

Educational Package

Lachine P.Q* .

12 Dec/44

My dear Elinor,

We arrived in Lachine on schedule on Sunday night & were immediately assigned to airmen's Barracks which looked as if they hadn't been cleaned since the war started. However, that has now been changed a lot & with a few exceptions we are eating & sleeping in moderate comfort.

Very little is going on & we have no idea how long we will be here. It does not seem likely I will spend Christmas at home.

It was with a feeling of the greatest tenderness towards you that I said "good bye" & I fully appreciate the difficulties of your situation & the load you have to carry. But after 14 years I know you are made of good stuff & will see things through with your usual aplomb, poise & philosophy. So keep a stiff upper lip, & - as I said before - when it is all over we will both be glad this happened.

Try & take the remaining 4 pictures on the roll & if they are good send them to me as quickly as possible. It would be a good idea to send me some cigarettes too, as I understand they take a long time getting started. Possibly Blanche & Ken or Marion might be interested in sending some American cigarettes too.

If I were you I would ask Amity to put a lock on the new door & put up some shelves for you. He could also move the ice-box over 3 inches & cut off the projection of the bench it is standing on.

Have Nick clean my paint brushes properly & put them away. And please keep the key of the workshop under your own personal 'supervision'.

I think Nick or Ken should also be able to put the plywood cover over the entrance to the unfinished room. The screw-holes are all there. Tell them to use small 1 inch screws.

On Monday night I had dinner & spent the evening with Maud & Bruce. They have 2 little girls now, one 2 years & the other 3 months! It was nice seeing them again.

Write me as soon as you like, c/o R.C.A.F. Overseas.

Look up some of my old letters & let me have the last address & married name of Mollie Steane.

Write regularly & start numbering your letters.

Love & kisses to you all. Ted XXXX

Letter #1 26 Dec'44

My Dear Elinor,

Well, we got here alright but just too late for Christmas. We spent Christmas day on the boat waiting to be disembarked & arrived at our destination this morning. We had to sit up all night & the train was unheated. The weather is exceptionally cold for England & consequently everybody is thinking wistfully of hot radiators far away.

I sent mother a telegram announcing my arrival, but cannot find out just when I will be able to see them yet.

There is very little bomb damage visible & the people all look well dressed & well clad. After I have looked around of course I will have a better idea of how the country has changed.

The ocean voyage was reasonably comfortable (for the officers) & the food excellent. The sea was generally like a millpond. Very few people were sick & naturally I was not one of them. Will write you more details soon.

Much love Ted xxxxxxxxx

Letter #2 28 Dec/44

My dear Elinor,

I suppose you received my first letter O.K. You will notice I am numbering mine & would suggest you do the same.

Educational Package

Also make a note of when mine arrive so I can have some idea as to the elapsed time.

We arrived here in the midst of one of the coldest spells this country has had in years, & although the temperature was actually only about 15o above, it was much more uncomfortable than 10o below at home. Of course the amount of heat available in homes & quarters is very limited & inside temperatures would break your heart. I purchased some long woolen underwear & feel much better with it on today. However my hands are still a bit stiff with the cold & my writing is consequently suffering. Going to bed in these cold rooms is quite an experience. In fact I am sure that the most courageous thing I ever did in my life was to get into bed the night before last. The second most courageous thing was getting up yesterday morning.

The natives still walk around quite cheerfully without gloves, & the WAAFs ((W.D.s) work without sweaters with their sleeves rolled up to the amazement of us newcomers.

Food at this place is much better than we expected & there is plenty of it. If I continue to eat as much as the climate requires I will probably put on weight again.

This station is located at a holiday resort on the South Coast & is a beautiful spot. I don't expect to be here more than just a few days. So far I have not been able to get home (ie - to Mum & Dad), but am hoping to do so tomorrow.

There are lots of things I want to write to you about but conditions for writing are not very good, so I will just scribble you little bits at frequent intervals until I get settled down some place.

I am looking forward to hearing from you & to receiving some pictures of you & the boys. Give each of them a big kiss for me & tell them I am thinking of them every day.

All my love, Ted. XXX XX

#9 (not counting the ones to the boys) Jan 20/45

My Dear Elinor,

It was really nice to get your first letter this week & also the one from the boys. So far that is all I have received & I have already replied to them by air-mail. Don't forget to let me know when my letters arrive, so I can get an idea whether it is worthwhile using airmail from this end.

Try and get after the gang to write me the odd note. My two little successes at the Post Office to date look pretty miserable compared to the abundance most of the other chaps are getting.

— Especially since we have to stand in line hopefully every day to see if there is any.

The weather is remaining cold although the temperature is high compared with Ontario. We all caught colds immediately on arrival and in spite of repeated bottles of cough medicine we still have them. They are just beginning to break up.

This together with the backache we accumulate from walking so much in order to keep warm, has prevented our stay here so far from being altogether pleasant.

In spite of my former impression, hard liquor is almost unobtainable in bottles, & in the pubs, when it is available is very expensive. Beer on draught is quite plentiful, although it is very watery & also expensive. One hotel here has some good ale on draught at 75c a pint. So far I have had no need to buy many meals out, but they are also very expensive.

I will have some difficulty in making ends meet, unless I happen to be posted to London.

However, our trip here has been quite successful. Since arriving we have taken Warsaw & almost captured Budapest.

One thing I want you to do for me right away. Phone Miss Robertson or Mr. Myers & ask them to send me a few WOODEN INSERTS for my BRIGHAM PIPE. They will know what you mean. Ask them to send them by the fastest mail.

What is the probable date of arrival of arrival of J.K?

My regards to everybody, & love and kisses to you & the boys.

Educational Package

Keep the mail rolling Love Ted. XXXX

Jan 20th 1945

My Dear Kenny,

I was very happy to get your airmail letter (and Nick's) yesterday. I hope you will write to me very often. Then I will know how you are getting along and what you are doing.

By the time I come home I suppose you and Nick will both be expert ski-ers.

From where I am sitting now I can see the sea, with the sun shining over it. In the background a long piece of land is sticking out and pointing towards France, which isn't very far away. This is a very beautiful part of England.

