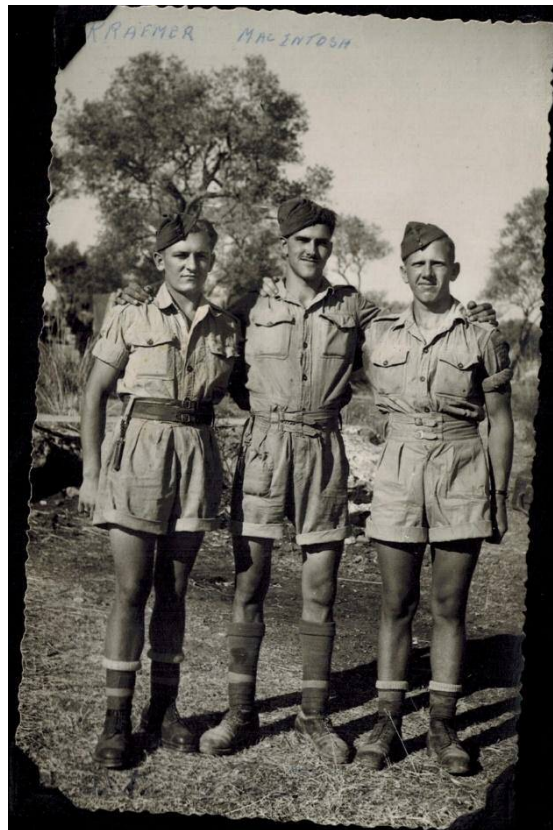
4-Oct-43 Drying out after a night of rain: in a tent with 3 others, and rain only came in at the end of it. You will be hearing of status on radio; it's not worse than they say. Visited Wilfred Scott; he was pretty sure Keith was in England. On the move - can go 40 mph in carrier at times - only on good roads, but don't take chances, to stay alive. No news from home since 26 July. P.S. was about to mail, when officer brought letter dated 4 Sept.: glad to get it. Glad cables went through ok; some doubted if they would. Realized along the way he lost his ring, and not sure where. Don't worry: he is alright.

13-Oct-43 Responding to air letter dated 13 Sept: seems strange that winter is coming on at home: getting darker earlier there, and only a bit cooler. Discussion of \$ sent home: \$50 pay + \$23 MO. If sending parcel, please consider tooth powder / paste might get squashed and serviceable shorts. Army's aren't so good. (Pause in writing because on duty during night.) May get word to move at any time. Received 3rd blanket: was OK. Others are wearing serge, but not him yet, since he can carry (transport?) his kit. if at home,

he would be participating in plowing matches. Getting out of practice - may as well give it up. Dorothy needs to take care, with all the work they have. Surprised Harold Patterson was able to go west - crops at home not so good? Signing off: writing in back of truck that is being loaded. Will wish Merry Christmas soon. Jerries must be beginning to wonder: Russians are doing good.

15-Oct-43 HMCS Andree Dupre: No trouble getting there, except for late plane at Ottawa. Went to good stage show put on by navy: sell-outs.

16-Oct-43 Surprise arrived after waiting 2 months: photos: one of Art Kraemer, John MacIntosh and him. Prison haircut shows in picture. That is his Christmas present for the year. May send copies to girls, so there will be souvenirs to look at later, as they get crumpled if kept there. Received letter 18 Sept. Getting a bit of rest / talk of trades pay again, maybe. He put a mark below the new officer: (Vokes?) he is a good head, also Sr Sgt, who has gone with double hernia.



20-Oct-43 HMCS Andree Dupre: Too bad about Bill Drake: casualty. Had letter from Norman written 2 months ago, after Sicily was taken. Fifth Victory loan drive.

23-Oct-43 (6 pgs. on new pad) Received air letter of 9 Oct. Found out Marsh Deering was parked a half mile from them - went to visit and asked about Bill: said he had just written to his folks to ask. Returned to base and had letter from her and Dorothy saying he was killed, so went back over to tell Marsh. Bill was about best guy in that gang / goes to show you don't need to be overseas to "get it". Coincidental that mother was painting and he just finished painting his "chariot" black on outside and brown on inside, to fight rust. Enjoying maple syrup for breakfast. Magazines read and being circulated. Three birthday cards yesterday.

Thanks for Christmas parcel on the way; shopped in town but couldn't pick, so pictures might do. Nelson stepping out with girls? (Glad) Has heard from friend in Scotland, but trying to shake her, to go home single: trying to keep in touch with some with letters. Kraemer's girl in Kitchener accused him of running out on her. You finally heard on radio we are in Italy with 8th army. Was lots of news when in Sicily, but not so much now? One of the Cpls said he married a Norwegian - name was Sorresdoll - he was from west - asked if she had siblings: 6: one named Lloyd, who left home and was married...told him he worked for my uncle! Nice weather: hasn't rained for a week: mud is dried up, so nicer for getting around. Glad Dad has decided to ease up next year: not looking like I will be home by then. No trades pay yet = \$1.50/day still. vs prices at home: \$65/mo. Merry Christmas.



31-Oct-43 Will receive this around Christmas = 2 missed - hopefully closer to home next year. Glad \$50 sent was received. Took out a \$50 bond in this drive - notification to be sent in case anything happens. Having a contest among brigades to see which buys the most. Wet weather = damp clothes that don't get dry with cloudy days. Sleeping under cover though. Asked officer if he knew Norwald Norris at Vimy and he did. Things changing: Gordon starting school, Johnny Templeman going out with girls. Soybeans must have been good crop compared to grain. Sleeping in a hay mow with about 6 others: cozy and have company in the dark after 5:30. On duty 'til midnight, so writing now at 10. Halloween and Sunday: don't expect many realized either. Hope you get the pictures; Merry Christmas / hope we might be together next year. Keep well / don't get pneumonia.

1-Nov-43 **HMCS Andree Dupre: On watch and quartermaster / visited with Pelling and Cliff Norman.**

6-Nov-43 Just got home from a day in nearby town and received air mail letter from 21 Oct, so good. Had jam sandwich for supper and sat down in straw shed with radio to write. In town saw movie and forces show: both good. Four in group from Sigs. 11 allowed passes/day and truck gives ride. Got a headache on trip back. Maybe give an idea of how much saved in bonds and certificates? This Bgd HQ went > \$10,000 in the loan = pretty good. Likely Christmas will be past when this received. Cool lately, but nice days and warm at night in shed. (cont'd) Sunday: finished church parade - only held when out of action. Writing outside shed in sun and chilly wind, enjoying view of green hills and bush. Mountainous country: either coasting or in 1st gear. Had officer out teaching him to drive "chariot". After starting, he said it ran better than when they got it - made him feel good. However, no cover, so weather gets to you. The last one ran onto a mine and was

wrecked. Lucky not to have been in it: sprained thumb and was on rest. Driver wasn't hurt bad, but his nerves went to pieces a few days later. Things like that happen fairly often, and get used to it. An aircraft strafed them once; he was last vehicle in convoy and just watched. Two were injured by shrapnel but back from hospital now. An operator went on patrol in Sicily and disappeared; his mother wrote recently that he is POW. Italians are helping escapees get back to their units. Don't let this scare you / maybe censors will cut it out anyway (didn't). Have a good Christmas / and as I said last year, hope I am there for next one. (Staffa PM 2 Dec)

63 days after entry to Italy, the 8th Army would have traveled 450 miles. 1195 casualties: 316 fatalities. Near Ortona, the forces on both sides were about equal. Part of the Allied strategy was to draw off as many Germans as possible from what was to become the North-West European battlefield.

12-Nov-43 HMCS Andree Dupre: Hazel getting glasses / not expecting to get off for Christmas.

20-Nov-43 Sent lots of airgraphs and air letters lately, so kind of lost track, so writing ordinary letter for change. Have stock of post cards, so will send some along instead of losing there. Will be good for me to look at there. Some of his snaps have been through quite some places and would be good to save. Going back to school: an English officer who speaks Italian and is interpreter is giving lessons during long evenings during this rest period. Voluntary: good way to pass time: quite a few going. Will be useful there: hearing it daily and having chance to communicate. Would like to get a snap of the women walking down the street with huge bundle of brush on their head, wearing old clothes, coarse woolen socks and men's boots. Don't know which do more work: women or mules. Often a woman has a 4 gallon can on her head, knitting and leading a mule at once! Met another neighbour: some boys from regiments have been there taking lectures on Signals. At breakfast, opposite 2 and heard one be called Looby. Had seen him previously and wondered if familiar: Clayton from Dublin. he came about a month ago, so getting to be more from home. Radio said rains will be over in a couple weeks: good, because playing hob with temp bridges and slowing things in general. Hilly country means a lot of bridges and diversions. Got into argument because a westerner said he saw 2 guys milk 75 cows in 3 hours. Adding some cards to letter; his cold is pretty well better; don't get a cold, Mother.

27-Nov-43 HMCS Andree Dupre: applied for a course; if approved, will go on land for part of winter. What to get girls for Christmas? Might send \$.

28-Nov-43 Sunday: good day for trades test for Driver & Mechanics (DM). Fairly sure he passed, so within a couple months, might get another 25 cents/day pay. More participated than can get the pay, but he and another who came with him are senior, so should get a break. Has been driving carrier 6 months. Good day, but miserable lately. Still no pictures received? Twisty roads there: drove 40 miles, and on clear day could see where went. Some places, trucks have to back up to get around bends. A man on horseback was on road - pulled off onto mule track. Both went about 3 miles to town and man on horse beat them. Plenty of snow on hills, but none on area travelled. Once today were up in clouds and looked down on them from above. Hills look nice: in fall colours like home. Women are out in fields doing plowing with 2-pronged wooden tool. Looby from Dublin was evacuated with malaria, after only a month.

*"The Ortona Barricade
30 Nov - 21 April, 1944"*

The British 78th Infantry Division, which had been spearheading V Corps since the Volturno Line actions and had sustained over 7,000 casualties in less than six months,[7] was relieved by the fresh 1st Canadian Infantry Division (Major-General Christopher Vokes), ready to renew the offensive on 5 December 1943.

6-Dec-43 **"Canadian division across the Moro**

On 6 December 1943, Canadian forces began a series of large-scale assaults on major crossing points along the Moro River with the objective of securing a large bridgehead along the defensive line.

The third action of the night of 5-6 December was an attack by The Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment. (In which Wilfred (Buster) Scott was a reinforcement) This diversionary attack, meant to draw German attention away from the PPCLI and Seaforth crossings, was made into the teeth of a fully alerted enemy. Darkness had already fallen when the Hastings relieved The Royal Irish Fusiliers on the seaward flank of the division. "Apart from some hurried conversations with the Irish there was no time for a briefing or to carry out reconnaissance." "13 Patrols reported the best spot to make their crossing of the Moro at a place 200 yards inland, with the plan being that if the leading company managed to gain a bridgehead, the rest of the battalion would follow on and consolidate.

The lead platoon, from "A" Company, forded the Moro at 22:00 on the 5th, reaching the far bank but unable to signal their success due to a faulty radio. The other platoons eventually followed, but never caught up to the lead units, and both elements of the company were caught by sweeping machine gun fire. The German guns were carefully sited to prevent just such a crossing. The lack of a radio also prevented "A" Company from calling in mortar fire, and the company instead chose to settle into a "chaotic exchange of small arms fire" with the Germans, in order to maximize their mission as a diversion to the main effort to the west. The Canadians withdrew at 01:00hrs on 6 December."



The Hastings & Prince Edward
Regt. had to cross the moro
river quietly at night, to attack
so one man swam across with
a rope attached to a boat, then
they hauled the attack troops
across one boat at a time for
a surprise attack at daybreak.
W. N. Dow

7-Dec-43 On move again: rest is over. Weather is changeable, but not too cold. Muddy and slippery, but have small tents for 2 men to sleep in. May think they are having it tough, but "it's the fellows like Buster Scott who are really getting the dirt". Aircraft are doing a thriving business., but so far, no trouble in their outfit. Suppose you are hearing by radio and know more than he can tell. (Cont'd) "something came up the other night, so quit writing"...sleeping with chum in tent; he has trouble light from truck, so can see to write. Received air letter from 23 Nov, so good. Stuck on duty last night from 12-6, but only sat and read and answered a couple of calls, so not busy. Today removed track from carrier and checked brakes, so no hope ready to go again. Glad you received photos - will be great to look back on. Actually, getting letters you wonder if missed - take longer and sometimes not mentioned. No Christmas parcels yet. Gwen said she sent one - she may be going with Calvin but sure writes often. So, Wayne is a year old, and Gordon going to school.

Hinted about boys from home being there: some old schoolmates are right there now, so be seeing them again. Traded oxfords for straight razor souvenir. \$4 typical price, so figure a good deal. Parcel from Mitchell: socks, handkerchiefs, bar of Ivory soap, face and shaving soap and tooth paste. Hasn't worn a hole in socks since Sicily: walking to and from kitchen! Cook has made pancakes lately, but not as good as home. For syrup, heats water and adds corn syrup: ok. Powers that be seem to be having another big and important conference just now. Things keep looking better. May send more post cards; hope you are getting them.

8-Dec-43 Canadian soldiers: Italian campaign/Moro

9-Dec-43 Moro River Campaign

9-Dec-43 HMCS Stadacona: E block: back to barracks / doesn't expect to stay long.

22-Dec-43 HMCS Stadacona: Halifax: How are you and dad now? Must be hard when you can't just go to bed when sick. Haven't had flu yet, but lots of colds around, with changing weather. Thanks lots for good stuff in parcel. The "ditty bags" came and all were interested in contents. His came from Rebekah Lodge at Comber Ont., which he hadn't heard of. It had this Union Jack writing paper, and just in time: he was out. Geo. Pelling shared Mitchell Advocate news. Had letter from Norman with pictures of him and 2 from Kitchener. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

December 28: After heavy fighting, Canadians occupy Ortona, Italy: east coast.

30-Dec-43 HMCS Stadacona: Halifax: Survive Xmas dinner? Was OK in barracks, and also bought turkey supper at hostel too. How's the flu? Elsie said Flloyd was sick, and Harvey and Dorothy had doctor out. Getting tired of barracks: waste of time without course work. Trying to get drafted to a destroyer, but ready to take anything to get out of this place. Got parcel from Staffa Women's Institute (first time) and sent thanks. Has Russ Miller left yet? Not sure he'd want to be a cook, but good somebody does it. Clipping in Halifax paper sent because Olive Hackney was mentioned.

Instructions.

