

Letters from Italy, 1944-45

John Arthur Hudson's wartime letters to his Mother, Father and brother Ian,
March 1944 - August 1945



INTRODUCTION

My Dad, John Arthur Hudson was born on the 24th August 1920.



At his christening the vicar was confused or misinformed or under the influence and named him 'Arthur John Hudson' but this was rarely spoken of.

He grew up in an unexceptional terraced house in Harrow ('Mentmore', South Hill Avenue) where his father [Francis Reginald], a civil servant, enjoyed gardening and his mother [Dorothy Mary née Crabbe] did I am not sure what, she ran the small household with my father and his younger brother Ian. There is mention in these letters of 'the office' so I imagine she was working during this period. She was an expert flower arranger.

Both Francis and Dorothy died when I was fairly young. My remembrance of their house is of a lush, dark, Victorian style of decoration. He was a tall man who smoked a pipe. In visits to their house I was fascinated by a brass fly, the size of a bar of soap, whose wings lifted up to reveal a small ashtray and striking strip for Swan Vestas matches.

They were not flighty people and not in the higher echelons of the middle class but they believed in education and both boys were academic and clever. They went to the City of London school where my father recalled being fined a farthing by a maths teacher each time a mistake was made.

Perhaps as a consequence of this my father decided to concentrate on Classics and went to Jesus College, Oxford in 1939 or 1940 where, incidentally he met my future uncles Iolo [Davies, my mother's brother] and John [or Jack] Cole, who married my mother's younger sister Gwen. Ian also was at Oxford.

War broke up and after two years of study they were conscripted, being offered a valid degree or the option to return, post war, to complete their degrees.

These letters suggest that he chose the former option - I am uncertain. His future brothers in law returned to college but it was not a happy time for them, having been through what they had - and with many of their former cohort killed in action. He was given a first.

After the war my father travelled in Europe for a time, then himself joined the civil service rising to being a not quite Sir Humphrey - perhaps a rank or two below. Towards the end of his career he worked high up in the Department of Education and Science as it was then, and for some time his minister was Margaret Thatcher, before she went on to do a different job.

Privately he loathed her but they both adored the television programme *Yes Minister*. Thatcher thought it was a skewering of the civil servants while my dad thought conversely that it was lampooning government ministers - of course they were both 50% correct.

So in 1942 he went to training in Aldershot, after which he joined the Signals Regiment and saw service in North Africa and then in Italy. These letters are all from Italy and range from March 1944 to August 1945. There must have been earlier letters from 1942-43/early 44 but sadly these are assumed to be lost, as are the letters written to him.

At one level there are recurring themes, mundane yet significant to the writer: mail deliveries, weather, leave policy, clothing, reading materials, colds and ailments. But at the other end they relate to the most significant happenings at the end of the war. Ian's progress into the Royal Navy is a recurring topic. Occasionally there is a lighter moment of serendipity.

The key letter in this collection is dated 31st May 1945 subsequent to the German surrender in Italy and written after a relaxation of censorship regulations which allowed him to detail his movements 1942-1945.

[His handwriting is singular and can be quite difficult. Where impossible to read I have either marked as 'unclear' or made a guess which is prefixed with a question mark.]

For me the most moving part was when he drove an army jeep into the Italian Alps; he picked an edelweiss which he sent to his mother and which we now still have.

Matthew Hudson
Garelochhead, Argyll

February 2025

Type to enter text

PASSED BY CENSOR *number unclear*
222641 Lt. J.A. Hudson
4 Coy. R. SIGS.
6BN. 1GRTD¹ (*unclear abbreviation*²)
CMF³

30 March 44

Dear Mother,

I think it is about time I dropped you another line although I still can't give you a good address to write to. The above address is all right as far as it goes but it's only a reinforcement camp and consequently temporary. I should think that I shall get out of here in a week or so. Of course anything sent here should be sent on often with an appropriate delay. I have unfortunately lost some time through this tiresome smallpox quarantine.

As I expect you can guess I have been finding things a little chilly. Fortunately I did not make the mistake of jettisoning my warmer stuff when I cut my kit down to something like a mobile level so I haven't really had anything to complain about.