You would notice quite a difference in the boys over here, if you could see them. They dress a bit differently - most of them still have bare knees (in January), and they look quite a lot cleaner and are much better mannered than most of the Canadian children. All of the Canadians here notice this. What do you think the reason could be?

I am getting plenty to eat, but miss a lot of the good food Mummy used to get for us. We get butter (or margarine) only for breakfast, and no milk at all to drink, just a little powdered milk on our porridge. We have one egg a week - for Sunday breakfast. Yesterday I bought 2 oranges, the first ones I have seen since we got off the boat.

What do you think we often get for breakfast? Baked beans! I like them too.

Did you or Nicky put the cover over the little doorway in Mummy's bedroom yet? Use 3/4" or 1" screws.

Kiss Mummy and David and Nick for me. Here is a big one for you X. Good bye son. Love from Dad. XXXX

#14 9 Feb 1945

My dear Wifey,

I have just returned from a very enjoyable 48 which I spent in London. It came up all of a sudden & of course I grabbed it. I arrived there on Tuesday night & went home, where we drank some mild ale & talked till two. Next day I rose early & went over to see Molly Walker (née Steane). She has mellowed with the passing years & we had heaps of things to talk about, such as her children & mine. We went down to the West End in the morning & I did some banking & then we took in a lunch at a Chinese Restaurant in Soho. But the food didn't begin to compare with the fare we enjoy so much in Elizabeth St. However, it was a welcome change. After lunch we sped off to Knightsbridge & delivered the Xmas present to Jack Marquis - who became a Group Captain the previous day! Tell Betty he is looking very fit & Molly thought him most attractive. We had a nice chat & arranged to get together next time I am on leave.

After that we went to see the acres of dereliction around St. Pauls & on thro the "City" where I used to work. It is much the same but not as many people about. There are still the odd silk hat, hundreds of umbrellas, black coats & striped trousers. Then we took a bus to the East End & looked at the destruction in that crowded poor-working class area. We viewed the results of a V2 which had dropped just a few days previously. It was pretty awful, but not quite as devastating as I would have imagined. Berlin probably looks a lot worse, but it certainly makes you mad as hell to see what modern warfare can do.

Afterwards Molly came home with me for tea & then we went to spend the evening with her brother & his wife & we talked & discussed for hours & hours. Next day I took Mom out to look at my old habitat & more bomb damage (half of one of my old streets is gone, plus most of the neighborhood). I stood in the train all night & arrived in camp this morning at 8 o'clock. So I'm pretty tired, but feeling better after the break. Will write you tomorrow again.

Love & kisses Ted XX XXX

#35 11 April /45

Darling,

Educational Package

I walked in the door tonight with your parcel under my arm & was greeted by the excited news from the family that we are now the proud parents of a baby girl!

Your cable to Mum arrived this afternoon & mine is still probably trying to find me.

Congratulations honey & I do hope you are O.K. & didn't have a very rough time. You must be relieved to have that over - & a load has also gone from my mind.

Mum & Dad are delighted that it is a girl. We are now waiting to hear what you decided to call her. I hope Betty doesn't mind too much. You will of course tell me all about how heavy & how long & when it happened etc. What do the boys think about having a baby sister? Bet she'll be a tomboy.

Mum & Dad & Nell are just getting ready & we are all going out to drink to your health & toast the new daughter. We have just had a piece of the fruit cake which they treated as birthday cake & wished as they ate.

They so much appreciate getting the cable. As it happened I had to go away yesterday & wasn't able to tell them, & so this afternoon they were quite worried as they didn't know if I'd be home tonight or not, or where I would be. My movements are most uncertain still.

How I wish I could drop in & squeeze your hand & pat your head. Take good care of yourself sweetheart.

All my love & kisses, Teddie xxx

May 7/45

10 pm

#45

My Dear Elinor,

Today is the eve of VE-Day & most everybody is celebrating. All day in London crowds of people were standing around waiting for the announcement which was expected this afternoon. However none came & tonight it has been proclaimed that the big unconditional surrender of Germany to the United Nations is to be celebrated tomorrow.

I had a 48 over the week-end which I expect will be my last before leaving England. I had to get all my kit re-sorted & re-packed & brought down here, & in view of the excitement in London I was afraid I would be unable to get to the station. However after much searching we found a taxi & I left at 3 o'clock this afternoon. Just now I went out to the local pub for a beer & everybody & his brother (& grandmother) appeared to be there. The handling of the announcement of VE day has not been very good & tomorrow will be something of an anticlimax I'm afraid. However it is wonderful news. I did not feel much like drinking so returned to camp after 1 pint. I could not help thinking of Jack & Ken Blais, Dick Steele etc. etc. There is much work to be done on the political home fronts to ensure that their sacrifice has not been in vain. I am not too happy about the leadership which is being given the people here in England by the Labour Party or at home by the C.C.F. Yesterday I attended a May Day Demonstration in Trafalgar Square put on by the London Trades Union Council from which the Labour Party had typically withdrawn at a late date. It was a huge affair one of the speakers being the leader of the Paris Resistance movement.

The military task is done, mine now will be to assist in the complete elimination & disbandment of the German Air force. And so to bed. Love to all our friends & special kisses for you & the wee bairns.

Teddie XX XXX

May 10/45

#46

Educational Package

Darling,

Well today is the day after the V-day celebrations & I hope you were able to do a little yourself - with due regard to your condition. We were standing-by & I thought first of all I would have to celebrate in camp, but later I was able to get away yesterday. I managed to get to London to a bit of a party my old girl friend Vera's boss was putting on. There were lots of people there including an Australian Navigator & a RAF observer who had trained in Ontario. There were 2 Greek aeronautical engineers & sundry others. The old man had a good supply of scotch & gin & beer & we had a lot of fun. Before things got going we went up to Trafalgar Square, Whitehall, the Mall & Buckingham Palace along with about 10 million others. We saw the Royal Family appear on the balcony & wave graciously to the assembled multitude. You have no idea how hysterical a British crowd can get when they see the King & Queen!