Regiment "J" Sec. 1 Can Div Sigs

Army Form B295
(In pads of 100)

Rank) Sergeant (Name) Dow N.

sent from his quarters/duty, from 12/43 to 0800 hrs 23/12/43

proceeding to* NAPLES

(Date) 23/12/43

† Delete whichever is not practicable.

* Destination not required unless absence is to exceed 24 hours, unless notification is desirable owing to local conditions or is necessary to enable purchase of a rail ticket at reduced fare.

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3-Jan-44 "(6 pgs.) Not sure where left off, since he was on 4 day leave to Naples just before Christmas. Now raining hard. It was the luck of the draw: 2 names from a hat. Unexpected, because he had just been off for 3 days at shop, for new reverse gear for carrier. Nearly froze on the way, because they were told to not take blankets, and he didn't take a coat. Stayed in Italian home with stone floor - didn't sleep. Better at Naples: had blanket. Good Christmas meal from leave authorities: Christmas cake, potatoes, veg, bit of turkey and lots of pork. Went to troop show and saw Humphrey Bogart and his wife. First time in Naples: lots to see, with Vesuvius nearby. truck broke down on way back - saw a few shows, and ended up hitch-hiking to base, and flood. Because of shelling, pup tents were set up over trenches for shelter, but blew so hard, in morning no tents standing, and nothing dry. Crawled into back of a truck and stayed there for morning. Moved to a small town and started ""fishing our equipment out of the water"". 2nd was clear, so got blankets dried. Sad to report Christmas cake received from home was put aside for New Years, and drowned. Cook took it and others similar and made a fruit pudding: was good, so not a complete loss. Discussed Christmas correspondence received during his absence / appreciated a card from Nelson from Andre Dupre. Suggestions of what needed and not for parcels appreciated. Liked maple syrup again and others remind him he's lucky. ""I only hope to get back in time to make it up to you some day.""

14-Jan-44 Wrote about 20 letters to others. Lost writing paper in New Year's flood, but Art got a parcel from girlfriend with 3 pads and he shared one. They share back and forth. Weather not bad now, but has a cold. Has underwear, but gave second ones to middle aged friend who had fever and had lost all his kit in landing. Visited Eldon Allen, who was surprised to see anybody from home / didn't know he had seen Buster Scott and Marshall Dearing at times too. Expects quite a few neighbours passed nearby last night. Friends at home getting good pay for cutting wood, compared to his, but "got myself to blame I'm not there too." Sending back photos from Hazel for safe keeping and souvenirs: they were in strange places: in Carrier #1 when it was blown up and recovered and passed on from a fellow who knew him later. Usually carried with him, but had put them in a compartment. Parcel was good, especially maple syrup. Has 13 pr of socks - not walking much. Soap was scarce in Sicily, but available there now. Tooth brushes go soft from there, so would like that, a few bars, cookies and Advocate, canned chicken, crackers, cheese and gum. (FYI.) A cheap (\$1.75) watch would be nice - they seem to stand up. Appreciates all he gets - staying sober and clean.

15-Jan-44 HMCS Stadacona: E block: Expect to get a ship draft soon. Has a cold. Mail back and forth to Norman is only taking a few weeks.

18-Jan-44 Catching up on Christmas correspondence from others, like Olive Hackney returning to England from N Africa. Doing OK, / cold getting better. 'helping in kitchen, so well fed. Battle losses a concern, but dodging it so far. You might have guessed pretty well where I was around Christmas, from the news, but was on leave. Hoping to meet with acquaintances, but missed them so far. "I only hope nothing happens to them before I see them...You'll be hearing of fellows you know getting it, but I've come through quite a lot of it already.

25-Jan-44 Getting over cold / hope they are over Christmas colds too. Weather is good. On duty, but just being available. Buster Scott visited and they went to see Eldon Allen. Buster shared stories that were interesting and gruesome. War advancing after second landing, and "Russians are going strong too".

25-Jan-44 HMCS (? __?) *not allowed to say* / Halifax, about to go overseas soon. Wanted to get double opening zipper on shore for modified jumper, to wear on ship, but no luck. Will try to not leave it so long to write next time.

26-Jan-44 (Same letter as above.) Relocated and weather bad: raining. Heard from Nelson lately? About 30 people wrote cards for Christmas...Winnie McPhail.... No parcels since 15 October. Casualties are happening / don't worry about him



"Winnie" McPhail

28-Jan-44 (same letter as above) Parcels are starting to arrive - getting cleared out of backlog. Five of them in location, have 5 parcels, so OK.

31-Jan-44 Training planes diving near Uncle Stan's and one crashed. Snow around at higher altitudes, but not where they are. Some good sunny weather. Air force busy on Fifth Army front. New landing bringing out the Jerry air force. Keeping informed with radio rigged up. Announced last night that the _(Perths?) _scribbled out by censor__ are in Italy. Getting \$8.40/month, but not spending much. Can get bars and gum. Maybe ashamed of bars received from home, because maybe gets more than home folks. Marg Kemp put last letter of thanks in paper - proud of him. He had just written to her again to thank for chocolates. Appreciates getting Advocate as much as purchased items, to keep informed of home.

7-Feb-44 Just received air mail from 23 Jan, so moving ok. Using a non-censored air mail to try it. In shack with lineman and 2 others, away from troops. Ready to repair lines cut from truck or shell. Maybe can go to show with another guy / getting supper in midst. Getting water with bucket from 100' well, and burning grape vine wire posts for heat. Supposedly passed trades test, to qualify for 25 cent/day pay raise, but will only believe when seen, because last one is delayed. Service ribbon awarded: suppose it will be sent home for safe keeping. Threatening snow, but usually sunny enough that it doesn't stay.

14-Feb-44 "out for a spell". In billets, but not well organized for writing home: writing on bed, by candlelight + gas wick light. Charging motors giving trouble: no electricity. Saw a couple of movies, but one outside: nearly froze. Spring supposedly to start in February, but wintry, but snow turns to slush. Not as nice as January was. Buster Scott came to visit - back to his unit, but lucky to have been sick: a lot of new replacements now, because of casualties. They are only about a quarter mile away. Buster saw Marshall Dearing several times, but dad not since September. Took head of little engine Sunday morning / helped carry a lot of mail another day, and nothing for him, but others shared parcel contents. Nothing much received since Christmas.

18-Feb-44 Started euchre, but mail notice came, so broke up to see. Received from 28 Jan and 4 Feb, so moving ok. Thankful for parcels from Staffa and Lions. 330 cigarettes will get enough \$ to last about a month.

Maple syrup from Roy's on pancakes tonight was good; shared with others who appreciated too. Back pay has come through. Miserable weather, but job is tending batteries, so inside: not bad. Casualties in Perth's will be hitting home. News of mail plane dumping load, but no personal effect that he knows of.

19-Feb-44 Telegram: arrived and OK.

HMCS Niobe: Greenock, Scotland: land base [HMCS Niobe, Scotland](#)

23-Feb-44 HMCS Niobe: Finally got over but not sure he likes it. When prepping new ship, they came on, officers said needed to do 2 weeks' work in one, because they needed to get over to take over another new Canadian ship. Now seems like a month wait. Not crazy about barracks. Needed a coupon for soap, so had to go get them. Giving a pound note for something simple, get a handful of change - need a bag to carry it. Did you get the cablegram OK?

HMCS Teme: K458: River class frigate: launched 11 November 1943 for Royal Navy, then transferred to RCN:

28 Feb 1944. (See the date of the next letter!)

Improved version of Flower-class corvette - intended as ocean-going anti-sub escort. On 6 June 1944, took part in Operation Overlord. On 10 June, escort carrier HMCS Tracker collided with Teme, almost cutting it in half.

HMCS Outremont towed Teme to Cardiff for repair until Dec 1944.

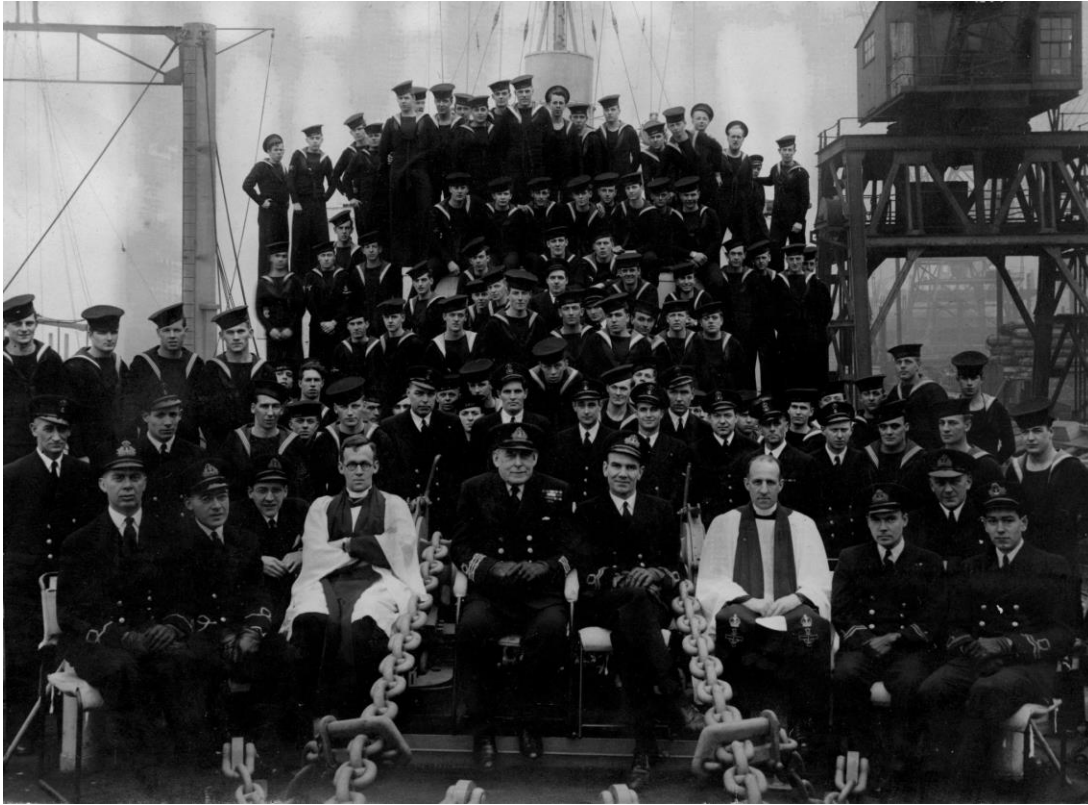
(Photo used w/o permission, so far. DD)



This photo was on a cardboard mount in Uncle Nelson's collection, without any identification note. Compare the similarities to above, but no number on the hull (yet?) so maybe during transfer from RN to RCN?? DD



29-Feb-44 **HMS Teme: London, England:** On new ship: seems OK. Came over on new one too, but were just transporting it. Bumped into army Cecil Walkolm back in Halifax. Name of ship is pronounced like "team". Would like to see countryside on leave. Would like to visit Mervin. Dorothy and you will be getting a year 'younger". met another sailor with same birthday as him: other sailor is 26; he is 27.



Uncle Nelson third from right:



29-Feb-44 Appreciating parcels, including Readers Digests, that he holds on to first and then shares around. Weather is better: instrument and mechanic and he slept in pup tent for first time since NY flood, was good. Staying close to electrician's truck: steady changing batteries. he is senior person in group now; others have moved on. Initially he was teased as a zombie. Doesn't want a new job: content with pay and work. Stagnant warfare: hope it opens there and second front.

2-Mar-44 Weather better: less mud and can keep boots clean. Liking new job. Lots of letters, but not sure when he can reply. Wishes he was home helping make syrup.

7-Mar-44 Happy late birthday. Lots of parcels since Christmas: had to scrounge an ammo box to store stuff. Four of them together - they often bring back bread after supper. Heated chicken stew with blow torch: was good. Went to church after being offered a ride; was better than local parade church. Sermon was to try to make a positive difference, so you would be missed if gone. Appreciates rubber overshoes/rubbers, to keep feet drier and warmer. Told 3 sisters they can back off parcels, because they have families to look after.

9-Mar-44 HMCS Teme: received mail that was couple of months old, but no wonder since he had 3 different addresses lately. *Still liking new ship.* Had a cribbage tournament in seamen's' mess hall: twenty pairs playing. Discussion of naming for destroyers. One of officers was officer at Pt. Arthur when he was there - he remembered me and visited a bit. Sleeping in hammocks, which he hadn't done for a year.

12-Mar-44 Bad, wet weather. Writing in electrician's truck. Hoping pup tent doesn't blow away tonight. In town to see movie; afterwards on street, he was recognized by fellow: had to ask: Mitch Feeney from medical corps. He wants to meet again to catch up on others dad knew of. Thanks for Mitchell papers, even if they are past, to keep informed. Nelson crossing again: doubt if he will like it. Olive Hackney not happy - wants to get back to unit. Soon ready for leave again, after 3 months. been in army 2 years now / ready for home. They say will have to stay in army 18 months after war, but at least will be home and safer to wonder. Montgomery says may be pretty well over this year. Liking battery job. Wasn't supposed to send paper, so it may not get there. never mind about a watch.

Four-and-a-half years into World War II, the residents of San Sebastiano, Italy — a Neapolitan village on the western slopes of Mount Vesuvius — had already endured much misery: dictatorial rule, invasion, occupation and bombings. In mid-March 1944, they faced yet another catastrophe, this one a natural disaster that would destroy their town.

On March 17, Mount Vesuvius began an eruption that, over the ensuing week and a half, rained down rocks the size of basketballs, covered some areas with up to a meter of ash, and released a slow-moving wall of volcanic rock, lava and debris that crushed and burned everything in its path. U.S. [newsreels](#) recorded the eruption and the evacuation of San Sebastiano's residents, who, assisted by Allied soldiers, piled household goods and belongings onto wagons as lava advanced toward the village.

17-Mar-44 Now a Lance Corporal: looking after stores: kit and such, after recent job of charging batteries. Still driving carrier and get DM pay plus 10 cents for the hook. (Single chevron) Sees Mitch Feeney from Dublin: farmer dad may know. We are where you had figured we would have been at Christmas. Hope second front opens up soon - they are pounding France. May have trouble keeping up to letters in the next while, expecting to be busy sorting things. he did such a good job of batteries that they bawled out the guy who had done it before. Hope Nelson is doing ok. Weather has straightened out a bit.

"Lance Corporal was an appointment granted to soldiers holding the rank of Private in the Canadian Army, The insignia of a Lance Corporal was a 1-bar chevron worn point down."