I should be glad if you could send me a text of Virgil. As I have several I can easily spare one to have out here. I think you will find a small blue pocket Oxford Virgil somewhere in my books. It used to be on the third shelf up in my bedroom at the right hand side I think. Of course it is not worth sending this to the present address. I hope, by the way, that mail may be a shade quicker from

¹ 1 General Reinforcement Training Depot

² *beginning B, perhaps B.F - British Forces?*

³ Central Mediterranean Forces

here, particularly surface mail. Air mail (rather than letter cards and airgraphs⁴, does not work at all, i.e. it goes no quicker than surface.)

By now, I suppose, you should have had Ian back for a spell if he got his leave at the beginning of March. I hope he did anyway.

I don't think there is much that I can add now, but I shall close the letter as I want to get it off in the morning.

I hope you are both keeping very well.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

⁴ A letter photographed onto microfilm and printed, enveloped and delivered at the receiving end - as shown



PASSED BY CENSOR 10

222641 Lt. J.A. Hudson
15 HQ Signals
CMF

8 April 44

Dear Mother

I am afraid this is a waste of a letter card⁵ as I haven't had any news which I didn't put in yesterday's⁶. I am just writing this because I have fetched up in a unit and I wanted to give you my present address which is as above.

I shall now be able to make a serious effort to get some mail redirected to me, as of course I have had none for the last month.

Well, as I said, there is nothing more to tell you at the moment, so I will just wish you a very happy Easter again and close.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

⁵ The light blue tissuey folded letters shown on the first page of this document

⁶ Lost

PASSED BY CENSOR No 4843

222641 Lt. J.A. Hudson
2 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

23 May 44

Dear Father,

I have been quite fortunate with mail during the last two or three days, having received three packets from you containing Penguins and the Fabian Society publication. These were very acceptable as I had come to be short of reading matter.

At the same time I heard from Ian who told me of his hopes of reaching a selection board⁷ about now. I had written him a birthday airgraph to his service address, but if he loses his ship it will probably reach him later.

You were quite correct about the savings certificates. Of those referred to in the bank statements all the counterfoils are being held by the bank. I have written to them asking them to get another hundred in the same way. This should come through some time in the next month. The other forty are quite distinct and were bought through Cairo, and of course are not included in the other totals.

Of course the war situation is very interesting here now. As far as one can tell things have been very well managed so far. I hope we shall not be disappointed in the outcome.

I hear you look like having a bumper pear crop, although apparently the late frosts have ruined the soft fruit crops throughout the whole of the country.

The weather here now is just betwixt and between B.D. & K.D.⁸ Some units are in drill, others not. We are still wearing battle dress, mostly in short sleeve order.

I hope you will manage to scrape through the tennis season with the resources available. It must make you laugh to recall how people used to balk at not getting new balls on Sundays as well as Saturdays.

I hope you are both very fit.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

⁷ For Cadet Officer training in the Royal Navy

⁸ Battle Dress and lighter Khaki drill

PASSED BY CENSOR No 4843

222641 Lt. J.A. Hudson
2 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

8 June 44

Dear Mother,

The last few days have been seen pretty startling changes in the picture. Rome has gone and the invasion has started. As to the former I think it probably caused less excitement here than elsewhere, as if you are watching the campaign at all closely, the real achievement appeared to be the initial breakthrough, and the capture of Rome was was a relative sideshow. However the Italians got very excited.

As for the latter there won't be any excessive optimism here. This is very satisfactory; I don't see how some people went up in the air at the time of the N. African landings, and how flat they fell afterwards. You must have noticed a terrific lessening of tension; in many ways you must have been reminded of the last war and will be so more still when people start coming back on leave and the hospitals start to fill up.

We are pretty busy now. The work can be quite tiring; no-one likes night work and you have to be on the watch to try to anticipate mistakes, delays or wrong deliveries of important messages. However its certainly interesting, as you are kept pretty well in the picture.

I haven't heard from Ian since his selection board, although he told me he was up first. I expect I shall hear from him soon.

You say that the papers talk of the unpleasant conditions of Italy. I think they have no discrimination. People have been working for years in conditions a thousand times worse in every way (e.g. Persia & Iraq) with hardly a mention, but now that Italy is in the news they pile it on.

How does the office work go?