I had hoped to get out to see Mum & Dad but travelling was almost impossible & I did not know if they would be in or not. Big bonfires were lighted everywhere & all the pubs were filled & crowds drinking outside on the sidewalks. As long as you had a glass you could get a drink.

3 large envelopes arrived today from the Teheran Club enclosing some Tribunes, National Affairs Monthly & a pamphlet on the "Races of Mankind", which were very welcome. Your letter of April 23 came yesterday - the one you wrote on your arrival home. Glad you are feeling good & like the baby. I hope you were able to keep Isabel for the other week. You didn't say if you received any of my letters while you were in the hospital.

I wrote to Jimmy a couple of days ago & will try & catch up with my other letters as soon as we settle down.

All my love honey - Greetings to the gang! Teddie XXX XXX

√ ENA Holland

May 18/45 (Friday)

#48

My Dear Elinor & Boys & Jackie,

We landed at Ostend yesterday & have been driving ever since except for intervals for sleeping & eating on the roadside. This consists of rolling oneself up in a couple of blankets in the back of a truck full of equipment, or trying to make a meal for the whole outfit out of inadequate tins of food & biscuits. This week has been pretty strenuous — rising at 3, & 4, & 4.30 on Tuesday, Wednesday & today, sleeping in yesterday until 6.30 on the boat.

Today we passed through some beautiful parts of Belgium & Holland, as well as through some blitzed areas that have been bombed & shelled by both sides & fought over fairly recently. This evening we really had a break arriving in a town where there is a large Canadian Army "Leave Transit" Camp & we were able to arrange to stay for the night. I just had a shower & a good meal & a haircut, & feel even if I do not look like a new man. I noticed all the other officers shaving also, but this was not necessary as I contrived to do so this morning at a quarter to five, in cold water out of an old biscuit can & Nicky's metal mirror! (Standing on the top of a ditch by a highway). I also managed to clean my shoes. So you can see I haven't changed a great deal yet. The camp aforementioned which we are in tonight is one of the best set-ups

I have yet seen & I am proud of being Canadian today. The Army admitted us all, provided beds, blankets, showers, food, barber, writing rooms, movie etc. for officers & men & were glad to do it. The Dutch people are extremely friendly, clean & well dressed & apparently well fed. Their homes & gardens look delightful & the girls look like Americans - from quick glances as we drove by. The men dress somewhat differently. I have chatted to many groups of children, blonde & blue-eyed - universal friends. I snapped some poorly dressed ones in clogs on the border of Belgium as they gathered around our outside cooking facilities collecting candies.

How are you all? All my love & kisses Teddie

Educational Package

Holland

(nr the German border)

May 20th/45

#49

My Darling & family

We have now got to the interesting part of our trip, and while our entrance into Germany has been temporarily delayed, it will not be for long. We sailed from England on one of those tank Landing crafts of which you had seen many pictures - especially around D-Day last year. You know the kind that look like giant fish, and open their mouths to disgorge the vehicles hidden within.

Our crossing was perfect on a hot sunny day. Embarking and dis-embarking was delayed for hours and we took a long time getting over as shipping is still convoyed in view of the danger of mines & the several hundreds of U-Boats still unaccounted for.

While waiting for unloading we were interested in the Belgian skyline, and watched work parties (probably German prisoners) exploding mines along the beaches. After dis-embarking we stood for hours in the rain waiting to start out by road.

We arrived here yesterday and expect to remain for some days. The drive through Belgium and Holland was interesting. The people all appeared scrupulously clean (especially the Dutch) well-clad and well-nourished. All along the exceptionally good highways and towns women were constantly washing and polishing windows and sweeping and sprinkling the sidewalks. The houses are cute and pretty and the children delightful.

We came through some of the worst devastation imaginable. Most bridges have been blown and have been replaced where necessary by the Army engineers. Arnheim - where our paratroopers took such heavy losses - has taken a terrific beating. The whole civilian population has been evacuated. The destruction is unimaginable and most of the city looks as if it should be shovelled up and started all over again. It would normally be a beautiful modern city with good homes and buildings and beautiful squares and parks. In some of these public gardens which we passed there were gorgeous banks of flowering rhododendrons, magnificent beds of roses of all colours, growing grimly amid the ruins. Outside Dutch patrols of armed civilians (patriots) stopped all civilians entering the city. Groups of collaborators passed us under guard, women with shaven heads, etc. Some of our boys saw a house of a collaborator in Ghent (Belgium) which was being emptied and the furniture burned. The owner was stabbed to death the previous day.

Nijmegen from which I wrote you on Friday has also taken an awful beating.

There is nothing in the stores here and no beer. We have no mess or canteen and consequently can spend no money.

We eat out of mess tins after which we have great trouble getting them cleaned again.

We are in an aerodrome built by the Germans in 1941 by slave labour. It must have been a marvellous place before we bombed it and they added their own demolition before quitting. They were here a few weeks ago. They obviously built this place including the buildings and quarters to last the 1000 years Hitler's Nazi Reich was supposed to stand.

While we are still in Holland, the population is reported to be hostile. We are all armed, and maintain guards at all times. Dutch patriots are also patrolling our roads and barriers.

It is obvious that the people here fraternized with the Germans willingly. Of course all the Dutch population look like the typical conception of a German.

I am impressed by all the children I have seen. They do the same things, play the same games and behave generally exactly the same as ours. Children are universally the friends of all. In Germany it is proposed to prevent the fraternization of troops even with children - such as giving candy, gum and chocolate bars. If this is enforced, what do you think the rising generation in Germany will be like? Find out from our friends what they think and ask what Canadian popular opinion is on this aspect of the non-fraternization policy.

Educational Package

So far I am rather depressed at the way our organizing efforts (if they can be called that) are going. The vast majority of our officers are permanent force types with whom I have little in common. Leave is going to be mighty important to me from now on.

There is a lot I would like to say. Maybe some of this will be censored anyway.

From here it is believed ordinary letters will go as fast as the blue airmails. This will be posted tomorrow (the 21st). Let me know particularly when it arrives. Stamps are difficult to get, and this kind of letter is better if they go as fast.

