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'C' SITE, Hut 9, RAF

Millom – Cumberland

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My dear Jack

I really owe you an terrific apology, for although I wrote you about three weeks ago, Anne notified me a couple of days after that you had moved and I've not written again til now as I was binding for Exams and couldn't settle down to letter-writing. So please forgive me, and take back all the rude remarks you've been thinking.

Well, the worst is over, and my finals finished on Saturday, except for a couple of oral exams next week.

I am not, however, feeling very happy, for although I did very much better than I'd anticipated in several subjects, the one vital item (at which I usually am pretty good) didn't go over as I hoped. Perhaps because I had a nasty cold (which hasn't left me yet) my brain was like cotton wool, I couldn't concentrate and I did bloody terribly. In fact, (and I hope I'm exaggerating) I will not be surprised if I flopped in it. And it'll be too bad to get a fail in that one subject and an average 80% for 6 others. In fact, if I do manage to take a dive, I'll never be able to hold my head up again. And I certainly won't remain in the RAF as AC<sub>2</sub> G.D. It'll mean an application for a discharge and joining the R.A.O.C. if I can.

Still, that's the worst, so let's hope for the best – and don't tell Anne of the way I'm beefing.

I'm very sorry about the disappointment and inconvenience that you're having through nose (or throat) trouble, and I hope that it is either very much improved by now, or that you'll be fixed up okay in hospital. When do you go in?

Conditions here have not been too good during the last month and the food has been absolutely disgusting. In fact, a week ago, complaints became [?] [?], that it seemed to have an effect, for a slight improvement has occurred.

Meat has been served up bad and stinking, and fellows have been to S.S.Q. as a result of eating it. Their own faults, for their noses should have warned 'em.

Tomorrow night (Tuesday) we have the Passing Out Dinner, a general custom at the end of a Course, when most of the officers, from C.O. down, are invited. It's costing 33 of us 10/- a head, with 16 guests. The two enclosures, joined, so that the worded one is inside, formed the invitations. All my own work, kind sir. The picture "Impressions of the RAF", was done in black and white and was 20" x 15". Created quite a sensation, and has been all over the camp. Now don't ask me for further copies, as they're 9<sup>d</sup> a time from the Photographic Section.

Enough of that!

Our Course, which has been extended a fortnight to get in back flying hours, comes to an end next Friday fortnight, when we go on seven day's leave, and we don't return here. Assuming that we have passed okay - pray for me pal! – and have wings and stripes (Yeah, three stripes, Corp!) we report direct from leave to an Operational Training Station. I believe that lasts about a fortnight or three weeks, assuming we last that long, and then, action! It is said that acting aircrews draw at least one pay ....

Curious that I'm least concerned about getting it in the neck, and all my relatives do the worrying!

Is there any chance of me seeing you when I'm on leave? I do hope so! I'll be in London two days – am not sure which until I hear from Anne – as I've a few visits to pay. Then other five (less travelling time) I'll be in Canterbury.

By the bye, if anything untoward should occur to me, Jack, Anne's going to be very, very unhappy, for she loves me much more deeply than I can ever deserve. So, should that quite likely event occur, you would certainly be able to get compassionate leave to go to her. Don't try and bully her out of being unhappy. She's very sensitive, and I know you imagine that women are built just like men. Well, they're not! They need sympathy and kindness. So treat her thus. And don't let her, or your family, ever raise any ridiculous ideas about her not marrying again. I'd want nothing better than to think that she could have a renewed happiness with someone else who would cherish her far more than I have done.

She'll have £500 insurance, so she'll be all right for a while from a material point of view.

By the way, this does not mean that I have any childish premonitions, for I'm not superstitious or religious, and I'm a terrific optimist. But as people make wills, just to save bother to others, so I mention the foregoing. Only don't say anything to Anne, because, like most dames, she imagines that death isn't a subject to discuss. I don't know why, since we all die sooner or later, and we can't live forever.

And as I'm on the subject, you bear in mind that I'm not an easy guy to get rid of, so should I ever be reported missing, don't assume death till it's in black and white, and even then take it with a pinch of salt.

And that's enough of that!

I hope the following, which has caused considerable amusement around here, will equally amuse you. And don't ever say that I'm not unselfish, for to write it all out for your special benefit is an act of martyrdom!

For your own convenience I'll start it on a fresh page.

And to fill up this ... don't take an example from my own sluggishness, but write me fairly soon, as if you leave it too long I won't be here.

I'll send you a portrait of myself (why?) if and when I get my stripes.

So carry on and read, and don't imagine any of it is an understatement.