Hope you are all well.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

PASSED BY CENSOR No 4843

222641 Lt. J.A. Hudson
2 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

17 June 44

Dear Ian,

I had your letter card of 9th a couple of days ago. I should not take too grim a view of not getting by the selection board. After all you have to compete against quite capable people who have been at it for anything up to five years. It is probably better to pip the preliminary board than to fail at a later stage where failure might be more decisive. If you get a draft (as I expect you will) you should get added experience - after a certain time in one job you stop learning, as everything becomes routine. What I think you should do now is to make a determined effort at further non-commissioned promotions. Apart from the immediate advantages it is bound to count in your favour later on.

I am getting some hectic spells on duty now; enough to keep me on my back for a good part of my off duty time anyhow.

A new order has meant bringing the limit for overseas service down to 5 years, with a guarantee of employment in the European theatre after. That only leaves me three more years - don't laugh. At any rate it would be better to do three years here than to go home for six months and get flung out to Sumatra or somewhere for heaven knows how long.

How was Oxford looking? I read in the newspaper that with the invasion a large part of the military element has gone from England ensuring a more civilian air.

Well, I think that's about all. The last two days have drenched us with thunderous rain, but I think most of it is over. I shall look forward to hearing the news.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

Opened by Censor
CMF BASE SENSOR 20 [Passed]
PASSED BY CENSOR No 4843

222641 Lt. J.A. Hudson
2 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

29 June 44

Dear Mother,

I have done pretty well for mail the last few days. In addition to the usual quota of AMLC's⁹ I have had one surface letter and two Penguins originally sent to M.E.¹⁰ which have finally come home to roost - The Cherry Tree¹¹ and Design¹². I was glad to get these and soon finished both. The little blue Virgil had arrived a few days previously, it was the copy I had in mind when I asked for it.

I also had the letter card Ian wrote on leave & replied to that.

I don't know whether you remember querying the amount I have in the Post Office Savings Bank. I guessed that the book had not been brought up to date and sent off an airgraph asking for my present position. As this confirmed my suspicions (I had a reply 2 days ago) I should be glad if you would send the book up to have it brought up to date.

Soft fruits have been beginning to appear lately, cherries first, and now apricots and plums. Of course I am very glad to see them appear on the menu.

I am thinking of having the kit which I left in M.E. sent home. I don't really need it here, and by the time it comes through I should almost certainly have moved & lose it altogether. The only cases I know of stuff sent from ME to CMF took nine months and fifteen months respectively. I dare say it would get home in eighteen months.

I am very comfortably situated at the moment, and might be able to enjoy a few amenities. The snag is lack of time, as under the present arrangements I don't get a free day anywhere.

Yours affectionately

J A Hudson

⁹ Army Mail Letter Card

¹⁰ Middle East

¹¹ The Cherry Tree, Adrian Bell, 1942

¹² Design, Anthony Bertram, Pelican, 1943

PASSED BY CENSOR No 4843

222641 Lt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

10 July 44

Dear Mother,

You will see above that the address is now 3 Coy; no real change, just a bit of domestic reorganisation.

Mail has not been at all bad recently. I have heard from Chorley Wood and Saffron Walden [grandparents], and today an airgraph from Dr Ewing¹³. I have had the pamphlet on Educational Reconstruction and the Pelican book of English essays. Both were very welcome.

Rome has now been released by the censorship. so I am able to tell you that I have been there, and of course made the most of the time available. It is a fine city, in striking contrast with the squalor of many towns of Southern Italy.

Of course we have been hearing a lot recently about these vertical flying bombs. I hope they have not been troubling you too much. They are a beastly device. I hope we shall soon occupy the bases they operate from.

The machinery for revising the register of electors seems to have been a farcical failure. We have had lashings of propaganda on the subject, pamphlets and papers and statements, yet not a single AF2626¹⁴ has been issued to the unit although it's a large one. I think that it's been a pretty poor effort.

It is now 0300hrs; the middle of a fairly slack night duty. I dislike night duties; the only benefit is that you have a chance of getting out and about in the day time.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

¹³ Not known

¹⁴ Electoral registration forms for the coming general election and issued to forces as postal votes

PASSED BY CENSOR No 4843

222641 Lt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

14 July 44

Dear Mother,

Just a few lines to keep you in the picture. In my last letter I said that we had not had any AF2626's issued. The following morning I was able to get 15 of them, approximately one third of my requirements. The excuse given - shortage of paper - is the feeblest I have ever heard.