I am now in charge of our postal services while we are proceeding to our destination and I expect some mail will be coming through in about 3 days. How I am looking forward to it!

Pass on the story to everybody and ask them to keep on writing and sending clippings etc. I managed to write to Jimmy and Lil a week or two ago. Life is not comfortable or easy, but is adding to my life experience. How's the garden?

Tell the boys I am proud of them and to keep up the good work. Kiss the baby and them for me. A great big one for you - All my love, Teddie.

Brussels

Sunday night

May 27th

Darling

I just received a letter from you - the one you wrote on VE Day. It was really a treat to get some mail again. It was interesting to note that your feelings re celebrating were very similar to my own. I hope Betty is not taking things too badly. For my part, while there seems to be so little I can do, & while there is much confused thinking & crackpot ideas floating around me, I am more than ever resolved to do everything in my power to help us reach the goal for which Jack & the others gave their lives.

Things have been very active lately. A few days ago I was left behind in Holland with a few office trailers (which I described to Nick) & trucks & a rear party of airmen. Meanwhile our fairly large staff set out for Celle in Germany, 15-20 NW of Hanover. Here they set up camp under canvas.

Yesterday I had to close up shop & bring the remainder over on my own. We set out by road at shortly after six in the morning & as I was the only officer I led the small convoy, driving a 15cwt. truck myself. You would have probably laughed to have seen me with battle-dress, heavy army boots & revolver & ammunition pouch slung around my waist, finding my own way for 200 miles through Germany. Of course road maps mean nothing because roads have been mined & shelled & half the bridges are demolished — which means trying to find a course from town to town. Knowing no German didn't help & for miles we would often see no British or Allied troops. The people generally ignored us, most of them are scared of us, but some smiled & waved — which we ignore.

The little children wave & smile & when we stopped to cook our lunch by the side of the road they started to gather & watch. They said nothing & asked for nothing — just watched. By the time we were through there were 20 of them. This was out in the country.

Halfway to Hanover we got on the famous Reich Autobahn which is like the Niagara Highway only a bit wider — 4 lanes of traffic with a grass boulevard in the middle. The countryside we passed through is magnificent & the crops looked excellent. Women & children & old men are the usual farm workers — & I do not think this is necessarily a result of the war.

Some of the cities are completely demolished — unbelievably so. Especially Osnabrook. The roads everywhere are dotted with refugees going in both directions. German army & air force personnel stand bewildered in all the towns, dirty & tattered — with some exceptions. They all present a stunned appearance. German police are on duty directing traffic etc. in most places.

Educational Package

We are now living in a spot reminiscent of N. Ontario — in a complete tent town. My office & bed are in a tent, together with phone & electricity. We just put it up last night — we got here about 5.30 in time for dinner & then worked until 12. It is now nearly 12 again & I have been busy all day.

Tomorrow I expect to be pulling out of here for a trip around another part of Germany by road. This might take a week of two & will be quite an experience, although I am really getting tired of moving about. I expect to be largely in the area occupied by the US Army.

We are reasonably comfortable & the food is not at all bad.

The job of disarming & disbanding the German Air Force is going to be different from what was expected. How long it will take is anybody's guess. The electricity just went off (at 12o'c) so I am finishing this by the light of a cute little hurricane lamp.

I was glad to hear everybody is still in touch & not leaving you to your own resources. Wish Gord good luck for me.

Tell him I hope the Air Force will provide me an opportunity of casting a vote for him (or is it another candidate?)

Life may sound very interesting, & it is in a way, but I would rather be at home with my own wee (not so wee at that) family living our normal lives. I trust this job doesn't last too long.

Tell Jimmy that S/L Thompson who used to give the odd lecture to the School of Aviation Medicine (on L.M.F., Atlantic fever, Harvard Step test etc.) is our H.Q.M.O.

Give the babe a big kiss & my usual hugs etc. to the boys.

All my love, & good night sweetheart, Your own Teddie XXX XX

84 Group Disarmament Staff

RCAF Overseas

17 July 1945

#71

Darling,

I have been feeling a bit low today and so will take solace in writing you the story of the picnic on Sunday. It was quite a success and I am hoping to repeat it weekly as long as possible. There are now something like 150 or so children in the children's house and the children's hospital and possibly twice that number in the camp in addition. The latter, however, are living with a parent or parents or relatives. The majority are Jewish but of practically every European nationality.

It is fantastic and almost impossible to believe, but there is good reason for the opinion which has been expressed that this handful of children represents a large percentage of the total Jewish children population surviving in Europe today. Their survival is inexplicable and a reflection of a breakdown in the reputed efficiency of the Nazi machine. A fair number are alive today because of the personal courage and initiative of a Russian woman Luba whom I have met and who accompanied us on the picnic. When Belsen was taken she was discovered in a small room, a hovel, with 50-60 of these children. They were free from Typhus which was rampant in the camp and by one means or another she had managed to keep them "relatively" clean and fed. How she did it is not known. The other inmates did not know they were there, but she must have squared the SS guards in some way. As mothers, parents or relatives of the children died, she would take them in and hide them, and of course was able to furnish information about their ages, names and the fate of the others. Her husband was killed in Auschwitz for either refusing to work on, or sabotaging the incinerators in the crematoriums (if such a place can be dignified by such a name!). Her own child was deliberately killed before her own eyes. Today she is a stoutish blonde woman with a plump rosy face and twinkling blue eyes. She is bursting with energy and is working in the children's home. Her flock is always around her.

