

4 April 1944

(England, 6 hand written pages)

Dear Dotty, Sid & Judy –

Gosh, it's ages since I've written I know but here goes to make up for lost time.

Have received a couple letters from you – both some time ago – one to Camp White and the other to my New York address. Also received the nice birthday card – a little late but never the less good to get. So far have not received the stockings but expect they will arrive in due time. Had a very nice birthday considering all things – Ruth (my buddy) arranged a cake from someplace and she & another gal treated me to a movie in the afternoon. In the evening we went in a group to a Polish concert with party & dance afterward. Met a Polish officer who is an Ace having a large number of enemy planes to his credit & proved to be quite a boy. His take-off on our way of talking was something. At the same time met a boy in the RCAF who claims Edmonton as his home – lived out in Calder. Had a date with him the following Friday but guess he's gone now. Met an enlisted boy from Edmonton a while ago too.

Well, the newness of being here has worn off considerably and life has taken on a rather routine boring existence but will try to give you a few of my impressions & experiences.

Can't say I enjoyed the trip over too much. Found out I wasn't such a good sailor. Altho it never really got me down I was never comfortable inside and a couple times had to feed the fishes. Had a bad cold to add to the misery but I'd suffer again tomorrow just to get back.

Was pleasantly surprised to find on arrival instead of living in tents or old barren barracks – we billeted in a private home in what is supposed to be one of the nicest residential districts in the country – a famous peace time summer resort – still see plenty of fox furs strolling on the promenade. It is a very neat, orderly well kept place and the spring foliage & flowers are making it beautiful. The people where I live – as is true of most of them – are wonderful to me – they fall all over themselves to be cordial – bringing me tea without notice at frequent intervals – including before I am up in the morning (7 am) and before going to bed at nite. At first this was somewhat of an embarrassment knowing their tea & other food stuffs are rationed but they seemed so sincere is their insistence that now I just take it and like it. I try to reciprocate with some of my Post Exchange (P.X.) rations – such as chocolate bars which they've not seen for years. The kids of the district marked us at first asking for gum, candy, coins, etc. It got to be a racket & we have quit handing it out wholesale and the cry of "Any goom (gum), Yank?" has faded out.

My people have the cutest dog – a Scotch Terrier called Sooty. They sure go for dogs and are very fond of them. Next door where Ruth lives they have a Great Dane and with he & the indoors bomb shelter there is not much room left. (No – no air raids now – not even close).

One of the luxuries I enjoy is a hot water bottle in my bed at nite which is really necessary due to the extremely damp climate and poor heating (this due to fuel shortage and absence of central heating system, fireplaces & small electric heaters supply the heat & even their cooking is done in a contraption built in the wall and heated by a fireplace).

So far have not been doing any real nursing but have a strenuous training program which is getting very boring – having had the same thing a dozen times before. Am itching to get down to some real honest work & get back home. Am hooked for Chief (nurse) of a Surgical Team which calls for a change in rank status and of which I have been informed to expect but so far no official notice.

Have had several sightseeing opportunities which I have not passed by. Have visited some ancient buildings and old landmarks such as an old manor hall (Croxteth hall) built in the 1000's and still in a state of good preservation filled with antiques of various kinds such as old armor, spears, household articles. One can spend hours in a cathedral reading historical plaques and admiring the architecture. An old Roman wall was interesting – pretty well worn by the sands of time. Have been on pass to Liverpool where there is still much evidence to be seen of terrific bombing. Ruth & I keep changing our minds as to which of two places (London or Edinburgh) we want to go to first when it comes our turn for a leave. Think I shall choose London as I have a good chance of meeting my favorite cousin there (talked to him by phone today for the first time).