I sent home the K.D. because I couldn't carry it all. At least that was the principal reason. On the same topic of clothes, I just thought of something the other day which might be quite handy. I left two poplin cotton shirts with detachable collars behind when I came overseas. I think that they were in that notorious green suitcase. They should come in quite handy if you could post them out to me.

I had the Pelican book of essays a few days ago. I don't think I had it when I wrote my last letter.

To return to a topic which I think I broached once before, I still feel that you should have your photograph taken; particularly as both Ian and myself have taken this step comparatively recently.

I weighed myself again the other day. It came to 80 kgs. I haven't worked this out in pounds yet - I believe it's about 180 which puts me a bit less than I was in Egypt. Of course there is less to eat here. However I still feel very fit. Apricots are very good just now.

Ian seems to be still at work at Chatham. I don't know how he likes it. Usually these depot places are deadly.

Hope you are both well.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

PASSED BY CENSOR No 4843

222641 Lt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

18 July 44

Dear Father,

This is chiefly a birthday note; although of course I can't really predict the date of arrival - I think it should be too early rather than too late. Anyhow, whatever the adjustments of date you may have to make, my very best wishes.

I had your letter enclosing the note from the Health Insurance - as you say the availability of maternity benefit seems a rather doubtful advantage at the moment but I shan't let it worry me.

I concur with your remarks about crosswords. The Listener is too difficult; extreme difficulty is not a merit because it is very easy to compose an impossibly difficult puzzle. I think Torquemada has never been surpassed because there was as much ingenuity in his puzzles as sheer erudition, and he didn't very often leave you completely despairing of a solution. The Times is always a good staple diet.

I have just been reading a book which has impressed me very much, in fact I think it is genuinely first class. I don't know whether it would be possible to get a copy, but I should be very glad if you could reserve me one. It is C.S.Lewis' 'SCREWTAPE LETTERS' (Geoffrey Bles 5/-). Rather a high price for 160 pages but it's certainly worth it. Not that I want it sent to me as I have borrowed it to read now, but I should like to have a copy.

It has just occurred to me that this is rather a topsy turvy request to include in a birthday letter. Perhaps you will excuse it; if you can get one you will find it quite absorbing.

I think that is about all, It can't be so very long now.¹⁵

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

¹⁵ Sense uncertain

PASSED BY CENSOR No 4843

222641 Lt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

31 July 44

Dear Mother,

Actually it's wrong (the date I mean). I am writing this on night duty and the time is 0140 hrs, so it should be 1 Aug. I do dislike doing night duties.

I had a letter card from you today and one from Ian yesterday. He says that he will be going up for another board quite shortly. I see that he manages to get home for weekends sometimes from Chatham. He really has been fairly fortunate with leave. Of course I have only another three years to do now before I definitely qualify for repatriation, and after that I shall not be sent overseas except to N.W.Europe. (Those are the terms of the latest ruling on the subject. Mr Eden¹⁶'s statement that men with 4 1/2 years overseas service were being repatriated was promptly denied by a circular letter from Army H.Q. here.)

We have done fairly well here recently for fruit; I have tried to do justice to what apricots, peaches, plums and pears have been available.

The Italian doesn't progress as fast as I should wish. Army life doesn't throw you much into contact with civilians and so the opportunities for learning are not as favourable as they might be. However I don't think I should worry about making myself sufficiently understood if I were touring here. I should like to come here under more favourable circumstances; but I should choose a better time of the year. The weather just now runs to a very stuffy heat with very little fresh air which is very fatiguing. According to my calculations I should be due for a 1/6d increase from about the middle of July. I have submitted the necessary claim, but it will probably be some time before it comes through.

I have been notified by ME that my kit has been despatched, but I rather doubt whether you will ever see any of it.

Best wishes.
Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

¹⁶ Secretary of State for War

PASSED BY CENSOR No 4843

222641 Lt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

10 Aug 44

Dear Mother

I have had the Penguins through recently; the two purple (travel) ones and the Pelican on films, which looks very interesting. Consequently I am pretty well off just now for reading material. I have also heard recently from Joe Foster and have written a letter card to Dr Ewing. I sent off a parcel to you the other day with one or two lemons; but of course the date and condition of their arrival is very much a matter for conjecture. I would have sent some previously, but it took me some time to get a suitable box to pack them in.