We drove up on Sunday right after lunch with three 3-ton trucks and a couple of staff cars and a jeep. We took boxes of

Educational Package

sandwiches, 100 freshly made doughnuts, 200 chocolate bars, 4 gallons of milk, a piano, two violins, two banjos, an accordion, etc. We had four officers (including Jamieson whom I wrote you about) the Medical officer, some sergeants and airmen. I had great difficulties in keeping the number of the party down, so that there would be sufficient room for the children. On pulling up to the buildings which are used for the "Kinderheim" we were greeted with all the boisterously gay reception which only children seem to be able to muster up. They were all spic and span with freshly ironed shirts and frocks. The supervisor said they had been washing out their clothes every day since Wednesday when she first told them we were coming. There was some difficulty in sorting out the kids. Some had arrived who did not belong in the home but had heard there was a picnic. Others who were too sick to go had also sneaked out of the hospital in the hope of getting themselves caught up in the crowd. Actually a few managed to do this we discovered after we got out in the woods. It was a bit heartbreaking to see the tears of the little ones on the sidewalk whom we had to leave behind. Especially pitiful were the little kids in bed in the open marquees in front of the hospital (TB cases getting "open air" treatment). They have got to know us and stand up and wave and talk in many different languages whenever we are in earshot.

We took along Miss Fernandes, an English Red Cross nurse in charge and some of the teachers, together with some of the chaps from the "Psychological Warfare" branch (who were the first to enter the old camp, and who are still among the most zealous workers there).

All we had to do was start driving and as far as the kids were concerned the picnic was on. The band played on one of the trucks, and everybody was happy including the rest of the population of the camp who waved as we went by. They got such a thrill out of seeing the children laughing and singing again!

The country is rather flat around Belsen but is pleasantly wooded. About 9-10 miles away we discovered a pretty spot with trees and good grass and just stopped and disembarked. We had deliberately refused to organize games, etc. and that was quite unnecessary anyway. The biggest thrill the kids got was in being photographed. There must have been several hundred snaps taken which are being developed now and out of them we should get some good ones. We also took some Ciné-Kodak shots and I believe F/L Sparrow who owns the camera is getting his wife to have the National Film Board look at them. (I took a full roll including most of the little girls who have become my own particular friends, but unfortunately they were all spoiled). The German film I used was a bit large for my camera so that it was necessary to tear it out with pliers).

The youngsters are most anxious to see the pictures so we are hoping to get a stack of additional prints and distribute them as fairly as possible. One reason for this is that they believe if a lot of people have pictures of them, may be some relative or parent may still be alive somewhere and see one.

Anyway the kids played and talked with the grown-ups, posed for pictures, ate sandwiches and drank milk, and brought tears to our eyes and lumps to our throat, as the case may be. Some of them are very beautiful and look alright, but most of them require a great deal of love and care to enable them to grow into a healthy normal adults.

Four little girls were specially dressed in "sailor" frocks and berets and did a Polish sailors' dance and song for us.

Another girl of about 14 with shaven head asked me if she could borrow a violin after which she played some excellent numbers beautifully.

Eventually the time came to go, so we sounded the horns of the cars and passed word around that each child would be given a chocolate bar on getting into the truck. Consequently our embarkation problem was solved in a few minutes.

The remainder of the bars and candy we presented to sick kids at the hospital.

The whole thing made a deep impression on the airmen and officers present and I anticipate no great personnel difficulty in keeping up this sort of thing as long as necessary. Transportation is the toughest problem. We are already planning for next Sunday when we will probably take out some of the smaller children who are not living in the home. They do not need friendship quite as much, but do feel hurt if they are always left out. There is much work to be done in

Educational Package

rehabilitating the people in Belsen including the adults. There is some splendid work underway (but by all too few) in the way of occupational therapy, etc. A young English artist ex-soldier is running an art school, but is short of supplies. In our job here we have access to plenty of various materials of some kinds, and I am hoping to do something about these things too. If possible I want the whole of the RAF 84 Group (and especially the RCAF Section) to take the camp under its wing. But this is rather an ambitious thought and will take some tactful and careful selling.

Canada could do much for these people who have suffered so much more than their share for us. (Will you make a point of speaking to Betty, Lil, Bill, Lon, Sid Gordon, Al, and anybody else you can think of. Somebody should start doing something right away. So far only day to day considerations have been dealt with and it is always possible that those who are willing to help expect somebody else to start. I cannot write numerous individual lengthy letters to a lot of people, but I think you could get a few people moving if you got on the phone. I would even be happy for you to pass up a letter to me in order to make time to do this).

I could help as a contact with the camp itself at this stage and would endeavour to dig up any further information required or to deliver any material which might be sent. (I think people like Margaret Gould would be interested and useful and of course the Canadian Jewish Congress would support such a move and also the Trades Unions, speak to Dena.)

Ultimately what is required is an international organization "To succor victims of Nazi Concentration camps" to coordinate and plan the treatment, training, rehabilitation and re-establishment of all of these people. Canada could and should undertake responsibility for a good proportion.

Another step which should be considered seriously by the appropriate organizations in Canada is the adoption of the children. Do you remember the plans we were making to adopt the orphans of the Spanish War? Sweden is undertaking to take a large number of children and adults for medical care and treatment. England has offered (I believe) to take 1,000, but this figure may not include the sick.

(How would you like a little Hungarian girl of 12?) Anyway do what you can and if you can't find time, mail this letter on to somebody.

Last night I went to a show put on by the Hungarian section. There is a magnificent theatre in the camp (formerly for the entertainment of the Wehrmacht) and it was absolutely packed. We had to sit on the floor in front. The entertainment was actually poor, although of course my lack of knowledge of the language did not help. But it did not compare with the Polish show we had. This was a big affair and most of the camp administrative staff was there, and the producers took the opportunity of getting in some digs at the way things are run. Included in the numbers was the reading of a four-page political dissertation by two women which lasted about 20 minutes. There are strange currents of political thought in Belsen, particularly with reference to the Hungarians. There was a Hungarian regiment working with the SS in the old camp and are reputed to have been worse than the Nazis. They are now walking about freely and there is much ill-feeling in the camp, especially among the other ethnic groups, as a result.

I suppose it will have taken you a half day to read so far, particularly with my writing deteriorating as it does. I hope you don't mind me devoting so much of this letter to Belsen. If you were here you would be just as keen as I am. Even people who don't usually know about these things or think politically at all are impressed. One chap, after talking to a girl about her experiences noted her Typhus marks, dagger scars, etc. and having heard her say she never went along one particular road because that was the way they were marched in from the Station (it was lined with dead and dying at the time), was very silent for a long time and then remarked: "I wonder how many of the Germans realize what they have done".