Canadian soldiers' insignia

24-Mar-44 Buster Scott visited after his leave. Lots of letters lately in response to his / mail is moving. Likes being storeman so far. Answers to questions: excess money: maybe buy bonds. Don't send good watch, or any because hard to look after. Would he like to go on sick leave? No: glad to be healthy and relatively in one place. Nelson is in England?

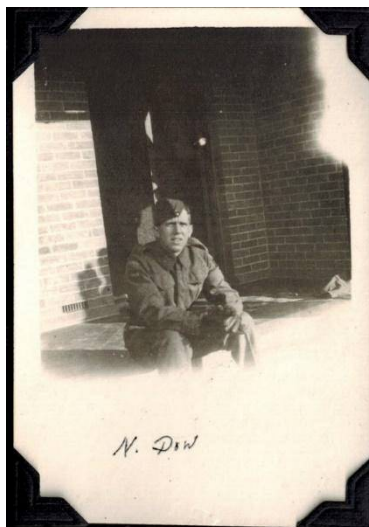
1-Apr-44 Appreciating a Readers Digest somebody had sent from US, so maybe they bought a subscription. (Gwen?) Regarding tea, can get from cook, but a can of coffee would be nice for change and maybe saccharine pills. Beans for lunch were good and will enjoy peaches sent tonight.

2-Apr-44 (cont'd) Four went to church, but it was cancelled and had to leave in a hurry. Not doing long moves lately. Another nicer day. Underwear fit well.

4-Apr-44 On first day of leave. Warmer weather. Brought bedding and \$50, so better prepared than last time, but canteens are run by forces, so food not too expensive. Skipped supper because full from cakes and tea. Has visited with some Perths. A nice fellow in platoon at Kitchener with him was killed. Saw some country on train ride that was looking more like Ontario better farmland, compared to twisty road poor country at front. Hope you got some syrup made.

5-Apr-44 Lots of mail including a good one from Nelson, complaining about mail service. Received some salvaged from plane crash. Victory loan repaid, so not to look for it. Sending a poem from front line theatre that describes Italy. Radio says second front may open: hopefully because that will help end it. Likes summer underwear issued / working in stores, gets to pick first. Getting '39-45 star. Haven't seen Buster for a month.

9-Apr-44 Still on leave 5/20 decided to go to Easter Sunday church parade - was high English - was OK. Sending a picture of self. Has voluntary maple leaf service medal on. *Allowed to wear beret, but have to buy 'self - likes better for staying on than wedge cap.* Leave is almost over, and most are broke, but since he only spends on food, doing fine. Saw a guy from Mitchell in Perths in canteen. Heard Russians are doing well.



15-Apr-44 Nicer, drier weather. Had some mail and enjoyed crackers and corn syrup, but maple would be better. Heard some mail both ways is being sunk at sea, so not sure what is making it. Worked on sending a bond, and they are trying to sell another, but prefers sending \$ and having it bought at home. Have you heard about rehab program after war? Thinking about it, and place across the road. Government is potentially

offering \$6000, of which only \$4900 needs to be repaid after 10 years - would be a good start. Started a discussion with western farmers / cut off writing to participate.

21-Apr-44 Enjoying better weather and swim in salt water - was good for feet. Bombers going over the last few days. Hoping war is over this year. While he would have not expected it to last to '45, he is glad to be helping instead of being at home hearing about those serving in trouble. Eggs are 15 cents/egg, but not so important to him - would rather have apple pie. Had some, but not as good as home. Suited with stores job - keeps him busy. Writing on ground behind carrier.

30-Apr-44 Bad weather lately: everything wet, so demoralized to write lately. Feeling better today - dried up a bit. Has received plenty of mail lately - some ordinary coming as fast as air. Victory Bond from last fall not lost - was paid back. May send \$100 or keep on book. Glad maple syrup may be coming. Saw in paper about Buster Scott being in hospital - was a good place compared to front.

7-May-44 Mail coming and going within weeks: is good. Censorship discussion: no unit on outside of letters now. Received airmail/less censored letter from Nelson - "foolish boy thinks he would like to get down this way". Good weather: locals using tractors and horses instead of oxen and women. Sleeping in truck (fine) partly to watch inventory. Likes the idea of "Marlene" as a name, to be different in the family. Likes new beret instead of wedge cap: it stays on better. Happy (late) Mother's Day / hope to be home for next one.



9-May-44 Writing by candlelight in truck. Radio indicates air war is going strong, likely for second front. Using about 10 blankets for mattress. Getting a promotion, with \$12 back pay, so will likely send \$100 home instead of carrying in pocket. Nelson reports getting \$2/day, so ahead on the rate, but likely saving less. Glad the mail is moving: nice to be keeping in touch.

4-May-44 HMCS Teme: Thanks for birthday cablegram. Mail held up or slow because of being address to Halifax. Wonders if Norman saw volcano eruption.

6-May-44 HMCS Teme: Doesn't know what to think of name Dorothy picked for baby - different. Ship was English, switched to Canadian, with Canadian crew. Heard about Athabasca going down / knows somebody on sister Haida.

10-May-44 HMCS Teme: Dorothy had baby OK - same birthday as his (?) What name? Billy Hocking signed up? Is he only 18? Parcels mentioned still not there, but something to look forward to.

"The Battle in the Liri Valley

11 May - 4 June 1944"

May 11: Tanks of 1st Canadian Armoured Brigade support Allies' assault up Liri Valley towards Rome

May 14: First German defenses broken

15-May-44 Had a touch of fever/malaria - hopefully getting better. Received 3 Advocates to catch up. Turned in "old plaything" so now driving 3-ton stores truck. It made almost a year driving a carrier: was OK: nobody else drove it or told him how. Now acting L/Cpl, with back pay.

14-May-44 HMCS Teme: If Marlene is as good as Flloyd, she won't be much trouble. Thanks for dandy parcel. Also, everybody on ship received a "ditty bag"; his was packed by charge staff of Simpson's in Toronto.

May 16: 1st Canadian corps (50,000) ordered to advance on second German line in Liri Valley

17-May-44 (Actually sent on 20th: lost track of date (22 may letter)) Busy lately. No longer looking after batteries: now stores as new L/Cpl. Still driving carrier. You kind of figured where they are, if you look at your Christmas idea. Did such a good job at battery care that previous chap was bawled out. Thinks Art taking over for him now. Weather is better. Hope Nelson is ok.

22-May-44 Received parcel in good shape and started reading Advocate. Please don't bother sending hot chocolate, because too strong w/o milk or sugar, that are hard to get. Parcels are spoiling him. Tooth brush ok, but likely need to visit dentist travelling with unit. Cook made nice apple pie, and enjoyed some cherries lately. Had paymaster send \$100, related to refunded Victory Bond, so about \$1000 sent? In bulky truck convoy behind "present do", but sometimes still a "bit of excitement.". Hope seeding is done and hay coming on.

25-May-44 "Received mail from 3 steadiest writers: mother, Gwen and Bill. Glad seeding is done. Hope she is feeling better, and let Margaret push mower. Had back trouble and sick a while ago, but better now. Olive made it home, and out of forces? So got letter about farm?

""My idea is that I'll want a tractor if I can manage it at all, and it would pay better with a bit more land."" Chocolate powder ok after all: drove a ration truck during a rush / quarter master gave him a tin of milk and little bag of sugar. Went to a show, so not roughing it, but likely some Perths will be in trouble. Playing horseshoes, thinking of Tom by the barn. Shared Family Herald with gun shop crew. Not able to reply to as many letters lately, because busy."



Stretcher Bearer

Minturno War Cemetery, Italy

SCOTT, Private, WILFRID, A/59439. Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment, R.C.I.C..

24 May 1944. Age 25. Son of John and Agnes Scott, of Cromarty, Ontario, Canada. Grave Reference: IV, K, 4.

25-May-44 HMCS Teme: mail is slow; Norman could hardly read one because it was salvaged from a plane that crashed. On torpedo party all the time: not bad: not rushed.

June 10: Caen France: Canadian objective taken by Brits + Canadians

5-Jun-44 Heard Rome fell? Was in on it. Truck dirty, so cleared out, swept and reorganized, but got dirty, so heated water and washed waist up. Haven't had a bath in river or anywhere for a week. Hot and lazy in daytime, until 4. Happy to have received parcels, and feeling fine.

6-Jun-44: D Day: Operation Overlord 15,000 Canadian Army + hundreds for RCAF + 60 RCN vessels & crews participate @ Normandy. (359 deaths / 1074 Canadian casualties)

Photo documentation shows HMCS Cruiser Prince David took part in the invasion, carrying troops to Juno Beach.

8-Jun-44 Learned of Buster Scott's death from passing stretcher bearer. Two of 3 he knew in infantry gone. One fellow in his section killed by a mine. More sad homes in Canada. With new push on second front, there will be more. "He's sort of on the run here, but this is really just a side show now". Some have been to "big city" unofficially - hopes he gets a pass. New front seems to be gaining ground, but expect heavier fighting as reserves arrive. Wondering about Perth's, but expect most are ok. Glad she received the (army?) paper and poem that described Italy from their perspective. Received picture from Hazel of Nelson and kids when he was home. Hope he is OK, maybe helping support second front. Hope to be home in a year.

10-Jun-44 On 10 June, Royal (British) Navy escort aircraft carrier HMS Tracker and the HMCS Teme were following an ASDIC signal (sub finding sonar). The Tracker accidentally rammed Teme, almost cutting her in half. Four sailors were killed in collision, according to letter 4 Sept below. So, notice location of letter of 11 July, below.

15-Jun-44 "Discussion about Wilfrid Scott's death, temporary burial and then transfer to larger cemetery. Many casualties at that battle. Large cemeteries at Regalbuto, Ortona, and likely to be one at Liri Valley. In Liri Valley battle, he (Dow) was long way behind with truck - in bulky transport, until 27 May, when he was close to where Wilfred was killed. Been hot, with flies and mosquitoes at night. Discussed sending stuff home - would like a comb - theirs break. Saw Cassino - is a mess, not likely to be rebuilt: looks like a heap of rocks on a hill. Two pages of how impressive it was to have visited Pompeii with its Roman BC history.

Ordinance check prep - hoping he did OK."

18-Jun-44 Got back from good visit with the Perth's, mentioning Russ Miller was away to Naples. Got soaked on motorcycle ride to and fro. Heard Germans are putting up stiff fight in France.

June 23: Lt. Gen Crerar takes command of the First Canadian Army

25-Jun-44 "Diarrhea going around, but nice weather. Had good visit from Wes Balantyne. Enjoyed local ice cream and then a movie. Happy to be 1 of 2 drivers who got 150/150 for ordinance check, especially since he looks after truck himself. Helps keep the good job. See you for Christmas!"

11-Jul-44 HMCS Niobe: Haven't written for a while. Dance at barracks tonight, and have seen nice looking Scotch girls, but not interested: wishes he was a good dancer, to meet people. Had a presentation about Canada's rehab for servicemen: sounds good.

12-Jul-44 Was off for a week and enjoyed it. Appreciated parcel and cards when returned to J Section. Getting birthday cards 2 weeks before date, because mail is moving. Second front must be tough, but not getting much news from there.

20-Jul-44 Flies are bad. One colleague gone to hospital with malaria. Heard from Nelson - he and Mervin getting up in pay. Glad haying is done, because it's such hard work. Wrote to Mrs. Scott, because Buster is gone / hope others would do the same if he gets hit. Hope war goes well and be home for Christmas.

HMCS Kamloops: K176: Flower-class corvette: launched Aug 1940. Second refit completed April 1944. Part of MOEF: mid ocean escort group C-2.

(photo from Uncle Nelson's artifacts: ref 2 December letter below)



27-Jul-44 HMCS Kamloops: St Johns: wasn't at Niobe long after last letter / now on old refitted corvette - pretty good shape now. Some crew had been on Teme, so knows a few. Another guy he met on Teme invited him to go to Paisley Scotland to visit kinfolk. Their tea-time was like a supper. Is Billy Hocking in navy yet? Not too crazy about the "run" they are on with different ship.

"The Road to Rimini: 26 July - 21 Sept 1944"

4-Aug-44 With flies and heat, and past sickness, lost appetite and weight, but some of that normal for summer. Enjoyed supper: applesauce and tomatoes, without so much hot meat. Not happy about being 24 on the 24th, because he went to work on truck and broke a brass fitting and didn't get a good replacement and it leaks. Raining out, so most are going for pup tents, but he is content to be able to live and write inside truck. Feeling better lately.

18-Aug-44 (typed!) Mail is moving. Glad you got the \$100. Maybe have over \$1000 when done. Glad some farm guys came by and had a good discussion about feasibility of 6 horse tandem hitch. Has more

experience now than most others - 2 years since Scotland. Readers Digests not coming - wrote to them - they are extending subscription to balance what is missing.

20-Aug-44 HMCS Kamloops: St Johns, NFLD: No mail for past month, but caught up when we arrived "back on this side". You asked if we could say how badly the ship was smashed: badly enough that we were surprised it held together.

August 25: Battle of Normandy ends with liberation of Paris

September 1: Canadians return to Dieppe to clear German garrisons around channel

27-Aug-44 News from France is good. Stole glory from 1st Div., but 1st is still the best. Good supper of potatoes, Spam, rice, cherry jam, bread and tea. Have been bartering for eggs and fresh fruit with locals - they trade for bully beef / maybe keeping it for winter. Glad threshing is done / hope to be there for it next year.

1-Sep-44 Thanks for parcel, which arrived OK in spite of heat. An officer was sent Laura Secord's, and they were all bad. You said Russians would be first into Germany, but on west doing well too: soon finished with France, and hopefully Italy too. Enjoying cribbage matches. Hot and dusty - no sense in polishing truck. It has been giving trouble_ runs OK then not. Maybe fuel line. No consensus on it.

4-Sep-44 HMCS Kamloops: So, you went to the Falls for weekend - do they still run coloured lights during wartime? Wish I could have been with you in the peach orchard! The Teme had 4 casualties when it was rammed by the aircraft carrier. Don't expect to get leave: some with 17 months' service are turned down.

14-Sep-44 Sharing Advocate with others from home. Personnel are changing as war drags on. Glad of progress in Europe, with Americans into Germany. Still hanging on in Italy. Weather is cooler. Farmer was plowing with 6 cows behind truck. What happened to deal across the road?

16-Sep-44 Don't worry too much about him: he's what they call a thirty-mile sniper now, so pretty safe. Several Readers Digests came through. Maybe getting older looking, as some are in pictures received. Mervin is getting married? There were nice girls in Scotland too.