Recreation facilities are quite good altho that too is getting dull. There are dances someplace every night and the music is not too bad. Have learned some new dances (English). There are shows & movies (flicks as they are called) and stage. The "flicks" are at least 6 months old – my chance to catch up on some I missed while on maneuvers. The vaudeville is stinky unless one appreciates English humor which I can't. Pub (bar) hanging out has lost its novelty for me altho it seems to be the natives' favorite pastime (all classes). Just don't go for their brew which is warm & flat and haven't seen any of our own. Occasionally, one is lucky enuf to get a Scotch, diluted of course & expensive. Gin is more prevalent but can't go the stuff. Late hours are out on account of blackout (and it's really black). Pubs close at 1015. Dances at 1100. Last trains & buses at 1100.

Have had some varied dates. Two with our commanding officer to a couple command functions. Why should he pick on me! Just cause I'm short I guess. Wasn't too bad as he is a pretty good dancer. Ruth went with his assistant. We sure took a razzing from the gang tho. Then a certain 1st lieutenant who was our reception officer has been giving me the rush. He's quite a bit of fun but he's getting ideas so guess I'll have to put my foot down. Another date and this will really slay you – was a blind – friend of an English Naval captain friend of Ruth's. Turned out to be a Captain in a Scottish Regiment and appeared in full regalia including kilts. Would have fainted if one of our unit had happened in to the same place.

Then we have our own Officer's Club but it is rather small & not too inviting – but close in and a smelly, stuffy room up above one of the local pubs.

Quite a few have gone in for cycling and have purchased bikes of their own. Am endeavoring to learn to ride one myself so far at the cost of a well-skinnd knee, numerous bruises & a couple precious stockings but am improving. It is really the quickest and most dependable way of getting around here.

One of the girls wanted me to go horsebacking today but it was too damp & cold & besides I've got a lot of letter writing to do.

Gosh, this has practically developed into a book. Think I've pretty well come to the end of my adventures here.

Saw today where Canada is calling in more recruits. Am wondering if this catches you, Sid. Am glad to hear that Doug & Isie got together again. How are the Tuesday nites coming along?

I expect by now Judy is running all over and has several more teeth. Would surely love to see her. Have been looking around in the shops for something to send her and you too, Dotty. The things I'd like to buy are rationed but someday I'll run on to something & send it along. One sees a great many babies here – on the whole the healthiest, best dressed bunch of brats you've ever seen. A lot of them evacuees I understand. They push them around in their prams until they are old enuf to graduate on to a bicycle at which time they appear more puny.

I expect you've been going to town on the spring sewing. Oh, for the day when I can blossom forth into a frilly frock again. Maybe it won't be too long.

In conclusion I'll quote a couple stories – one nice one – good if you get the right inflection and the other – well, I've debated whether I should put it down.

No I – The Story about a Girl

She got up in the morning, put on her robe, went downstairs, raised the blinds, took the cover off the parrot, went out into the kitchen, put the coffee on & lit the fire. Just then the telephone rang and the boy friend says "Hi-ya, baby. I'm just in off the ship. Fix yourself up. I'm coming right over." She hung up the phone, pulled down the blinds, took off the coffee & turned out the fires. She then came back into the living room, put the cover back on the parrot and began slipping off her robe. As she started up the stairs, the parrot called out after her "Chur-r-r-iss, this sure has been a short day." Ha! Ha!

No II – Do you know what the cow said to the bull? If you don't give me that red paint there will be a shortage of veal next winter. (Explanation – meat ration stamps in the U.S. are red.)

Wonder if the censor enjoyed that one.

Think I've said enough.

Hope I hear from you real soon.

Happy Birthday, Sid. Wish I could be there for the celebration.

A peck on the cheek for Judy and
Love to all of you,
Maysie

[note on back]

Have been in France for sometime now and the novelty of being here has worn off. However like it better than the boredom spent in England. At times have been extremely busy but not for some time now. Business is steady however. Nursing here is certainly a far cry from a stat. Hosp. Or even maneuvers. The cases are much more severe & the boys much more appreciative. For a while we felt like regular vagabonds moving our tent city every few days but had to keep up with the boys. We're in one hot spot for a term there we experienced a real blitz. Have enjoyed seeing the beautiful French scenery except for the destroyed towns of course. The French really gave us a real welcome.