You will have heard that the policy of non-fraternization has now been relaxed - to everybody's relief. Now some of us should be able to tell a few people about Belsen. I am hoping the men will not now rush into the arms of the Germans, but will refrain from doing so for definite and conscious reasons of their own. One other thing I intended to mention

Educational Package

above - the Art School in Belsen has uncovered a surprising amount of talent and is shortly planning an exhibition of the work done. Most of it portrays from memory the experiences of the artist in the camp. Some have been done by children. I believe they may later be exhibited in London. Would anybody be interested in getting it for Canada and maybe the States?

I hope you managed to get a good rest while the two big boys were away at camp. Look after yourself now and don't let anything prevent you from preserving your youth. I have been swimming a few times lately and am starting to accumulate a fair suntan. There does not appear to be much chance of leave in England for a long time yet, but arrangements are being made for leave in places like Amsterdam, Brussels, Paris, Biarritz, so I may take a trip one of these days. My German is not progressing as rapidly as I had hoped but I am catching on a bit.

Write soon and let me know what you have accomplished. I am looking forward to the pictures of Jackie. All my love and kisses - Teddie

31 July 45

#76

Darling:

As I told you before, or at least hinted in my letter, I have not been getting along very well with the top officers in this job. It is not necessary or even possible to go into details except to say that they are permanent force types who were brought from Canada for the job. I have found it increasingly difficult to work with them or to agree with their ideas of organization, and have at last brought matters to a head. It was the best thing to do, because it has been having a bad effect on me and has been most unpleasant.

I have now submitted them a memorandum formally requesting transfer to other duties. The effect of this has been somewhat explosive, as I had anticipated and it now remains to see what the results are. Discussions have been bitter and recriminatory and I have no doubt they will try hard to make things tough for me. They possibly might endeavour to have me placed in a Flight Lieutenant's position which may ultimately lead to my reversion to that rank. Since one of them is an Air Commodore (the equivalent of a Brigadier) he may succeed in this, unless the matter is referred to RCAF H.Q. in London, in which case I will be treated justly.

However I have taken these step deliberately, knowing full well what the possibilities were. The situation had become quite intolerable and I would welcome a move anywhere, and to hell with the rank. It may even lead to my earlier repatriation to Canada than would otherwise be the case!

Anyway I am going on leave to Paris on Saturday and hope to be able to relax a bit and settle my nerves before I come back.

So don't worry about it. I am only telling you because I know if you knew the whole story you (and all our friends) would agree with me. These things usually take a long time to work out and I will tell you what happens in due course. There is plenty of support for me in the camp, but heavy braid is pretty hard to buck against.

How are the kids? I am looking forward to hearing about their experiences in camp.

How I would love to rest my head on your shoulder and talk to you tonight!

This whole thing has become most tedious and a strain. The sooner I get out the better. But as I said before, don't worry about me just sympathize.

All my love and kisses Teddie xxxxxxx

Paris

8 Aug. 45

Darling,

Educational Package

It seems so absurd that I should have to see Paris without you but I will do my best to tell you about it when I get back to Celle.

We (i.e.. Ed. Jamieson and I) managed to arrange to fly to Brussels and also to fly from Brussels here, which made the trip a lot more pleasant than normally. We are comfortably settled in the St. James and Albany Hotel, on the Rue de Rivoli, which faces the Jardins des Tuileries. The hotel itself is quite old - formerly occupied by Lafayette - but is an absolute dream as far as service is concerned. We simply soak ourselves in deep hot water, have tea in bed and so on. A change from tents alright.

The Canadian Army runs the place assisted by the Salvation Army, as a Canadian Officers' leave centre. We have music with our meals which consist of Army rations prepared by French cooks.

We are both exceedingly proud to be Canadians for in Paris the Canadian authorities have done more to really look after their officers and men than any other outfit. The men have a "Canada Club" at the Palais d'Orsay, and in addition to this hotel we have a "Canadian Officers Club" right by the Opera, which I believe is the best thing in Paris. It has a bar at very low prices, a good dining room, lounges, tea and dinner dances, etc. etc. No tipping is allowed, and it is really a place. Also there is a "Canada Corner" in the heart of the city where everything is available including beautiful young escorts from old French families. These girls are all apparently fully pedigreed and will conduct you around the city, go dancing or to a show. You should see them. Ed speaks better French than I but mine is beginning to come back.

We met some people from the US. Embassy here and are hoping to get into Pétain's trial. We were both trying to arrange to phone our sweet wives in Toronto, but it cannot be done.

Paris is absolutely magnificent. No wonder it is an artists' paradise. I have never seen such an accumulation of beauty in any city before. We have taken some pictures and will send them home when finished. Kiss the boys and girl.

I love you and wish you could be here. Your own Teddie xxx

84 Group Disarmament Staff

13 Sept. '45

Darling:

I have been quite busy for the last few days chasing Polish artists around Germany & usually not finding them. But I now have sufficient stuff to make a reasonably interesting exhibition & have arranged to fly the collection to London on Monday morning. I am not sure just what will happen to it then, but it needs a certain amount of working on, mounting etc. before it goes to Canada. If Bayeffsky 'phones you, tell him to make tentative plans for a moderate-sized show.

I expect to stay in London for a few days as there are several other things I have to do. Originally I had hoped to take 9 days leave following my duties, but this has now become impossible as I have just taken on a new job which will entail a lot of rapid organization & I can barely spare the time to leave for London at all.

Incidentally you will be pleased to hear that my private war with the braid has now ended in complete capitulation by the common enemy!

I am really surprised as the fight had reached a formal & very bitter stage. I had taken the matter up to the Overseas Headquarters in fact. A few days ago the Air Commander called me in &, acting very friendly, informed me he had decided to forget the whole thing & was tearing up the reports etc. (which were originally intended to break me).

I am now wondering what H.Q. will do, as I had already protested to them officially! However I have won out. Your judgment was correct.