22-Sep-44 HMCS Kamloops: We are on the other side again. How is dad / the flu must have hung on. Letter from was typed - he said he is ready to go home any time. Mervin getting married in England / 20,000 girls in Canada married to servicemen! With some leave, going visiting to different ships; wishes he could have gone around in England and Scotland like some others with better timing.

24-Sep-44 (Opened by censor) Had to go back to work after easy spell, so had to return typewriter too. Nice to be with boys again - they appreciated getting their kit bags for extra clothes. In building now instead of truck - OK. Got more letters and a couple of Advocates with soldiers' letters, including his and Nelson's - shared around. Hope dad didn't get flu.

2-Oct-44 (Marked 2/9/44, but should have been 2/10/44, with mention of receipt of 24 Sept letter, weather and "October now") Weather not so good, with gales and blowing rain. Has a cold. In a good place, but not moving very fast, so might be there for winter.

8-Oct-44 Staying indoors: wet weather / has cold - not as bad as feeling sick a week ago. Enjoying parcels with chocolates from Kaye Russell and Roy's Church WMS - sharing with 4 other DMs. They topped off

supper of stew and apricots nicely. Responding to multiple letters. Discussion about doing own laundry: not on drizzly days: doesn't dry.

"The Po Valley Denial: 11 Oct '44 - 8 March 1945"

14-Oct-44 Have place across the road? Glad you don't work it next summer: enough to do. Warfare is busy there, with good weather: army and air force. Busy roadway right beside where he is parked, messing with typing. Discussion of action and loss of brave soldier in section. Sent home another \$100 - they can buy Victory Loan there, so know where documents are. Still has \$15 in pocket since Salerno leave.

15-Oct-44 HMCS Kamloops: Back in Halifax. Don't expect leave: some with 1.5-2 yr. are refused. Norman is back at front, and would rather not be. Requested another course, but was refused because his paperwork not there. Forgot about Thanksgiving that Hazel asked about (turkey) - had to ask when it was. Has crossed Atlantic 6 times. Usually about 10-day trip. Had wisdom tooth out a while ago; gums are bothering now, but no doctor on board.

19-Oct-44 HMCS Kamloops: Got parcel sent in July, addressed to Niobe: thanks - will be handy for going across again.

October 23: 1st Canadian Army begins Battle of Scheldt in Holland

23-Oct-44 Muddy warfare going on. Did some visiting. Homeland is paying dearly for war with losses.

30-Oct-44 Still muddy so good there are card games and farm forum discussions by various folk, but a long-winded westerner bored him a bit, so left. Back with the boys, so no typewriter again, and has to work at the supplies job: details about clothing and such. Doing well in spite of mud.

4-Nov-44 HMCS Kamloops: Scotland: wish he could get leave to visit country, but was denied. Would like new billfold found at home: this one is 5-6 yr. old present from girls and getting thin. Has paralysis outbreak been checked yet? Haven't heard from Norman since he was sent to front.

November 9: end of Battle of Scheldt, but 3 weeks needed to clear mines for ships to bring supplies to Antwerp

5-Nov-44 Back on typewriter for a bit. Thanks for the box of chocolates. Did some visiting. Missing Pilgrim from Saskatchewan - hope he recovers and returns. Doing well in spite of weather and mud. On wet nights, taking issue of rum: warms a person up before bed, and getting dark around 5:30.

16-Nov-44 Just went to Canadian stage show for second time, because there was nothing else to do; they did a better job than first performance. Truck has been given a good report. Christmas parcels and mail are starting to arrive - he is doing OK. Food is a bit better thanks to scrounging parties bringing in fresh spuds, veg and honey. Paper showed a picture of Johnny Miller from the front. Sorry to see Perth Plowing Match trophy gone to somebody else again, but maybe done with matches.

21-Nov-44 After 7 pages to Hazel, has 3 left, so writing. Drier and cooler now / putting antifreeze in trucks. Going well on western front - be nice if can finish this year, in both places.

27-Nov-44 Not happy lately, working on hauling mail for others and getting none. But now received package from Staffa WI with good stuff (maple sugar etc.) and then one from mother, with burst milk can, but

ok, then some letters too, so ok now. Helping in kitchen by peeling apples, and got another piece of pie for pay. Some soldiers getting bad news: mother dies at home, another's brother killed in France, while another brother sent home with amputation. Having trouble writing inside truck because lanterns not so good.

29-Nov-44 HMCS Kamloops: Haven't written, because haven't been ashore for a month. Mervin had a big wedding, and good-looking wife? Thanks for swell Christmas parcel. Received 5 others too: had more stuff than others on deck. Don't know what to get you, so will send \$ so you can get your own. Expect to leave again soon.

December 1: Canadian troops in Italy fight at Lombardy Plain, to control Senio River: the northernmost post in Italy

2-Dec-44 HMCS Kamloops: St. Johns: Was Russ Miller moved to barracks in Quebec, or to pick up a ship? Yes, it can be rough at sea - a nuisance when working. Get wet a couple of times/day. In the Christmas car, there is a picture of this ship with an iceberg. Merry Christmas and all the best in New Year.



Grand Hotel, (?), 2 Dec 1944

7-Dec-44 Had a '48 leave lately. Some serious action on the front, with advance, but casualties. Too bad some are dying at home too (training?) Was glad to be at a dance lately, with CWAC: she wearing rubber boots and him in hob-nail boots, but OK on tile floor. Damp weather - must be bad at front. Helping in kitchen - good to be indoors.

15-Dec-44 "(Typed) Air mail slowed up for Christmas: just received 3 dated Oct 13, 19 and 26. Don't know how she can write so often and find news to say. Tanks for parcels, also from Nellie and Roy's. For Aunt

Mime's request: no socks or personal stuff needed, because of his job. However, nut bars, chicken or noodle soup, tomato juice, maple syrup, hot chocolate, cookies, cake, comb, tooth brush, jam, honey, and gum. Not wanting to be selfish, and thankful for mother's parcel quality. Glad you liked the items sent home, including straight razor, which was getting tarnished. Don't have same chance to get stuff as when he was with forward troops, but ok with that.

Considerable detail about the stores job to answer mother's query, not snipped out: looking after truck and inventory, keeping front line needs filled, looking after weapons and replacements, clothing, blankets. Need to be honest / last guy lost his job over that. Sgt McCarthy from Stratford is fine to work with. Being L/Cpl not bad as far as respect for orders, given he pitches in to help too.

Sorry Bill Pilgrim is still in hospital; he is looking after his kit still.

Forget about him getting home on leave; consider it lucky if he makes it through war. But don't expect they would send us to ""the other side"" w/o a leave. While there have been a lot of ""39ers"" killed, there are plenty left to keep him down the list / a lot of 5th Div. are ahead of him, then workshops and Div. HQ biggest % 1940 group. Sending a snap: sour looking. Enjoying 5 Christmas parcels Chicken, jam, honey, stuff from Uncle Roy's and Staffa."



26-Dec-44 Finished big feed of noodle soup and crackers with pay sergeant. For Christmas, detachment of chums came back from front and they went to leave centre where there was a dance. Didn't have passed, but Sgt asked for consideration and were all given supper tickets: was good, and sang carols. Came back afterwards. They have had a hard time: Cpl had same clothes they went up in a month ago, and all stayed downstairs in house for fear of who was upstairs. Glad he is storeman. On Christmas day they had the chicken the girls sent and it was better than turkey for dinner @ 4 PM: was turkey, potatoes, cauliflower, mince rolls and raisin pie, so not bad. Didn't bother with supper, so passed on Christmas cake. Paymaster got drunk and put him in charge, but pay Sarg stayed sober, so he is Boss.

1-Jan-45 New Year's Day: had the best meal yet in J Section. Up front with boys, delivering supplies. Quiet at present, subject to change. Had a (picture) show and played cribbage while others partied. Had a parade; Brigadier said to wish folks Happy new Year. Not likely any supper, because dinner was so much. 'Certainly better than last year.

6-Jan-45 HMCS Kamloops: Recovering from big feeds at Christmas and New Years? Sea looked the same all along, so crew more or less forgot what days it was. Received new pocketbook, but don't like it as well as the one girls gave him. Elsie asked about jar of chicken: concerned if it arrived without being broken: arrived fine and chicken was good: one night before we got in, supper wasn't very good, so he got out some

chicken; another guy made some soup and another made a pot of cocoa, so they ended up with a good meal. Finally visited Mervin and his wife on other side: he hasn't changed and quite a nice wife. Dunks can use his radio, but thought Harvey and Dorothy wanted it?

8-Jan-45 Mail slow: southern roads blocked. Left Section just after new year's, so not doing as much. Driving an HUP for a change Did 3 trips to section in the day. - just about had an accident with bigger truck, and nearly went into ditch, but ok. Had a good officer with him: took it ok. Had a letter from Nelson, who figures leave is cancelled. Storming like blazes, but has been good with little snow. Still looking after "porker", so not so homesick.

"Canadian Military Pattern (CMP) trucks were a class and a coherent range of military trucks, made in large numbers, and in numerous variants, by Canada during World War II, compliant to British Army specifications, primarily intended for use in the armies of the British Commonwealth allies, but also serving in other units of the British Empire.

Canadian Military Pattern trucks not only motorized the militaries of Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, but were also sent to the Soviet Union following the Nazi invasion, as part of Canada's Gift and Mutual Aid program to the Allies.

Canadian factories produced around 850,000 vehicles in World War II, including some 50,000 armoured vehicles, self-propelled guns and tanks. But the greatest significance had the vast majority – more than 800,000 units – of trucks and light wheeled vehicles, produced by Ford, General Motors and Chrysler of Canada. Thanks to a large pre-war automotive sector, Canada's great wartime achievement was to build more military trucks than the main Axis nations – Germany, Italy and Japan – combined, matching the demands of mobile warfare in the age of Blitzkrieg.

By war's end, Canada's vast supply of trucks provided a vehicle for every three soldiers in the field — compared to one vehicle per seven American GIs, making it the most mobile army in the world.

Made in Wireless (HUW), Ambulance (HUA), Personnel (HUP), Machinery ZL (mobile radio repair shop) and Computer (accounting, payroll) configurations"

Canadian Military Pattern truck

11-Jan-45 HMCS Kamloops: Promised Mervin a letter, but don't have new address, with slow/no mail, so he will be wondering. Is Billy Hocking finished training yet? Had a good speaker on board about civilian life rehabilitation: will be good if they do what is described. Heard from Norman?

17-Jan-45 Had good pancake supper: with syrup and cheese. Handy to section: going there every day for their wants, working with Quartermaster. Fellow from Scotland, on leave, may come to visit. Both traded fathers' names, just in case, when went into Sicily. Don't be concerned over mention of service in Burma. Gave up leave to Rome: figured others deserved it more. Sent another \$100 / not spending much. Staying with an Italian family. Italian host family has pig in with theirs / sharing chores. They appreciate hearing news on his radio. Glad of frosty weather and less mud. Friend Pilgrim still in hospital for 2 months. Cold getting better.

24-Jan-45 Busy lately: truck and he were hauling a Cat. Only in room to sleep. War going ok: if Russians get to Berlin, Jerries should know to quit. Western front going well too. Weather not bad there for winter. Not much mail received lately.

27-Jan-45 HMCS Kamloops: St Johns: How are you getting along with snow: must have been lots, if roads were blocked for a week. 2-3" of snow there, which locals say is unusual: 4 years since they had any. How is Elsie after the fall? The Teme is out again, but missed it; the guys on it must have had a good rest; it was down for 6 months. Had a letter from Cliff Norman and carton of gum from Mitchell Lions Club, but otherwise no mail - must be something not right. The gum had been addressed to Teme, then went to Niobe, and arrived broken with half missing, so somebody must be enjoying cheap chews. Best of luck with all the snow.

February 1: Withdrawal of Canadians from Italy for deployment in Western Europe begins

February 8: Rhineland Campaign: Gen Crerar leads First Canadian Army + Allies: largest force ever commanded by a Canadian

3-Feb-45 Discussion of mail and room with fire and lantern for writing with pencil for visibility on knee. Water truck didn't make it, so cook couldn't prep supper. Boys brought bread, bacon, tea; he brought jam and cheese, and YMCA staff brought cookies, so aok. Haven't seen Perth's since fall. That Cat hauling story was because the unit was on a trailer, so they had me and the Ford pull it. It was so slippery on roads when he returned it that he only went 5 mph / Cat driver said he could have gone faster using it, but saw 3 trucks in ditch within a mile, because of conditions. Glad that is over. "Old Joe" and the boys doing well on western front; Jerries have Russians stopped at Oden. Glad Nelson saw Mervin and his new wife. Glad the snaps sent arrived. Don't expect to see me until it's over; I am too far down the list.

9-Feb-45 Raining outside with fire inside, so writing. Too bad about Bill McPhail. Air Force is taking its toll around home. Had just finished a letter to Winnie but not mailed and had to tear it up.



Mosquito XIII HK481:



Winnifred, Bill, Doreen McPhail: Christmas, 1942



[Adegem, Belgium: McPhail, Wm. Hector J/21326](#)

[RCAF Squadron 409: "The Nighthawks"](#)

1919- 13 January, 1945: night landing accident in snowy conditions in France

Awards:



Almost lost soft job: Transport Cpl is going home and they wanted me to drive a great big truck and give more orders. Convinced them he was better where he is. Mail is slow. Hard to write lately too. So many Sgt's like McCarthy going home they might run short. Roads are bad: heavy traffic on spring roads like sideroad when frost coming up. Helping a guy stuck and got mud from head to foot. Glad has good rubber boots. Typewriter sticking on letter i - this isn't the original one he was using, which owner took after Cpl made Sgt.. War looks like last lap.



17-Feb-45 HMCS Kamloops: Still snowbound? Just arrived back and found lots of mail and parcel - thanks. Holding parcel opening until leave port again, which expect soon. Nice to have something to open when at sea. As for soap, not hard to get on this side, but always useful. Too bad about Bill McPhail - "was clever at school, and with scholarship he would probably made something of himself in this world." best wishes with birthday coming up / haven't been ashore and may not get, so best wishes. Had letter from Norman: in dance with CWAC who had rubber boots on and he had hobnails, so don't see where there would be much satisfaction in it. You hoped roads would be OK when get leave, but doubt that will be an issue, because don't expect leave for months. Received box of chocolates from Stan, Marjorie and Gwen Hocking: pretty darn good of them. So, Billy is an S/Lt in the navy? Thought he was a long time training for seaman, but that accounts for it. You asked about ice on the ship; covered when came in, and likely still will be when leave. Not usually so bad on other side.