The news from France has been very good recently. The breakthrough in Brittany was most spectacular. It is most encouraging and it really does look now as though the Germans have just about had it.

Have you come across a German song which has reversed the process and broken out (in a suitably English translation) into England? It is the song called Lilli Marlene which used to be the signatory tune of a programme for the German forces in Africa¹⁷. It used to come on at 11 o'clock every night in

¹⁷ The song, sung by Lale Andersen was greatly enjoyed and listened to by both German and Allied troops. After the war Andersen received a gold disc for a million sales.

M.E. and a lot of people used to listen to it. Now it has been officially naturalised. It is an extraordinarily catchy tune.¹⁸

The Italians have an institution in their towns called ALBERGI DIURNI (ALBERGO = AUBERGE DIURNO = daytime). This consists of a sort of personal rehabilitation centre, hot and cold baths,

¹⁸ Relevantly to these letters it was also given fresh lyrics by Allied troops in Italy: named The D-Day Dodgers it was subsequently recorded by a number of artistes and bands including Pete Seeger and The Spinners. The lyrics:

We're the D-Day Dodgers out in Italy
Always on the vino, always on the spree.
Eighth Army scroungers and their tanks
We live in Rome – among the Yanks.
We are the D-Day Dodgers, over here in Italy.

We landed at Salerno, a holiday with pay,
Jerry brought the band down to cheer us on our way
Showed us the sights and gave us tea,
We all sang songs, the beer was free.
We are the D-Day Dodgers, way out in Italy.

The Volturno and Cassino were taken in our stride.
We didn't have to fight there. We just went for the ride.
Anzio and Sangro were all forlorn.
We did not do a thing from dusk to dawn.
For we are the D-Day Dodgers, over here in Italy.

On our way to Florence we had a lovely time.
We ran a bus to Rimini right through the Gothic Line.
On to Bologna we did go.
Then we went bathing in the Po.
For we are the D-Day Dodgers, over here in Italy.

Once we had a blue light that we were going home
Back to dear old Blighty, never more to roam.
Then somebody said in France you'll fight.
We said never mind, we'll just sit tight,
The windy D-Day Dodgers, out in Sunny Italy.

Now Lady Astor, get a load of this.
Don't stand up on a platform and talk a load of piss.
You're the nation's sweetheart, the nation's pride
We think your mouth's too bloody wide.
We are the D-Day Dodgers, in Sunny Italy.

When you look 'round the mountains, through the mud and rain
You'll find the crosses, some which bear no name.
Heartbreak, and toil and suffering gone
The boys beneath them slumber on
They were the D-Day Dodgers, who'll stay in Italy.

So listen all you people, over land and foam
Even though we've parted, our hearts are close to home.
When we return we hope you'll say
"You did your little bit, though far away
All of the D-Day Dodgers, way out there in Italy.

tailors shop, massage, manicure etc. and there are dozens of them. I think that it is an excellent scheme, and one that could profitably be introduced into England.

I think I shall go to the cinema tomorrow to see 'This Happy Breed', which I believe is quite good. I have also seen 'The Bridge of San Luis Rey' recently but was rather disappointed in it.

It is just about 0200 at the moment , just the time when I begin to feel really tired, and I can think of nothing more to write now.

I hope you are both very well and not having trouble with the flying bombs.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

PASSED BY CENSOR No 4843

222641 Lt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

13 Aug. 44

Dear Ian

I am making use of a night duty to reply to your letter card of 20th July. My night duties tend to have a flat patch in the middle from about 0100 to 0300. By 0100 last nights work is mainly clear and things will run quite quietly, so that I can relax until about 0330 when it's about time to start getting things sorted out for the morning.

You say in your letter that you should be up for another board about now. I hope it passes off satisfactorily. Although your chances of promotion to P.O.¹⁹ are very distant I think you will get some credit for having passed the exams.

I have now had my AF 2626 (electoral registration) form and completed it. My section have been quite conscientious about it; I got about 80% of completed forms. Of course they are all fairly intelligent and interested people, mostly clerical workers of some sort.

I find the climate here just a shade trying. Of course it is just about the worst time of the year. It is quite hot and very stuffy and airless, so that you wake in the morning feeling worse than when you went to bed. We are supposed to be taking Mepacrine²⁰, although I don't think there is much malaria about. It is extraordinary how people, particularly officers, will avoid doing so. The stuff doesn't affect most people in the very least. At any rate I am scoffing mine, and shall continue to do so while there is considered to be the slightest risk of it.