As a result I have been given the responsibility of trying to raise the very low morale among our men here — which has very deep ramifications. I am planning a big scale programme of recreation, entertainment, courses, concerts, lectures, hobbies, discussion groups, debates etc.. We are getting some top notch lecturers from Oxford, London & Cambridge to fly here especially for our cultural advancement. Also outstanding people in the musical world. We may get teams from

Educational Package

the Oxford Union etc. to come too. So you can see I am going to be busy.

The last letter I had from you was dated 22 August & this is 13 Sept. Poor show eh?

A few days ago I had my camera stolen in Brunswick. It was a brand new Agfa & I am still gnashing my teeth! However I still have another which takes 120 film, so keep trying. On the roll in the camera when it was stolen were some exposures of some Red Army wounded prisoners of war who are now in Belsen. I took the RCAF band up to play to them on Monday & was especially anxious to get some good pictures.

Also were some taken at the Jewish children's New Year's party in the camp at which I was a guest.

Jack Eisen was here this week for a day. I took him to Belsen also & introduced him to the Jewish committee there. He did not know Jack King had been killed. I will write to Betty at the first opportunity.

Tonight I am taking up some chocolate bars & your raisins etc. to the Maternity hospital, so that they can prepare something special in the way of icing etc. for cakes for Yom Kippur for the Jewish mothers (& children (?)) These people are now seeing their first Yom Kippur in comparative freedom in many years. No special food is provided for in D.P. rations for events such as this.

Yesterday I had lunch in the house occupied by the Jewish Relief Section in Belsen (a sort of Jewish Red Cross team) & felt right at home.

So lately life has been reasonably interesting again.

I also received a delightfully newsy and chatty letter from Vera! Tell her to keep it up — just what I need.

I suppose the big boys are back at school again & David should be starting too. This ought to give you comparative peace for a few hours a day.

Ed Jamieson says his wife is going to call you when she gets back to Toronto. Kisses all around & all my love as ever.

Yours Teddie xxx xx

London

Monday

24 Sept. 1945

My dear Kenny,

I am writing this to you because I have not got my list of letters here and so cannot be sure which of you boys I wrote to last. But I know you will pass the letter around.

Your letters about camp (both of them) were very interesting and I was glad to know you got along so well. How far could you swim by the end of the summer? I mean with both feet off the bottom!

One of the sergeants in Celle used to teach Art (drawing) at the Saturday morning classes you were going to. Are you going again this Winter? I am very much interested in having you carry on and using all your imagination in the things you draw. In the exhibition I have from Belsen are a lot of drawings and paintings done by children in the Art School since their liberation. Some are very good and others very bad, according to their ability and suffering probably. They all tend to show a good sense of colour and freedom.

The other day at a children's party at Belsen a Jewish Padre spoke to them about the future. He said that as children they should have 3 definite aims. - 1) to learn - 2) to work - 3) to make friends. This is not a new idea of course, but I thought you might be interested. What do you think of it?

How are you getting on with the book "Growing up"? Tell me when you write. Kiss Jackie and David and Mummy and Nicky for me, Love DAD xxxxx

Celle

Sunday Oct. 14/45

Educational Package

Darling:

It has been rather a busy week or I would have written again before this. I have been thinking about you a lot and hope things are not getting you down too much. I will be looking forward to hearing what you have done about your request for compassionate posting - by the way not compassionate leave! When I leave Europe I want to come home to stay! I wouldn't be too optimistic if I were you. Colonel Little left yesterday for home and civvy street. He will leave a great big hole here. We spent a lot of time together and he became extremely interested in Belsen and the D.P.s. There was a little good-bye party for him in Belsen on Wednesday - among our friends. It went on pretty late and next morning we had to be up really early, as we were leaving for Berlin at 6 o'clock.

We drove all the way and to some extent the trip was the climax of the war for both of us. There is a corridor through the Russian occupied zone along the autobahn. It gives you a thrill to get your first Red Army sentry's salute and to pass by the Archway festooned with Red Flags etc. All the road signs have been changed to Russian but other than that the countryside looks much like that on our side of the line. Instead of following the proper route into the city and approaching from the NW., we missed a turn and got way off into Russian territory, finishing up about 40 kilometers south of Berlin. According to reports this is a highly dangerous thing to do, but we had no trouble and enjoyed the experience - it gave us a chance to see much more of the enigmatic ally.

Berlin is a fantastic place these days. There are miles and miles of completely gutted buildings. The government district is just a ghost. We had the satisfaction of standing on the steps of Hitler's wrecked Chancellery, the Allon Hotel nearby (where P.G. Wodehouse lived) etc. There is a great deal of poetic justice in just seeing these places.

But it was the people who impressed us most. They are warmed up corpses - nothing more. Pinched white faces everywhere with a look of absolute despair. They are apparently going to die these this winter by the thousands, at *aurgati* ?? mass graves are being prepared for them already outside the city, according to fairly reliable reports. It gives you a jolt to have little children running along by your car saying "something to eat please". The food and heat situation in Berlin now is really acute - nothing like that around Celle, bad as it is.

The other most fantastic experience is to see the black market operating. Right in the opera in a park (the Tiergarten) in the centre of the city, it looks like a football match. There thousands of people are bartering dollars, jewelry, cigarettes, chocolate bars, food etc. Cigarettes have a standard price value of 5 marks each (.50 c at present rates) and are acceptable instead of cash. The chief customers are Red Army soldiers and officers who seem to be in the market for any kind of civilian clothing or watches. They all have huge Bank rolls and most of them there were carrying suit-cases in which they stuffed their purchases. I watched one girl trying to sell 2 Red Army officers the coat off her back but they were not interested. They spotted me however and came over and started examining a leather jerkin I was wearing and wanted to know how much I wanted for it. Cigarette cases, watches, rings, silk stockings, cameras - everything you can imagine was being offered - absolutely fantastic.

We stayed overnight at the Savoy Hotel and came back Friday. Friday night the Army officers here gave a party to the Colonel at the Country Club - which was quite a session. So all told I have had a hectic week.