18-Feb-45 Received air letter dated 26 Jan, so good. Killed and butchered the pig: was 95 lb alive, so figured he did a good job of feeding and should be good food. Parsons did the butchering, with almost all the section on hand to watch. So, you are getting a winter storm? Pilgrim recovering and may be back. Had good euchre games, and learned to play cribbage since going there. Weather somewhat spring like; trying to get some tents dried out. Received snap from Calvin of him and me that Murray took; interesting the changes.

During the last week of February, the 1st Division was relieved in line by an Indian division and moved across to Leghorn for shipment to France.

25-Feb-45 Trying to catch up on letters from Hazel, Elsie, Dorothy, Wilma, Margaret, U Roy's, Bessie Davidson and Gwen Lealess. Bill Fawcett was due for home when killed? You were stuck in the snow in the field at Dorothy's? Swell weather there: a guy was sowing with ancient drill and oxen. Haven't got the parcel yet, but should be soon.

Early on 8 March, the convoy sailed, arriving in Marseilles the next day.

25-Mar-45 (8 pgs.) Week since last wrote (?) Quite a few letters arriving: one from her 6 March, and one from Nelson at sea. Figured he wouldn't get home this time, but maybe leave in England. Wish they could meet there. Lucky I turned down a couple of leaves during winter. Guys helped unload supplies. Helped

Quartermaster. *Everybody has new uniforms.* Had box of chocolates from Mitchell & District and yesterday one from her. Also big parcel of 30 Dec. Also box of Smiles & Chuckles from Stan Hockings and Mary R. Appreciated the Molly Os, compared to milk or dark chocolate there. Thanks for Nellie's jam, and special thanks to you and Dad. Bought a couple pair of little wooden shoes last night; after taking to England, will try to send home. Also shopped for jackknives, but cheap with only 1 blade, so passed. Had church parade this morning - first in a while. Buster Scott's old padre spoke well. Singing was terrible with no instrument to lead. Saw Bill Pilgrim a couple of weeks ago: still in holding unit / hope he gets back with them: one DM short. Carmen Wolfe was there a few days getting mechanics to check over his truck. They were over 3 days checking his: working on front brakes. Been busy lately: almost everyone got a new uniform and all that goes with it. *Now a well-dressed soldier wears a black tie with collar open:* probably a nuisance. Not sending air letters for now because of new censorship rules: can't write "I certify..." on back any more; they have to be censored right there. He prefers the risk of censorship of ordinary letter at Base. Weather good until today's cloud. Surprised at number of trees, compared to home, but shady type. Nice to hear he truck tires on good cement pavement. Push on in Germany: 21st Army group, but Germany has only lost 2 armies. *Has 3 service stripes now /* never figured it would have taken that long. Don't work too hard this year: should be home soon.



"Service Chevrons were revived in the Second World War, being introduced in December of 1942. At first, they were restricted to officers and men of the Active Army except those serving in UK or in ""theaters of war."" ...

Initially, one black chevron was awarded for each complete year of continuous service after 10 September 1939. ... The chevrons were to be worn pointed upwards on the left forearm of BD Blouses, SD and KD Jackets, summer worsted and drab serge open collar jackets (only). The point of the lowest chevron was to be 5 1/2 inches from the bottom of the sleeve, or immediately above any rank or Good Conduct badges worn on the forearm."

26-Mar-45 HMCS Kamloops: Back on this side, so need to write. Thanks for birthday card and box of chocolates. Had to plow through a few patches of ice to get in but was OK. Heard from Norman? Some news that all Canadians are being pulled out of Italy - if to England, maybe can visit together next time across.

29 March: Meanwhile, after being repaired by December '44, and tested at Tobermory, Scotland in February, HMCS Teme was hit by torpedo while escorting convoy BTC111 in the English Channel, south of Cardiff: 60 ft was blown off stern: 4 sailors killed. Ship was written off as total loss.

April 1: First Canadian Army begins campaign to open supply route through Arnhem, to clear Netherlands and coastal belt of Germany.

6-Apr-45 (The Beaver Club / London stationery: 8 pgs.) Will likely write again when back, but waiting on supper, so writing. On a real leave now, almost over, part of first bunch. Spent first 2 days with Mervin and Betty "I think when you meet her you will find she is a very nice girl...." They gave me some good square meals, a good bed and took in a dance while there. Merv had day off when arrived, then next day showed inside of a bomber and started the 4 engines. Then went to Glasgow to Salvation Army leave hostel, then to Overseas Club where he used to stay. Went to visit Weetch's at Sandyhills. Received royal welcome, wondering if they would have forgotten him over 2 years. Mrs. Weetch insisted he go to town after supper and cancel room and stay there, since they had no son of their own and their soldier had returned. it was daughter Margaret's 22nd birthday; he gave her a handkerchief he had just bought in Belgium. Made him feel at home after 2 years with troops. Mrs. Weetch wanted to send him with rhubarb pie like supper, but not ready in time. Margaret and he went to train and got there in time, then Mr. and Mrs. arrived with pie, cookies and meat rolls for trip. They took pictures to send later. Shared address so mother could correspond. Never offered to pay them anything because they would have been offended, but Mrs. W mentioned she would like to try maple syrup some day so maybe might send a can? Weather wasn't good: saw a couple of shows with Margaret who took a day off work in Glasgow. Had an extra day in leave, which was good for travelling. War looking good: should be in own home soon. Be fine if they finish it w/o him. Met Lloyd Russell at club although he didn't recognize me. Gave Betty a pair of small wooden shoes from Belgium.



13-Apr-45 Plenty of boxes and chocolates lately and 300 cigs from Mitchell Lions. Things going well and all in good spirits: better than before. Trees starting to leaf out like home, and sun out, making feel lazy in mid-day. Dinner was good: fresh beef, potatoes, gravy, cabbage, jam, bread and tea. Eating much better, with fresh rations. Had to help clean up the house, and as L/Cpl give direction, but went ok by giving example as usual. Then did first wash since leave. Have been on the move, so working on truck instead of just gassing up. Brakes caught fire when used while he was away - they had been serviced and were too tight. On way from London to port, met Arnold Culliton: Sgt in engineers, brother of Fred who was killed in Perths. Going on leave, *he was with Bob Warner, as had happened before*. Had letter from Pilgrim, who is at leave report center, but would rather be with 1st. While on leave, sr. Sgt McCarthy went home to Stratford, so might visit. Only 2 39ers left and they should go in next bunch. Point system is changed again: anyone married with kids has more points, also those wounded. he not even in the running, so don't expect him during summer. Sure would like to get home, but the recent leave sure helped.



17-Apr-45 Typed: machine not used for a while - Sgt says he will make a gift of it when he goes home - should be in next bunch. Received swell big parcel from home and first letter straight to new address. You were wondering how long it took: can't tell other than well planned and rolled right through. Marshmallows were good and shared. Others shared chicken sandwich spread and canned pears, so with loaf of bread was swell snack: all they had between 11:30 and 8 at night - on the move. Concerned about new danger? Was every bit as bad down there. Going well at present: morale is good because of prisoners taken, covering lots of ground, and been on leave or looking forward to it: amongst friends who are glad to see you. People in towns are glad to see them, waving flags and on bicycles that had been hidden during occupation. Afraid they will be disappointed that their needs will not be met right away with number of prisoners too. Has caught up on some replies since boys went into action. Take it easy / saving most of parcel / feeling good / weather good for sleeping in truck.

25-Apr-45 Received air letter dated 8 April, so glad to be more current lately. Weather has been good / boys in billets and he in truck, so sleeping ok. Kind of quiet lately: started washing truck for painting, but told to quit, so switched to laundry. Glad of shorts sent last year: good for leave compared to wool pants and winter underwear. Was lucky to have had leave when he did; it has tightened up. Sure improved morale. Interesting war news, but too many changes to be confident of outcome yet. Quit guessing of when homeward; they hope to send a bunch on next leave. Lloyd Noakes will likely go and Joe McCarthy should be home. Must try to find more about Veterans' Land Act, but not confident he will qualify. Take it easy on the late nights!

2-May-45 (Air mail) Writing hoping you get this before Mother's Day. Sorry it's only a letter; hoping to be home soon, with war changing and looking good. In a hurry: truck is to pick up stores at Div. and have to get things for QM. Trying to delay writing next until after receipt of letter; he wrote the last 2 and letters came right after. As to query about how long trip from Italy took, sending a clip from paper that described. Bad weather with rain and hail, but inside so ok. Will find a flower for Mother's Day; didn't send a telegram, so not to scare you.

4-May-45 Mail is mixed up and crossing. Sorry if Mother's Day wasn't so special with only a letter from him. Has this typewriter as his now: as a present from Sgt. Bud Stewart, after carrying it and looking after it. He went home in last draft, and his father went too, as S Sgt. - to Toronto. Sgt Joe McCarthy went; he will be at Stratford and may visit. Lloyd Noakes went to London. Good to see the 39ers get away after 5 years, apparently being discharged too. You asked about the trip here; now it has been published, so sending a paper clipping, and can likely say was in 7 countries within 4 weeks: Italy, France, Belgium, England, Scotland, Holland and Germany. Too bad much of it was at the worst times, and no time to see the best of them. Missed the ending in Italy, but ok, given leave in Isles, and sure glad he skipped leave during winter. War news is good: when you wrote, they were fighting for Berlin, and now behind them. This front is the quietest and from what you said, you know the score. Interesting that food is taken to the starving people right in the middle of a war. People here are short of a lot of things and pay ridiculous prices for cigarettes. Got some stuff from QM, but still no summer underwear. Tough for guys on leave that they have to wear their longs. One guy wore my ribbons and oxfords, another fellow's hat and another's underwear! He puts "On Active Service" to save buying a stamp - doubt it will do mother any good, as she has been doing lately. dad reading about Land Act: doubt they will benefit - doesn't seem fair after they worked so hard. Like army life: if you look after your clothes, you get to keep wearing them; if you sell or use them rough, you will likely get new ones. Weather has been changeable. During first action there it was nice, but have had rain almost every other day and some snow. Trying to get wash dried. Shouldn't be long before home, but not likely before Christmas. Some will say he is only eating and sleeping now, so can't complain. Dorothy expecting again?

May 7: Germany surrenders

May 8: V-E day

10-May-45 HMCS Kamloops: Got back to this side almost a week ago, but things haven't worked out as hoped. We hoped to go on leave, but __(censored)___...and while we were here, the European war ended, so they just kept us here until they decide what's to be done. __(censored)___ is an old corvette they are not going to bother fixing. Expected it to be short stay so no mail, and did leave, but just short trip and back. Expect to be going back __(censored)___, so will be lucky to even get ashore. *Read about riots there* - must have wrecked the place. As usual sailors are being blamed, but think civilians are equally to blame. Halifax riot 7 & 8 May We were out on escort duty that night, so can't blame us. Went to show early last night, and was good it was early, because they put a 9 o'clock curfew and shut everything down. Wondered about telegram or phone, but didn't do. Mother's Day coming: no card at hand/might be too late. No Canadian mail received for 1.5 months. Wonder how long before Norman will be home. Some scattered fighting, but he should be safe now. Keeping escorts on the Atlantic in case some subs try to sink more before they give up. Happy Mother's Day.

17-May-45 HMCS Kamloops: A week since wrote last, and no wiser to when will be home. On short list for leave, but still no word. Quite a mess there after V-E day, but some stores are open again. Trying to find who was responsible. Hopefully this letter won't get all cut up.



Elspeet, Holland: Location during VE Day

18-May-45 Sending postal notes because can only exchange about \$50 when they leave the country. Getting ready for trip to Berlin. Was 10 miles inside Germany and the country and people look dismal. As soon as you return over the border, people smile and wave. Some boys are volunteering for more service, but he not planning to, but still won't be home soon.

23-May-45 (8 pgs.) Waiting to respond to mail, and now have 7 today, so started. Glad Mother's Day letter got there in time. Expected home presto? Won't happen: Bob Warner may make first of June with 230 points; I only have 104. At least war is over. Had baked beans, rice pudding, bread, marg and tea for supper: was good enough. Rest of boys are staying in houses in Nijverdal, but he still stays in truck. Recently plenty of company: yesterday at least 15 kids, but after they started picking at truck signs and lifting things, Goderich Sgt Youngblut declared they had to go, and it was my job to make it happen. Today had to keep them all out of the yard where the trucks are parked. School in session, so not an issue during day. At night a little 8 yr. old girl named Kristeen is favourite of the whole section; dimples and blonde. She washed one of his mess tins after supper and then followed him and climbed onto his lap. Didn't have heart to chase her out, but after 5 minutes told her to go, in case others got the same idea. One of the reasons she is a favorite is she always does as told and when the others needed to go, she chases them out. Several cute ones, both boys and girls; they never touch inventory, but like to climb on his bed and pretend to sleep. Brigade HQ sponsored a dance at factory there last night, with plenty of liquid; he went to dance. Seemed the younger ones didn't know how, so had to pick somebody over 30. Floor was concrete, so tiresome to dance on - came back at midnight. Good lunch at 11, with the best cake he has tasted during the Army term. Hasn't made acquaintance with any "big" girls there yet. A nice one came to retrieve her sister and brother from his truck, but she didn't speak English and he no Dutch, so that was that. Another young girl there while writing named Allie, who with 2 others comes most evenings. Duty as orderly corporal started at 06:15, to roust 70 guys from 10 different houses, some who didn't return from dance until 02:30. worked at it 3 times and some never responded or showed up for 09:00 parade, so had to explain for themselves. Two good officers there now, which is good. Censorship is off. (Letter had pass stamp) Supposed to be on way for a month's stay in Berlin. So, things have to be smartened up, and some officers would make life not worth living, but currently ok. Went over truck with oil along with other tasks. Received some mess tins today with rain capes and stowed them away. Kids used to sweep truck out, but now have to do it. Lieutenant and Jack MacIntosh are tossing a football beside truck; a guy came for mess tins, another to turn in a sten gun and another to get service ribbon. According to news they will get more ribbons. Quite a few have volunteered for Burma and Army of Occupation, but he is through with that stuff. You asked about binoculars, but dare not snitch from inventory. Traded typewriter for

German film pack camera; said to be good one by guys. Typewriter would not have been portable: 18" roller. Invited to go for stroll, but on duty so can't. Received clipping of Looby - would be good if you visit him.