I resume after a short break. You will probably notice the progressive deterioration of the writing in the preceding paragraphs. That is due to the fact that I am beginning to nod and my pen waver.

The news continues excellent, if the momentum of the offensive in France can be maintained, one feels that anything might happen at any time.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

¹⁹ Petty Officer

²⁰ Anti-malarial

PASSED BY CENSOR No 4843

222641 Lt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

15 Aug. 44

Dear Ian

I had just finished my last air mail to you when I had yours so I am writing again. I must congratulate you most heartily on negotiating the Admiralty board successfully. I knew of course that you were going up for the preliminary board from what you told me, but I did not know that you would be up so soon for the Admiralty board.

Of course I don't suppose you will underrate future difficulties. They are bound to set a pretty high standard in [HMS] King Alfred²¹, and one is always very much under observation in these establishments. I think it will be now that you will find that so far from regretting the time you have spent up to now whatever experience you have is invaluable and not too much. Still six weeks isn't so bad. I shudder at the horrible six months I spent at Aldershot (quite the worst of my army career to date.)

I've no doubt that, as you say you will get a spell away from home and probably the Far East at that. At that I think there is a lot to be said for travelling a bit rather than put up with the very restrictive conditions of most stations in U.K.

Today has brought the news we have been waiting for, the invasion of southern France. Things altogether look most promising.

Best wishes and good luck.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

²¹ Officer training establishment in Hove

PASSED BY CENSOR No 4843

222641 Lt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

26 Aug [44]

Dear Father,

I had your surface letter of 13 July three days ago - just over five weeks en route. I was very pleased to get the photograph as it makes a very interesting family group. Of course to me the most striking thing about it is the change in the children.

I think the total number of saving certificates I now have, including the latest instalment is 481. Incidentally there is some sorting out to be done there. Some weeks ago, as I now have several batches of certificates bought at different times and from different places, I wrote an airgraph to the G.P.O. asking what my total holdings were. I did this to get the business straight in my mind and theirs. They replied after some time, giving details tallying with mine but with the comment that these were held under two different registered numbers, so could I please return one card for cancellation. Of course what had happened was this. When I bought the first lot via Barclays I didn't give them my number, (I didn't know it actually.) Consequently they took out another. So I wrote to them by AG explaining the situation and asking them to arrange the transfer of all the certificates to one number. I informed the P.O. of this action. Since then Barclays have acknowledged, stating that they will take the necessary steps. I also confirmed, by the way, that my P.O.S.B.²² holdings come to about £63 not the £35 or so which my book showed.

I celebrated my birthday by (a) having a pretty quiet night duty, (b) losing my advance of pay book, thus keeping myself on short pay for the next three weeks.

I went to a concert last night at which a section of the audience (Italians) demonstrated against the conductor²³, and launched down from the gallery hundreds of leaflets describing what a horrible fascist he was. They also had several fights in the process.

Ian must be easily the largest of the family now, as I am down to 13st and a few pounds, having lost weight during the last six months or so.

I see overseas service is down to 4 1/2 years now.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

²² Post Office Savings Bank

²³ Possibly Bernardino Molinari

PASSED BY CENSOR No 4843

222641 Lt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

2 Sept [44]

Dear Mother,

I have just received your letter card of 27th. I am glad Ian is settled in at K.A.²⁴ As you say the six weeks should pass rapidly - in fact I suppose he will be nearly half way through by the time you get this. Your parcel has not arrived yet, I am afraid, but I expect it eventually will.

My kit, if and when it arrives, should be in the form of two sacking bundles. Don't worry about it though because I don't really care if I lose the lot.

With events in Europe proceeding at a startling pace most people here are preoccupied with the idea of not being sent to the Far East if they can avoid it, as the Burma front is deservedly unpopular. I should think that, given moderate luck, I've done long enough overseas to avoid it.

I shall be interested to hear whether they appoint a new principal at Jesus [College Oxford]. The popular buzz used to favour Goronwy Edwards, the senior tutor as his probable successor. He has been associated with the college for a long time, has a sound reputation as a scholar and is well known in Welsh circles as well.²⁵

Today's news has let the cat out of the bag as regards the Adriatic offensive.²⁶

I am sending off by post one or two little books. One of them also contains a group photograph but I'm afraid it is a poor one, due to inferior materials.