Hope you keep me posted on developments and write as often as you can. Will you send some notepaper please. All my love Teddie xxxx

P.S. How about another picture of Jackie? Give my love to the kids - are they helping you as much as they can?

Celle,

15 Oct./45

Darling:

Just a short note before going to bed.

I received letters from Leo Rosenzwayg and Leo Prais (Dan's friends) on Saturday and managed to locate their relatives

Educational Package

in the camp on Sunday. Today I had some pictures taken of them which I will send on as soon as they are ready.

I am mailing letters to three of their family today, and they are glad to have established "lines of communications."

Their main needs are psychological I would say, i.e.. knowing where they are going to be able to go and live again and when?

Also to get something to do. The re-training or rehabilitation side of the problem has not really been touched as yet.

This evening we (i.e.. myself and S/L Russ Metcalfe who will be coming home to Toronto soon) had tea and talked for a couple of hours with some friends of ours the Schwarz's, in their room in the camp. Jane is 21, weighed 60 lb. on liberation and now probably 120. She seems to be completely recovered and works as a "block leader" and interpreter. We see a lot of her and her mother. They have been together in various concentration camps for years - Auschwitz etc. Their survival is miraculous.

Mrs. Schwarz looks quite old, and is a quiet retiring creature who has really suffered. She has a brother in England, Chief Surgeon at the Hastings Hospital. I had lunch with him when I was in England, and we have been trying to find ways of getting Jane and her mother to England. But it seems almost impossible.

The old lady speaks a little English and tonight when we were talking she inquired about the Colonel. I said he should be just about home by now - "home" she said and repeated a few times.

Can you imagine what it would mean to her, after these terrible years of suffering and wandering and uncertainty, to know she was going somewhere she could call "home"?

She has no idea when that will be or where - England, Poland, Germany etc.

In a few days 50 children from the Children's House are going to England for possible adoption. All orphans or probable orphans, and all Jewish. Can you imagine what that means to them? They are mainly our original little pals of the first picnics so I have planned to give them a little send off at the airfield - they are flying over - what a big day! The enclosed card is one we are giving to each child. How do you like it? The Hebrew greeting had to be written by hand, as there seems to be no Jewish type in Germany.

Two of the boys (14 year old) and good friends of mine, have written out their "war histories" for me. They are in Polish however and I will have to get them properly translated before sending them on to you. Incidentally they are also going to write to Nick and Ken. So have the boys write back good replies. They will probably have to write through me, as we don't know what their address will be yet.

Sorry my letters seem to be so full of Belsen, but it really fills my life.

By the way, you never acknowledged the second \$50 I sent you at the end of August.

How's everything, your weight etc.? Kiss the kids and reserve a big one for yourself.

All my love, Teddie xxxxx

12 Dec. '45

Darling:

I have been a bit under the weather lately with a cold. Nothing serious, but annoying and hard to get rid of in the cold rooms around here.

A bunch of magazines arrived from Danny and a Red Army Song-book from Vera, all of which I was glad to get. Also a long letter from Lil, and from Vera, one from Bertha Cowan. I haven't heard from Leo Rosen lately.

It was nice to hear how well the boys are and to know they are all doing well in school.

With the refrigerator, you must use your own judgment as to whether or not to buy it now or wait until next summer. I thought with the baby and the bottles it would be important for you to have one as soon as possible.

A couple of evenings ago I had a phone call from Derek Sington in Hamburg (the British officer you have heard me talk about before) saying that Traute, a Czech girl who worked for him in Belsen and who is also now in Hamburg, was

Educational Package

seriously ill in hospital and needed penicillin, which is not available to German Hospitals. I contacted Madame Fischova immediately at the Glyn Hughes Hospital in Belsen, who arranged to let me have some. It just happened to be the worst night for driving we have yet seen here. It was raining and freezing and as the road to Hamburg is largely a cobbled road with a high crown and narrow, it was pretty grim going. However I made it alright, took Tom Odell with me for company, and finally got to the hospital about 11.30. They used it the next morning and I think she will be O.K. She has gland trouble - a direct result of her experiences. It is possible she may accompany the art exhibition if she gets well enough.

We stayed overnight and came back yesterday. Everybody thought we were crazy starting out at all.

I'm glad you got the things I sent. There are some others on the way.

Must go now.

Love and kisses to you all, and regards to everybody. All my love, your, Teddie xxxxxx

(on Christmas paper)

Celle, Germany

14 Dec. '45

My Darling:

I have timed this so that it should reach you just about on Christmas Day, because that is the day when you and the kids are going to be even more than ever in my heart, and I would like you to have a little personal greeting then.

It is over a year now since I left - a year which has provided us both with much time for thought. For you it has been a pretty heavy one, with a big burden to carry and no one to lean on. For me it has been a year of movement and experience, not always comfortable and pleasant, but stimulating and in some respects strengthening. Once again I seem to have had the better deal, but then war is essentially unfair and illogical anyway.

For me, separation from you has been a wound which I am anxious to hasten to repair. In the meantime I am grateful that I should have had the great good luck to have had you as a life-companion and the mother of my children.

So on Christmas morning noon and night I will be trying to picture in my mind's eye the proceedings in Scarborough. I will be there in spirit, kissing you all and joining in the fun.

A delightful Christmas parcel arrived for me from Leo Rosen and his wife. It really touched me and goes to prove something or other.

I was glad to learn that you have such an interesting companion staying with you as Dorothy sounds. That is just what you wanted.

The last few months have been a bit of a load for me. The Belsen and other D.P. projects and correspondence have become very heavy, and my own work has increased, especially since the Wing Commander was posted. So I think a week's relaxation will do me some good. I suppose you feel the same way but without the opportunity of doing much about it. But wait till I get back!

Ed Jamieson is coming along again with 3 others. I don't know what I'd do without Ed now.

I have rambled on and off the subject. This was intended to be just a love note to wish you a Merry Christmas! And may all your wishes for the New Year come true quickly!

We will be drinking a toast to you all so do the same for me.

Cheers sweetheart! All my love and kisses are for you, from your permanent lover, suitor and husband, Teddie xxxxxx