27-May-45 HMCS Kamloops: Nobody knows what's what - about us getting home. Others are in the same delay. Heard from Norman? News about holding 20,000 Canadians in Germany, but doubt it will be him. Saw sub mentioned in news, but could not tour or anything. Looked like Canadian ones, so nothing special.

1-Jun-45 Still rainy but clears up often enough for sun and our boys' ball game with Loyal Edmonton Regiment: beat them 9:1. Lectures every morning on re-hab and war service grants; today was Veterans' Land Act. Can wait 'til I get home, but interested in plans. If I buy farm outright from Dad, I could get the \$ in a year or 2, so interested if you are in favour. Max I can get is \$4800 for land and \$1200 for stock & equip. Would have to make down payment of \$480 and have 25 yr. to pay the 3200 @ 3.5%. Potential may be to pay off after 10 yr. Would be worth taking advantage of. Totaling gratuities and allowances, figures when he is discharged, he should get around \$900 cash or monthly payments of about \$60. Also have about \$1000 in savings? Lectures are good. Morning parade is 09:00 for inspection, then break to mess hall where either Lieutenant Ellis or Capt. Curliss take the topic of the day. Usually ends in general discussion. So far, have covered grants and gratuities, unemployment insurance, Veterans' Insurance, family allowances, university training, pensions, and housing plan for chap in the city. After parcel from Nellie, was telling her you might stop sending now, not that he doesn't appreciate, but they get a chocolate bar a day, which keeps them going. Not that he thinks a parcel won't find him: still expecting to be there maybe 'til Christmas. Brigadier left today: joining for Japanese war, gone to a course. About a dozen from section are going too - he is surprised there are so many volunteering. Heard the bombers are flying home from England, so Mervin and Nelson may be affected too. Would have been nice to have met (Nelson?) at Mervins', but glad he went on leave when he did. Over half of section have never had leave yet, and they are on hold for us being in this Berlin Brigade. Nowhere near Berlin yet - with rain, it's hard to keep trucks shiny, especially if being used. At least the ground is sandy, so not muddy, and can play ball after rains. There are 3 kids in to visit, standing and watching, so will quit until they leave - not supposed to be in here / guard must be slipping. (Later) Reading your air letter of 20th, received on 27th. Strange they cut up "Mike's" letter, since they are off censorship there.

5-Jun-45 Received a letter in response to one he wrote at that same location, so good to be up to date. Not in Berlin yet. Likes this town Nijverdal, although too quiet for some. Was invited to a house for some buttermilk: was good. Was playing with 6 yr. old girl in front of vehicle park; she lives across street: mother came to get her to bed and invited him over. Kids around are a good bunch that latch onto them when they go outside grounds. "Funny when you're walking along the street and some kid starts hollering Norm!" Had another Brigade dance with picture show at 6, dance started at 8:30, lunch at 11 and finished at 12:30. Enjoyed better than previous one. Tonight, Canadian Army Show who are going with them to Berlin put on a concert: mixed: 7 CWACs and 6 men. Christien Calkhoven just came in from across the street and wrote her name on the page: swell kid. Had an NCO meeting and invited suggestions: he suggested a group picture before they split up and it was done, so sending one. Taking a Canadian Legion Correspondence course on Livestock and Dairy Farming. Good for spare time: has sent in the first paper. Have a section softball team who play other units: rest go as cheering section. Officer gives them a truck every night to go to Almelo, a bigger town where there are 2 shows and a dance every night, so plenty of entertainment. Some men from Brigade are going home, as they volunteered for Pacific duty afterwards, so have a 1-month leave. Not sorry he didn't volunteer for that, so will get to stay home whenever it comes. Have a holiday tomorrow: 1st anniversary of D Day in France. Had a letter from Nelson, who doesn't expect to get home soon / not sure about his involvement in Pacific. Haven't seen Keith yet: 4th Div. is close, 3rd was a while ago, but have never been near 2nd that he knows of. Going for walk before bed. Hope they get some help for haying.



Newer uniform with "black tie and open collar" and (?) dance partner in Netherlands

15-Jun-45 Berlin trip was cancelled. Have moved 70 miles, from Amersfoort to Utrecht. Figured they would be losing the trucks there, so yesterday found a nice room with 3 closets and emptied truck completely, including bed. Finished that about 6, so was asked to take a load of boys to Utrecht, and agreed, because wanted to take the truck for a spin like that. Went to variety show that wasn't very good, put on by Belgians, so a few went to Canadian canteen and had their first Coca-Colas in a long time: tasted good. Took load again tonight, and came back to avoid leaving truck sitting, and to write. Picking them up again at 10:30. Has really enjoyed supper the last few nights: strawberries and milk: the best thing tasted in a long time. Constant hot stew and meat gets you down at this time of year. Cook traded some M&V (canned Meat & Veg rations) for the strawberries and looks like they should be able to get more. Received letter dated 2 June, so mail is good. So, Sgt Joe came to visit? His guess about release was likely close. This Div. will be going to England in a month, so that won't be bad if there is something to do. Now getting things ready to turn in: weapons, compasses, binoculars. Section is getting broken up: 8 either home or CFEF or the occupational force, and 5 more leaving Monday. Just had picture taken in time and will enclose one. Sun hasn't shone a day in the last week, and very few in past month. Locals are beginning to wonder about crops, but good for the strawberries! In a good building: plenty of room, cold running water, inside toilets, but no light. Downstairs room he is in was some kind of storeroom likely. Close to kitchen! Interesting morning: cook got them all up early because his watch gained a couple of hours. Normal breakfast is 7:45.

8-Jul-45(9 pgs.) Back from another swell leave spent entirely in Scotland. Left 2 weeks ago. 21 of us - 6 went direct to Glasgow and 4 came back together. had 10 clear days in Scotland. Not so pleasant 2 days on train going: one with cabin with no windows: cold. Visited Weetches and Goodsons. Mr. Weetch home after falling and breaking ribs and shattering elbow. Dad carried him around for a day to help, then worked in garden. Went with mates to what they hoped was a community dance at Kilmarnock, near where they had been stationed before trip to Sicily, but it was sponsored, so cancelled reservations and left. At Edinburgh, went to

a dance and met a girl from Leamington who was a fire watcher, and had a good time and visit. Was tiresome, but good overall and back to base in time for more mail, parcels and supper.

13-Jul-45 Regardless of what they told us, 17 of us came to 3rd Div. this AM and will be spending the rest of our overseas time with them. We hated to leave the old outfit, but might as well make the best of it. Are in a big building, not posted to sections yet. About 4 miles from 1st Brigade, so pick up mail there when moving. Had a parcel from church, including 2 tins of syrup. Hungry when arrived, so a guy brought out a cake & peaches, so with syrup was good snack. When returned from leave, found 600 cigs and carton of gum from Mitchell waiting. Trying to preserve for next trip to Scotland. Send box of stuff home - hope arrives ok. Hope you are ok / best can hope is home for Christmas - would like to have seen Mike. Am meeting quite a few guys he came to England with; they have the same points.

26-Jul-45 Now 25 yr. old. Returned from Brussels and was told he had to be orderly Cpl from 21-24, so sat in Admin office not doing much. Went to Utrecht at night for show with boys. Got birthday card and letter from 16th - you think I am getting home soon? If don't mind, pack little wrist watch and send registered air mail? Should be able to look after now: not banging around in trucks. Also, if don't mind: couple khaki dress shirts, pairs of brown dress socks, underwear and strap shirts, sock suspenders and braces? Lot of stuff, but might get good use of them with time remaining. Going on tour of Rotterdam and The Hague this aft. Tomorrow, put his name in to go to Amsterdam to see show "Meet the Navy", which Nelson may have seen. Group still upset with the transfer: 1st Div. Sigs the only ones so far to have posted men with <123 points to lower Div.'s and Sigs the only ones cross posted. Sending a page of Maple Leaf showing what guys are saying: bawl-up. Don't worry if can't send stuff.

2-Aug-45 Responding to letter of 25th. Caught him at bad time to ask what they are doing: yesterday morning picking up cig cartons, pieces of slate from roof, loose grass and twigs from around the kitchen. In afternoon sweep a stretch of road and clean up parade square. Work being done by companies in rotation and this their week. Annoyed because they just did it all a week ago. Another big allotment for leave in England coming: has enough \$ compared to others that he will apply, "just to get away from here". Latest rumour is it will be March before he gets home. 1st has been postponed several weeks. Is orderly Cpl every 3rd day this week: not bad, but have to stick around. Food ok, but would like more fresh fruit and veg. Don't let it get you down / just mad.

4-Aug-45 Going on leave again: 62 places posted and some of the 175 troops don't have enough \$, so decided to apply with explanation that he was just away, in case others deserved it more. Won't be sending more \$100 MOs, because now have potential to use the \$. Enclosing handkerchief he bought on recent leave to Brussels. Mrs. Weetch received your nice letter from April, but it was damaged by fire and delayed. Snap was stuck to envelope, but I had shown her the same one when there. She replied, which you may have. Was orderly Cpl yesterday, to supervise cleaning up outside. Went ok, by pitching in as usual. "slightly mollified to the general situation now Mother!"

August 6: Atomic bombing of Hiroshima and days later: Nagasaki ends need for 80,000 Canadians who volunteered, to serve in Pacific.

August 14: V-J Day

17-Aug-45 (8 pgs.) Writing in case you wondered if he was on the troop train that cracked up, since it was reported as men to and from Brussels. Writing from Glasgow Beaver Club, on leave. Spent a few days with Betty and her folks: good time and will do again if get the chance. Helped a crippled man with harvest; enjoyed, and Betty's 79 yr. old Grandad was doing about as much work as anybody. Cutting a field of oats 6' tall and all down. Two brothers: 1 on Fordson, 1 on binder, 1 raking grain onto table and 1 helping kick out sheaves. Cutting one way. Girls and he went to village dance and Monday night went with Betty to show in York. She misses Merv a lot. Stayed in London 1st 3 days. 1st night went to dance at Covent Garden. Provost

asked for a light. Dad mentioned he knew a Provost who might be around; discussed name Sgt Everett Martin: he was in house about 2 blocks away, so went and had a good visit. Had him for dinner and they went around together in afternoon. VJ was a good surprise, but not sure about bomb. Travel was busy after York, but wanted to get to Glasgow. Missed Weetches first night and when went to visit, only Margaret was there. Kept bed at club. Didn't follow up with Margaret, but went to dance at Club and encountered one of girls who had invited him to dance when they were based there originally. Had a good waltz. While left in time to catch street car, missed it for some reason. Walked her 1.5 miles home. They insisted he come in for tea and cakes and to spend the night, so slept well. Came back to town with her (Betty Welsh) as she is a short-hand typist. Slept well again: until about 11:30, being a holiday. Have 48 hr. extension to leave because channel is rough. Held up a day getting there due to train strikes. In better spirits now.



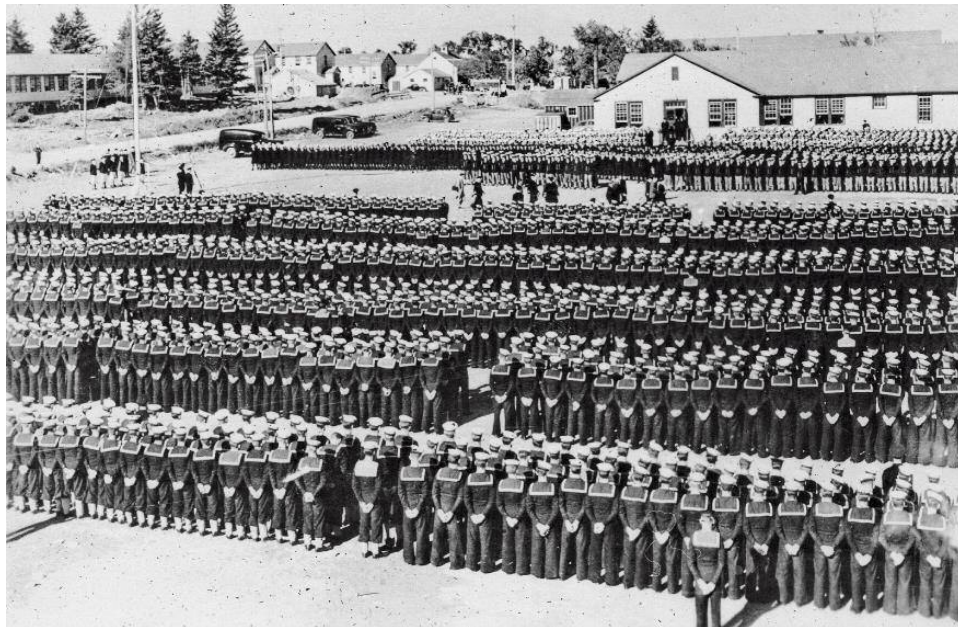
21-Aug-45 Just back from leave to find 12 letters, 2 Advocates and note to pick up registered parcel: the watch, which is appreciated and hope to look after it better than last one. Not planning leaves well: just had finished one "duty week" only to get back a few days into another! Sgts were glad to see him! Has something to send too - trying to decide to send or bring later. Glad Dorothy and new niece are doing fine. Likes Joyce Isabel name. Had a good night in Glasgow. Figured on meeting Margaret, but she was out, so went to dance and met a girl who came to Scotland with parents about 8 yr. ago. She had a girl friend and they seemed like nice pair. On way back, encountered 2 J sec boys who are now at 5th Div. Rode with them from Calais on all night train ride. Happy to have checked into good service for shoe repair at Glasgow and had oxfords resoled. Now that Japs have quit, Mike won't have to go? Still no sign of speed-up there, but things aren't as bad as they were. Just outside of Amersfoort. Keith is in town. Have electricity now with speaker rigged to a radio.

