

October 29th 1943

Dear Mum and Dad,

PASSED BY
CENSOR

Thanks for your letter. I do love reading how things are back home so please keep sending me the latest news. Some of the guys don't get many letters so I always tell them what's happening back in Blighty. Don't worry Mum I skip the personal stuff. I cheered so loud when I heard Boz passed his exams. I had to explain to everyone else why I was so happy. They're happy too.

Things have been a bit lively here since I last wrote. You probably heard about Salerno. I thought we'd steam into port and be welcomed with open arms by the Italians. I was wrong. The resistance by the enemy was much greater than we expected. I wasn't part of the first landings and by the time my L.S.T. went ashore there were hundreds of boats, all steaming towards the shore while squadrons of lightnings droned overhead. It was really quite splendid.

Jerry fought hard and we were kept very busy for the first few days. My guns were near a battery of heavy A.A. and they were firing constantly. It was terrifically loud. My ears were ringing like a church bell! We captured some Jerry and they said it's the worst shelling they've ever seen.

Eventually we pushed the enemy back and were able to get a bit of a breather. There were even a couple of nights where I managed to get a decent bit of sleep. We got supplies of fruit, walnuts and grapes from the locals and fresh milk from a farm that had been converted into a medical dressing station. Not as good as your cooking Mum, but better than Army rations.

Wine in [redacted] now and the weather has taken a turn for the worse. It's wetter than that week we spent in Margate. Some of the men from the 7th Armoured Division rolled into town yesterday. They like to call themselves the Desert Rats. More like the Drowned Rats. Ha Ha!

Some Maori fellows from New Zealand have just joined the party here. I suppose they wish they were back in North Africa. I don't but I preferred the flies over one damned mosquito they have here. Maybe the colder weather will deal with them.

The towns we pass through have been heavily damaged by the war. Whole streets turned to rubble. It's heart-breaking, sometimes. But the Italians themselves seem pleased to see us. They clap and cheer in the streets when we arrive. One of them threw some grapes to me. Delicious!

The locals call the Jerry "teds" and some of the other men have started doing it, too, but I can't get used to it. It reminds me of that old bear we have in the attic. The Italians are a good bunch. Most of them seem as keen to get rid of the ted's Jerry as we are. One of the children gave me a drawing of a tank!

I don't think we'll be here much longer. I might even be home for my birthday.

[redacted] hope so! We'll be heading [redacted] in a couple of days so don't worry if you don't hear from me for a while.

Ambs up soon and I don't want to be last in line (again) so I guess I'd better stop now. Give my love to Charlie, Isabelle, Johnny and Jackie. And throw a stick for Boniver for me.

Love always

Danny.

P.S. Thank Auntie Janice for the pyjamas

They'll come in handy when we get into [redacted]

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[REDACTED] I hope so! We'll be heading [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in a couple of days so don't worry if you don't hear from me for a while.

Grub's up soon and I don't want to be last in line (again) so I guess I'd better stop now. Give my love to Charlie, Isabelle, Johnny, and Jackie. And throw a stick for Bouncer for me.

Love always,

Danny

P.S. Thank Auntie Janice for the pajamas. They'll come in handy when we get into [REDACTED].