I hope you manage to get a good holiday in.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

²⁴ King Alfred

²⁵ He did not become principal there

²⁶ Unsure

PASSED BY CENSOR No 4843

222641 Lt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

11 Sept 44

Dear Mother,

After some days without, yesterday was a bumper day for mail. I had one airmail letter, one surface mail (containing the Penguin 'Stars in their Courses'²⁷) and your birthday parcel. Consequently I am very well off for reading material now. The only casualty in the parcel was the two small tubes of tablets, which both broke. This was unfortunate, as, due to heat I suppose, the Kiwi Red²⁸ leaked a little, and when I tried them there was a distinct soupçon of dark tan - consequently I had to jettison them. I was very glad to get it though, thank you both very much. The parcel with the shirts in has not yet arrived.

The weather has taken a turn for the better. After a couple of torrential rain storms the weather is really delightful now, just like hot English summer weather. Actually we had not suffered from rain during the summer, but from the close oppressive heat, which started about the end of June.

You are not quite right in supposing that I have been cured of a wish to travel. Of course, as you say, the prospect of a return to England has its very strong attractions, but I don't think I am by any means reconciled to staying indefinitely at home. There are some places like Austria, Iraq, Iran which I now know I never want to see. Although I regret missing Luxor and Karnak in Egypt, I think I can stand never going there again. On the other hand what I have seen of Italy makes me want to revisit it after the war, along with Greece, France, and I think Spain.

After spending the summer living in a small stuffy building, they have put us into tents for the winter. However I don't think they will be too bad.

I hope you manage to get something like a decent holiday somehow or other.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

²⁷ The Stars in their Courses, Sir James Jeans, 1931

²⁸ Boot polish

PASSED BY CENSOR No 4843

222641 Lt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

13th Sept 44

Dear Ian²⁹

I was pleased to get your letter card and to know that you were well into the OCTU³⁰ course. As I write this you will have another fortnight to do, which I trust will pass away without any untowardness. I suppose when you get to the stage of being an officer under training you have really passed the obstacles and are getting the final touches.

As you say the news has been beyond all expectation, although the offensive here has been going rather slowly of late. I think we can safely assume that the flying bomb menace is nearly over.

It is cooler here now, in fact very pleasant weather, and we have moved into tents; otherwise the routine continues much the same (28 months to do).

I don't suppose you get enough time off from your course to get much benefit from your surroundings, which is a pity, as the country there is very attractive. Still, it's fortunate that you are still able to get home a bit.

I remember Ashton³¹, who, you say, was killed with the Lothian and Borders Yeomanry. They are, I think, an armoured car regt. with a rather 'countryish' reputation.

I don't quite know what your duties as a paymaster officer are likely to be. As far as my knowledge goes they are likely, apart from the pay work implied in the title, general administrative and staff duties, and also ciphers. I should steer clear of the latter which is tedious and trying work.

Well there's not much to add; I am still enjoying Italy and hoping that the day I can return at leisure with a *unclear three words* and more leisure. I think you would like the place. Best wishes.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

²⁹ Addressed to Cadet I F Hudson C/MX 578261, B Class, ?Scott Division, HMS King Albert

³⁰ Officer Cadet Training Unit

³¹ Unknown, not included on the regiments roll of honour and difficult to trace without other names etc