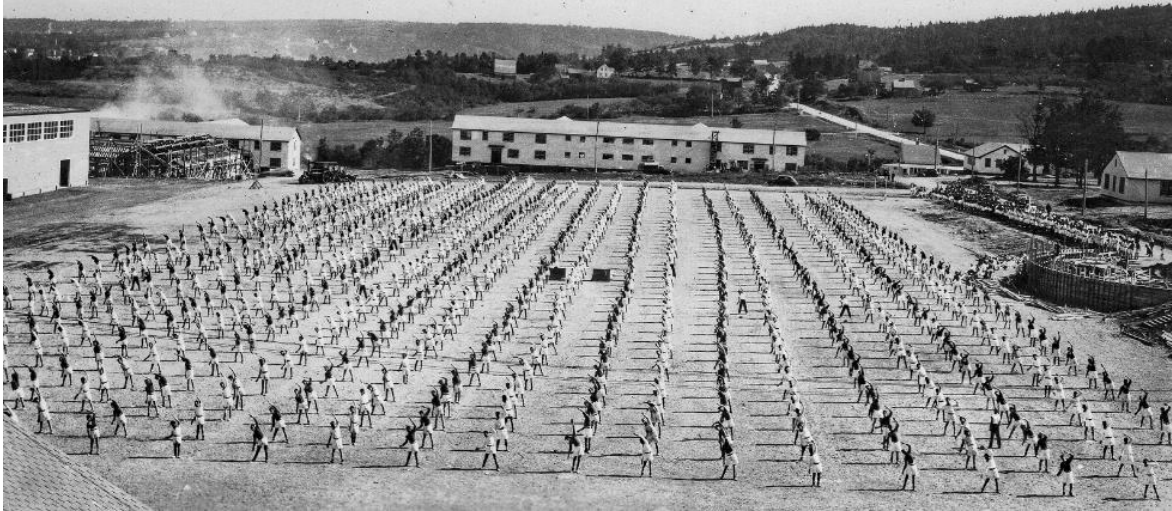
25-Aug-45 Responding to letter of the 16th. Orderly corporal for the day, and work is done. Good that threshing is done while Mike was home. Was telling some westerners about it and they could hardly believe as just getting ripe over there. Most of grain off where he is too. Wrist watch must have arrived just after he

left for leave, but not a big deal: he wanted it more for routines at base. Should have asked for it to be set before sending: loses 5 minutes/day, but not going to tamper with it there. Good news: Maple Leaf showed 1st Div. is finally getting under way: starting to move over to England. So even if not home for Christmas, hopefully will be there, where it will be good. Happier now than first went there - getting used to it or easier or both. Having the extra leave helped. No more now: they have to rotate every 3 months. How is Wayne coming along after argument with horses? Glad Nelson was able to help so much while he was home. Cliff Dows running employment agency again. Missing Margaret on leave not a big deal: 'just having a good time with ladies / nothing more. Two fellows ironing uniforms with sad irons and blow torches for heat, loud speaker on radio, and one playing guitar, so distracting, so signed off.

HMCS Cornwallis: large / city-size land base in Ontario HMCS Cornwallis

29-Aug-45 HMCS Cornwallis: Got there alright, but not impressed with the place. Have met guys from Kamloops, Teme, Robert, and Andree Dupre. One guy drafted to frigate - wanted discharge to get railway job while things are good. Quite a barracks with railroad station and highway running through it: they say between 10 and 15,000 troops. A big trainload comes in and goes out once or twice a day. So many...they go to shows, play baseball or go swimming - he is getting browned off for lack of work. Also have bowling, ice and roller skating. Meals aren't very good, and have to stand in great long lineup.





The last of Uncle Nelson's correspondence archived by his mother and preserved by kin: His next greeting must have been in person!



**Nelson C Dow (AB V16684)
Seaman**

2-Sep-45 "Tickled as a kid with a new toy" with parcel from 4 Aug. all was in good condition, and although he told them not to bother with more, he had finished his last maple syrup a week ago. So, you were worried about the train wreck? Betty and her aunt wondered if you would be; I hadn't thought about that. They were all fellows coming or going from Brussels on 72 hr. passes. Feeling happier lately: 1st Div. is leaving and potential for us in October. Things aren't bad: barracks cleaned up and 2/3 weeks fair time. Taking us on 4-day trip into Germany. Reports from those returning indicate it's tiring. Some good weather lately. Didn't get up until 10 AM, to find parcel and letters. A lot of guys like Art Kraemer getting married, but he waiting 'til home. Went to a Canadian Civilian Concert Party in Utrecht - was good: about 14 girls and 3 men. Sat in 3rd row and decided girls were ok compared to some. Hitch hiking back was over an hour. 3rd Div. has ferry truck, but doesn't leave until 11:30. Worked on a jig saw puzzle with a guy helping yesterday and almost didn't stop to eat. Shorts sent are just right. Everett doesn't figure on getting home until all the troops have left. Was hoping Mike might not have had to return so soon, but most of the work done.

In lieu of CFA 24
Canadian Army Overseas
LEAVE PASS

Pass No _____ Date 8 Oct 45
Number A 67833 Rank L/Cpl
Name DOW, W.N.
has permission to be absent from his
unit from 1700 hrs 8 Oct 45 to
2315 hrs 8 Oct 45 for the
purpose of proceeding to UTRECHT
ORDERLY
OCT 8
Orderly
Room
Stamp ROOM
(J.E. Morgan) Capt
.....O.C. 4 Company.....
Sigs 3 Cdn Div (Cda)

18Oct45 Responding to 2 letters at once, as he did last time. Has a sinus trouble, getting treatment 3x/day. Will likely go to dance tonight to watch, because if he goes to bed instead, he will wake when they return and have trouble getting back to sleep. Very little sun lately, barracks are cool and cold water for shaving. Getting homesick with long stay there. Meals not good. Don't need to send soap or chocolate, as it is easier to get there than at home. Latest word on return is only maybe for Christmas. Americans are upset with loss of 2 big ships. British have a lot of troops in Burma to bring back / been away longer than Yanks. Also have Queen Elizabeth to help. Hope you get the bulbs soon or it will be too late.

21 Oct45 (To sister Elsie) Too bad heifer was killed / at least saved some of it. Went to rugby game at Utrecht yesterday - was interesting. After supper was a show in mess hall: "Bring on the Girls", then tea for all. A lot of guys in camp, because no dance, remodeling or something. Got 3 letters written around the 15th.

Somebody blowing fuses for lights: too many irons and heaters plugged in. Sending 3 pictures; then won't have to carry them in about a month, hopefully. Haven't done a tap for 3 months.

26 Oct45 Pouring rain and only played solitaire after dinner, so need to write. Glad to hear on letter of 14th that bulbs arrived. Feeling fine again and went to dance last night. Dumpy for a week or so, with head ache all down one side. Movement order in for 3rd: start 30 Oct, sending 600/day from then to 15 Nov, when there will be about 4000 left to go. Rumour is the MDs will be last to go after cleaning up, so still unsure for Christmas, even with the QE. Aside from that there is a gale on the channel, holding up ships. Has kit ready to send, but keeping winter underwear because of current weather and unknown crossing time. Glad they are in good billets, with bad weather, and brick streets, instead of mud a year ago. Bought a \$50 bond and had sent to you; doubt you will see it before he gets home.

1 Nov45 (Includes piece of Maple Leaf newspaper) Update: bulk of 3rd Div. will be home for Christmas, but 3rd Div. Sigs go after the units, so not promising. Not as down hearted as it might sound: been kicked around for so long has got used to it. Copy of Maple Leaf enclosed for insight. Gen Simmonds was their Brig of 1st Brigade, 3 yr. ago, when they did a scheme at Inverary. Now has all Canadians in Holland. Visited them Tuesday. Friend Soderburg was in guard of honour. Simmonds spoke to him, seeing he had Italy ribbon, and didn't seem to understand or know about the group being cross posted into lower Divs. A lot of head colds around - no wonder with 1000 men in close quarters at this time of year. Yesterday was good weather, but today damp wind. Cleaned up and going to one of last dances tonight. Tickets are allotted and costs 10 cigs, some of which are free, so not costly. Letter from 20th arrived in a week and you received one as fast: like talking across the fence. You asked if food is stew: not usually now, but spuds boiled with skins, mutton or sausages either half rotten or spiced until they smell, carrots or cabbage and pears with skins for dessert. Apricots for variety sometimes. Breakfast: bacon, bread, jams and coffee, with porridge if you like it w/o sugar. Lately a change: 1 cook and 6 fatigue men on night: cook bakes (got some ovens) and men peel spuds, so better than before: potatoes taste better and scones for breakfast. Don't let this get you down - feeling fine. Don't send anything for Christmas, since probably will be moving. Had a quiet Halloween and wish Hazel many happy returns.

6 Nov45 (Air) Finally: waned for draft and given serial number: hooray! Nijmegen on the 15th, then usually 48 hr so England on the 18th. Still no guarantee for Christmas at home, but at least on the way. Was at dance last night and had a real good time. Got letter of 26th a few days ago and tickled that you sent gift to Weetch's. Silk stockings are the only thing. Mr. Weetch will be happy with anything. Haven't decided how to spend leave in England. May go to Betty's. So happy can hardly sit still. 'Seeing you! (Air)

10 Nov45 Counting days on 1 hand! Days not dragging: is orderly Cpl today: last time in this country. On Monday, have to turn out on parade with everything they own, to be moved to different rooms with fellows from own district. Monday night is last dance at Utrecht: most go / haven't missed many. Grim reports when not feeling good, but as Tommy noted at breakfast, leaving with no regrets. Some have girlfriends and have to say goodbye. Shouldn't have bothered with parcel, but be nice to get. For supper, had cheese, spam, potatoes and cookies with jam: not bad, but potatoes seemed sandy and cookies burnt on bottom. Will have to be careful at home not to get stomach trouble: a helping of maple syrup like used to gives heartburn. Chilly out, as if it might snow. Has 5 blankets: 2 under and 3 over, so ok. Std is only 3, but most have more. Wouldn't want to be one of 3 standing guard tonight - seems foolish. It would make a difference for fall plowing that you got the tractor from Harold. Likely suited Nelson well too. I hear he put it into the ditch in the corner field = blue air. Likely only correspondence now will be with you. Tell others will be a while to catch him.

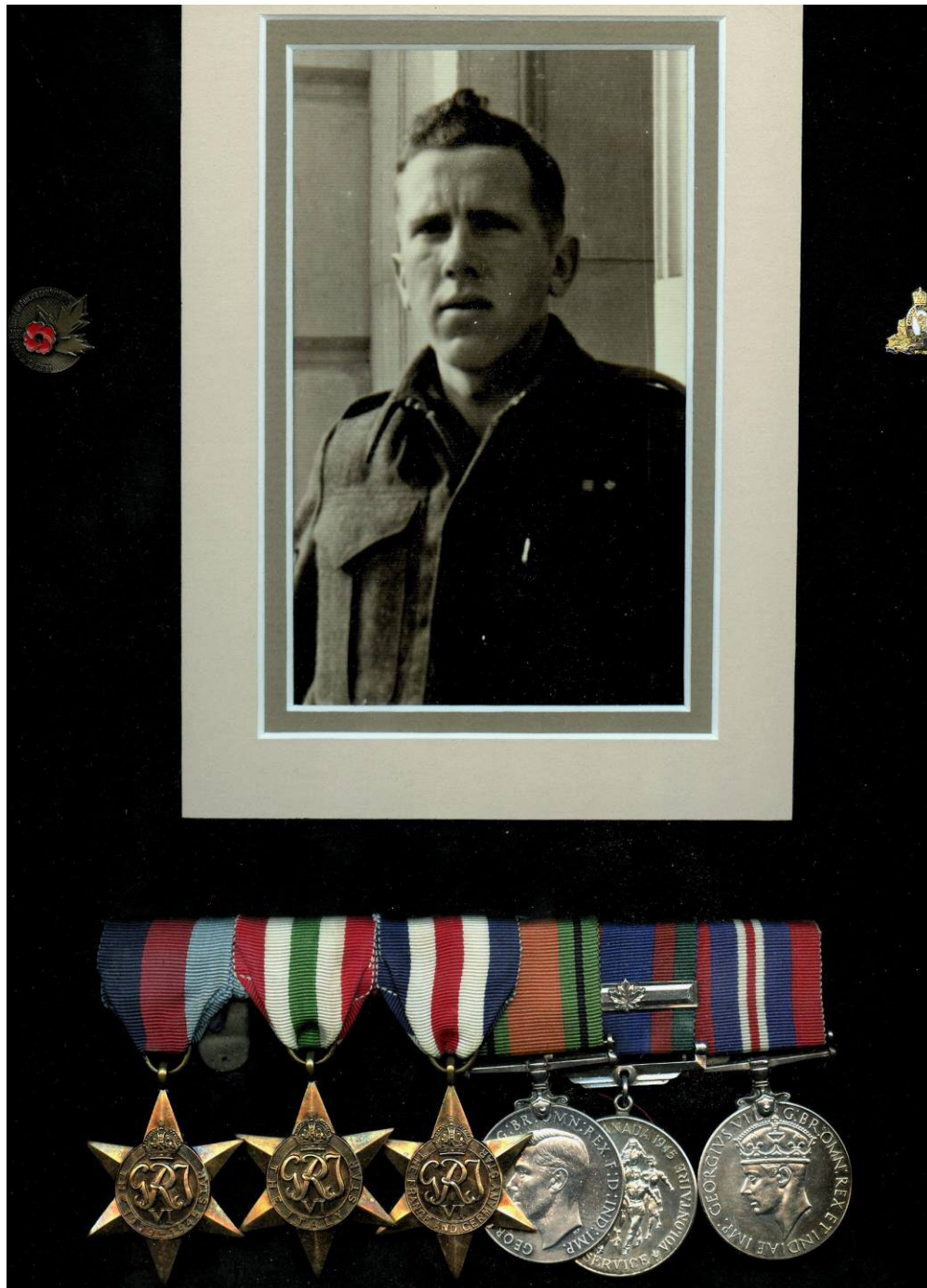
17 Nov45 In Nijmegen Rysat camp, last day in Holland. Glad to get away from here: sleeping in huts with 1 small stove, and full blast, have to crowd around it to keep warm. Meals are much the same as camp, but less. Considering numbers put through, it is well organized. Exchanged guilders to pounds and had last medical inspection. Art Kraemer with him in hut, and couple more Kitchener boys on same draft. Got a box camera from a guy / have 2 rolls of film, may try it in England. Should be in England tomorrow night and go on leave in 3 days. Will split half with Betty and remainder at Glasgow. Will likely have 2 leaves, and want to see

them. Not sure how long in England - they say maybe 4-6 weeks. Tell others to stop writing, but mail will catch us in England.

2Dec45 Just back from 10 days leave. Teamed up with Tommy for company leaving to Glasgow, and met another J Sec chum who is Sgt in Occupational Force. At Weetch's, missed Margaret, who was out with girl friend, so went to dance with Tommy and met nice girl and enjoyed dancing. At Weetch's, next day, went for walk with Margaret, then did a jigsaw puzzle with her and finished at 1:30 AM. Monday with Tommy, had tunics pressed and they did own pants with 26 lb iron. Went to dinner at Overseas Club where he used to stay and went to show. Went to show the next night with Margaret. She and Mr. Weetch came to station to see him off to York. Betty had a couple of letters from Merv, one saying Calvin and Gwen getting hitched during the winter. Told us this morning that we may sail on Lizzie next trip and either hit or miss Christmas. Have to stay there until Friday when will likely go on leave again.

16Dec45 (#10 Rysat Depot) Just got letter written on the 9th, and you got my last one in a week. They figure we should leave on the 20th, probably sailing the 22nd. Christmas on board, but at least homeward bound. Two ships mentioned / potentially on "Lizzie". Had another 7 days leave. Tired of long train rides, so didn't go to Glasgow, but had quiet time at Harpers' and rest in London. Likely last leave. Thanks for dandy parcel. Feeling guilty about chocolate bars because he likely gets more there than available at home. Appreciated cakes, which are gone and new tooth paste just in time. Keeping canned stuff and cheese for boat because of stories heard about food. Hadn't written in a week because of travel and laundry. Need to have kit bags ready to load tomorrow - told they won't see them again until after 30 days leave. Only to carry large and small packs. Want to pack my good uniform and wear my second one. Stop writing "as I should be following this letter fairly close. Here's wishing you all a Very Merry Christmas, and I'll be there myself to wish you a Happy new Year.... P.S. Get the old green suit aired out if it's still there, I'm going to want it!"





W Norman Dow (A67833)
Signalman, Driver/Mechanic: "J" Section: 1 Canadian Division Signals,
H.Q. 1st Canadian Infantry Brigade: Central Mediterranean Forces
L/Cpl, Store Man, Driver/Mechanic: 3rd Division Signals, #4 Convoy, CDA

Appendix:

Canadian WWII Service Medals

W. Norman Dow (1920-2017)

The 1939-1945 Star

The medal was awarded for six months of service on active operations for Army and Navy, and two months for active air-crew.

The Italy Star

The star was awarded for one day operational service in Sicily or Italy between 11 June 1943 and 08 May 1945.

The France and Germany Star

The star was awarded for one day or more of service in France, Belgium, Holland or Germany between 06 June 1944 (D-Day) and 08 May 1945.

Defense Medal

Although the medal was usually awarded to Canadians for six months service in Britain between 03 September 1939 and 08 May 1945, the exact terms were: Service in the forces in non-operational areas subjected to air attack or closely threatened, providing such service lasted for three or more years. Service overseas or outside the country of residence, providing that such service lasted for one year, except in territories threatened by the enemy or subject to bomb attacks, in which case it was six months prior to 02 September 1945.

Voluntary Service Medal

The CVSM is granted to persons of any rank in the Naval, Military or Air Forces of Canada who voluntarily served on Active Service and honourably completed eighteen months total voluntary service from 3 September 1939 to 1 March 1947.

Clasp or Emblem: A silver clasp with a maple leaf emblem in relief for overseas service

War Medal 1939-1945

The medal was awarded to all full-time personnel of the Armed Forces and Merchant Marines for serving for 28 days between 03 September 1939 and 02 September 1945. In the Merchant Navy, the 28 days must have been served at sea.

Canadian WWII Service Medals

Nelson C. Dow (1917-1981)

The 1939-1945 Star

The medal was awarded for six months' service on active operations for Army and Navy, and two months for active air-crew.

The Atlantic Star

The Atlantic Star was awarded for six months of service afloat or two months for air-crew service and was not awarded unless the recipient was qualified for the 1939-1945 Star by six months of operational service afloat or by two months of airborne service. Therefore, the total requirement was twelve months of service afloat or four months of airborne service.

Personnel qualifying for (the Atlantic Star,...or the France and Germany Star or two of these stars) ...OR (the Pacific Star ...), will be awarded only the campaign star for which they first qualified. They will, however, be awarded a clasp to show that they rendered qualifying service for a second star. A further clasp will not be awarded to those who rendered service which would have qualified for a third star.

The Pacific Star

The star was awarded for one day or more of operational service in the Pacific between 08 December 1941 and 02 September 1945.

Navy and Merchant Navy personnel are eligible if the 1939-45 Star is earned by six months service or if they entered the Pacific Theatre between 2 March 1945 and 2 September 1945.

Voluntary Service Medal

The CVSM is granted to persons of any rank in the Naval, Military or Air Forces of Canada who voluntarily served on Active Service and honourably completed eighteen months total voluntary service from 3 September 1939 to 1 March 1947.

Clasp or Emblem: A silver clasp with a maple leaf emblem in relief for overseas service

War Medal 1939-1945

The medal was awarded to all full-time personnel of the Armed Forces and Merchant Marines for serving for 28 days between 03 September 1939 and 02 September 1945. In the Merchant Navy, the 28 days must have been served at sea.

WWII Memories by Norman Dow: 22 January 2004

I was called up for two months of military training in March 1942. I went by train from Mitchell to Kitchener. We trained to march, look after our equipment and how to use the different weapons we might be issued with later. After a couple of weeks, I decided to enlist in the active army, which meant I was eligible for service overseas. In 1939, Adolph Hitler was conquering Europe and it looked as though we better stop him there before he captured the world (including us).

In May, I went to Kingston to become a signaller with the Royal Canadian Corp of Signals. (RCCS) I had asked to train as a driver, as I thought this would be the best training when I came home. I learned to drive four-wheel drive trucks with two speed axles and how to do basic repairs as well.

I sailed for the United Kingdom on Aug 8th on board the *Cameronia*; as I recall there were nine troop ships and eleven escort vessels (Destroyers, corvettes etc.) in the convoy. The summer of 1942 was the worst during the war for U-boats, but we were all protected. We were tacking continuously and we would see some of our escort chase a U-boat and see the corvettes roll the depth charges off, followed by a huge explosion.

Cameronia was a British ocean liner which was built in 1920 by William Beardmore & Co Ltd, Port Glasgow for the Anchor Line. She was requisitioned for use as a troopship in the Second World War, surviving a torpedo attack. In 1953 she was requisitioned by the Ministry of **Troop Transport** (MoTT) and renamed *Empire Clyde*.



We sailed right up the Clyde River to Glasgow, arriving Aug 18th. I found I was not a good sailor and after being seasick was glad to get back on land. We took the train for the south of England on the 19th and whenever we stopped people were telling us the Canadians had gone into Dieppe, so as we were supposed to be trained soldiers, we thought, oh-oh: here we go! However, such was not the case; we went to a holding unit south of London, for further training.

In Nov., I joined the outfit that I would be with until summer of 1945: "J" Section Signals, 1st Canadian Infantry Brigade, 1st Canadian Division at a village called Horan in Sussex County, England. Some of the fellows had been there since 1940, so I was considered a Zombie! We were supposedly guarding the south coast and doing further training at the same time; I was driving a wireless crew, who kept in touch with Div. HQ.

Probably at this time I should explain briefly how the Canadian Army was made up. We just had one Army, which consisted of two Corps: 1st Corps had 1st and 5th Divisions; 2nd Corps had 2nd, 3rd and 4th

Divs. A division was made up of 3 brigades. A brigade was made up of 3 regiments, while each regiment had 3 or 4 companies plus a headquarters. Our 1st Brigade was made up of the Royal Canadian Regiment from London, 48th Highlanders from Toronto, and the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment from Belleville area. There were various support groups attached to each brigade, such as our signals section.

In the spring of 1943, it was decided that the Brigadier General in charge of the brigade should have a Bren gun carrier at his disposal for such times as he wished to go nearer the front to confer with his regimental colonels. A carrier was an armoured track vehicle that would travel cross country and turn aside shrapnel and small arms fire. I was asked if I would train to drive this vehicle and I said o.k.

Before Christmas of 1942, we went up to Inverary in Scotland to practice assault landings and climbing mountains. That is what we were doing on Christmas Day! We celebrated on Jan 5th, I believe. In the spring of 1943, we were in the south of Scotland, getting ready for we knew not what!

We boarded ships in the Clyde in June 1943, and after we were well out in the Atlantic, they told us we were going to Sicily, off the coast of Italy. My carrier was in a LCM (landing craft motors), sitting crossways on the foredeck of the Glengyle, the ship I was on.

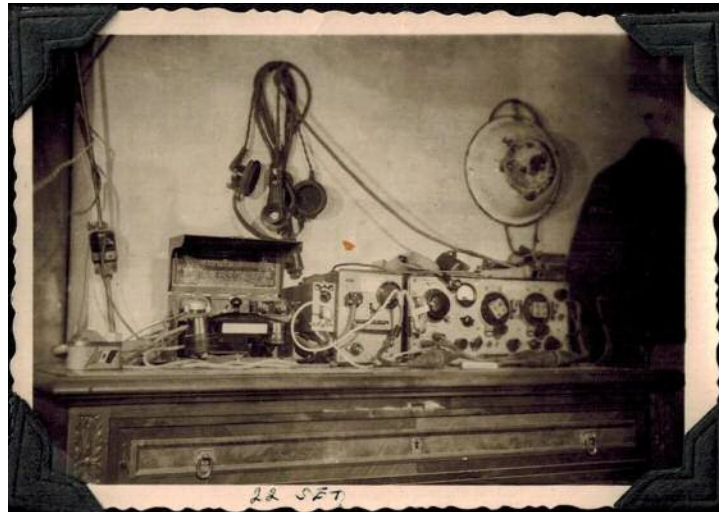


We sailed well out into the Atlantic, through the Strait of Gibraltar, into the Mediterranean Sea. It was lovely summer weather and as there were no females on board, we could sun ourselves nude, if we wished. Ours was a troop convoy and we were well protected again, but the slow convoys were not so fortunate. We lost most of our transport, including all my kit except what I had for going into battle. We sailed right around Malta and came to Sicily from the east (this was done to catch the enemy by surprise, which we did). We had a bad storm the night before we landed and I was very seasick.

We landed on the morning of July 10th 1943. There was a sandbar out 100 ft or so; my carrier was waterproofed to its top, so I drove it ashore and applied the brakes gently to heat them up to dry out.

As I said, I was glad to have the carrier, as most of the troops had to walk until the boys “liberated” enough Italian trucks to carry people.

The next few months were really the most interesting period of the war for me. The Brigadier would set up a forward command post, with a rep from the regiment in the line, plus someone from the artillery, anti-aircraft, engineers, and air support. Our wireless operator (who always rode in the back of the carrier with his “22” set by the way) would receive messages from our fellow wireless operator with the infantry, and the command post would decide who to call (by wireless) to bring down shells on the enemy who were holding things up.



I was supposed to keep guard that no enemy crept up on us, but I knew then what was happening, more than later on during the war.

The infantry walked miles in the 100-degree heat. One day, they were going single file when I decided to have a drink from one of the two 2-gallon cans I carried. A chap asked for a drink, then he kept passing the can along until it was empty, so I got the second one and they emptied it as well! I didn't mind, as I was a friend of the water truck driver and could soon get more.

Howard Graham was our Brigadier; Chris Vokes was Brigadier of 2nd Brigade. His carrier was sunk in the Mediterranean, so when they leapfrogged our brigade, he would ask me to go with them. One time, we were out 2 nights and a day and were getting hungry. He got out his emergency cubes and shared them equally with us, which I thought was decent of him. Another time, he wanted me to go, but I had sprained my thumb and asked to be relieved, so he sent his own driver second in command and wireless operator. They drove onto a mine at the side of the road, which blew the carrier up, killed the wireless man and seriously injured the other two. That was the last of that carrier, which was new when I got it. I was up past it the next morning with a jeep and it was not a pretty sight.

I was soon given another carrier, an old “desert rat” from Africa. (I forgot the mention that we were with the Eighth British Army by the way, and I saw General Montgomery several times.)

We went around Mt. Etna while we were in Sicily and I was near Mt. Vesuvius later.

We crossed the Straits of Messina on Sept 3 and were in continental Europe. The Italian army had no desire to fight. In fact, Italy soon gave up altogether. In some ways this made it more difficult for us; as enemies, they weren't bothering us much, and if there was a sniper or spotter up in a high building, we just called the artillery and knocked down the building. When they came on our side, we were asked not to do that and lost men because of it.

Before Christmas we were told that two of us could go to Naples on very short notice, to spend Christmas with the Americans. I was free at the time, so we crossed the Apennines in the back of a truck and arrived in Naples. I picked up a bad sinus cold and didn't enjoy my time there. We did see Pompeii, which was very interesting.

When we got back to our unit, they were just south of Ortona and it poured rain for two weeks. My mail had arrived with Christmas parcels and letters. I had been sleeping in a double slit-trench, with a pup tent over it, with a friend. I assumed he would be there if it started to flood, so climbed into my carrier and pulled the tarp over. When I got up in the morning, my friend had taken refuge in a building and my parcels were floating around in the water! I had three Christmas cakes, so the cook suggested we steam them for pudding, which we did! Our cook tent was floating around in the water, so we ate corned beef and hardtack that day.

Soon after this, the brigade was given an armoured office vehicle and I became redundant. I might have ended up in the infantry, who were very short handed, but our sergeant decided we needed a store man to look after the extra equipment of our seventy-odd men, so I was given a 60-cwt truck in place of the carrier. About this time, I was promoted to L/Cpl-Driver/Mechanic, with trades pay. I started out as \$1.30 / day, ended with 10 cents for L/Cpl plus 25 cents trades pay, for total of \$1.65!

From this time, I travelled more with the rear party and lost track of the day-to-day action. When Rome was surrounded, I had the opportunity to visit the Vatican, saw St. Peters and the Catacombs and was fortunate to have an audience with Pope Pius XII. He shook hands and gave us his blessing.

During the summer of '44, I acquired a baby pig, which I raised and moved along with us, first in a box in back, then in the cab, when it got too big to hoist into the back. Pigs are very clean animals and I don't recall ever having to clean up after it. We did attract attention, going through the towns as the pig had its hooves up on the dash! We butchered my friend and ate it for Christmas!

Early in 1945 the powers that be decided that the Canadian army should be all together to end the hostilities, so we assembled at Leghorn in Italy, crossed to Marseilles, France by L.S.T.s (landing ship

tanks), drove up through the Rhone Valley through Belgium, Luxembourg, the corner of Germany, and into Holland. The war in Europe ended May 8th, but because of a shortage of shipping, I didn't leave Holland until November. I went on several leaves to England and Scotland during that time.

I came home on the Queen Elizabeth liner, spending Christmas (my fourth away from home) on the Atlantic. I got in to London by train from New York on Dec 29th and was discharged in Feb at Wolseley barracks, London.

I read war stories and it makes me sad that so many fine men gave their lives, yet wars still go on and we don't seem to learn. (w.n.d.)