AIRGRAPH³²

PASSED BY CENSOR No 4843

222641 Lt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

17th September 1944

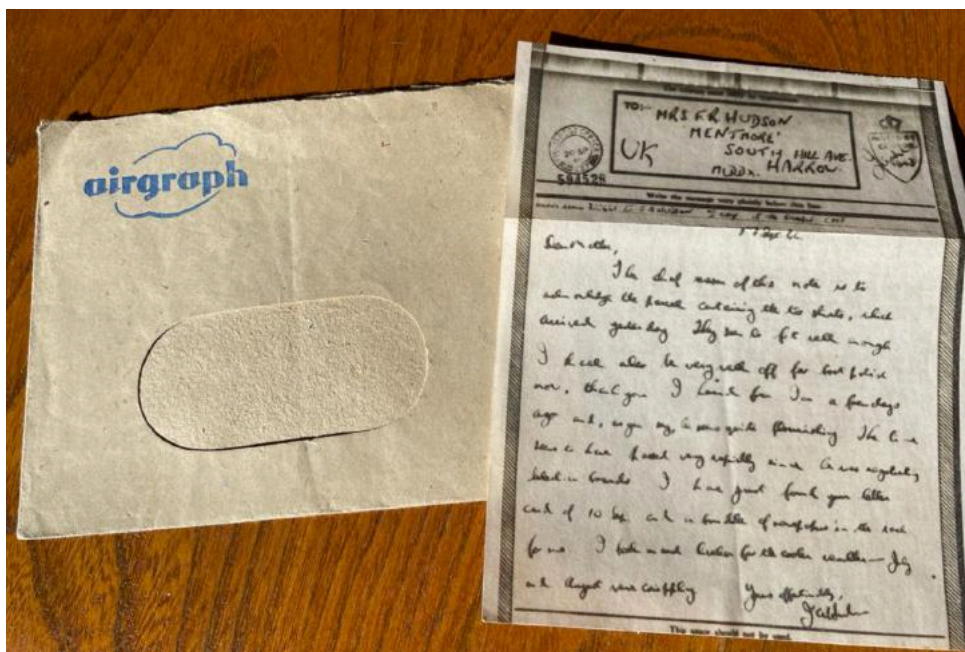
Dear Mother,

The chief reason of this note is to acknowledge the parcel containing the shirts, which arrived yesterday. They seem to fit well enough. I shall also be very well off for boot polish now, thank you. I heard from Ian a few days ago and, as you say he seems quite flourishing. The time seems to have passed very rapidly since he was negotiating selection boards. I have just found your letter card of 10 Sep. with a bundle of newspapers in the mail for me. I *unclear words* for the cooler weather - July and August were crippling.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

xpxp



³² Letters recorded on microfilm for transit, printed at the receiving end

PASSED BY CENSOR No 4843

222641 Lt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

25 Sept 44

Dear Mother,

I have just received your letter card of 17 Sept. I am surprised that the books arrived so quickly - not like the unlucky lemons. I think I sent four envelopes with books in. I also sent off two more parcels of books during the last week. As you say I think most of the people in the group are a year or two older than I am. By now I imagine you should have had my acknowledgement of your two parcels; however in case it went astray, they did arrive quite safe.

I verified the other day that the casualty [*qua* incidental payment] for my increase in pay of 1/6d p.d. (due from about the middle of July) was submitted by the unit at the end of that month. Consequently that should be through any time now. Under the new scheme I believe I am also due for an extra 15/9d per week from 3 Sept.

I suppose by the time you receive this you will have just finished your leave. I hope you made the most of it.

Of course the most popular topic of the last few days has been the demobilisation scheme proposals. The general feeling is that they are pretty fair, although most of my section who have done about four years overseas, feel that this should give some priority towards demobilisation.

I don't envy Dr Park³³ his probable sphere of operations. He will probably be an expert malariologist before he is through.

Did you happen to see an article in 'Illustrated' some weeks back on the War Office signal office? It was not a bad glimpse of the type of work.

I see that one of the witnesses in the Caruso³⁴ trial was lynched in Rome a few days ago. I went to a concert in Rome at which part of the audience demonstrated against the conductor and flung about leaflets condemning his political views and private misdemeanours.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

³³ Unknown

³⁴ Pietro Caruso, Italian fascist and chief of police in Rome, executed by firing squad 22 September 1944

PASSED BY CENSOR No 4843

222641 Lt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

6 Oct 44

Dear Mother,

My bag of mail for the last week consists of 1 Penguin, 1 letter card from you and the one from Ian + tailpiece from you. I was very pleased indeed to hear of Ian's success. I am writing to him and also sending a book as a memento of the occasion.

I hope you enjoyed your short spell of leave. It was fortunate that Ian was able to get away as well. He certainly has been fortunate with leave. Still, he will probably have a fair spell without it, as, unless I misjudge the situation, he is a very good bet for the Far East. Still on a ship or a naval shore station, life is pretty well organised and you should avoid a lot of the more severe discomforts.

It has been raining again fairly heavily. I have to keep pretty well everything covered with ground sheets & whatnot, because this tent drips, not fast but quite remorselessly, over pretty much its whole area.

These new increases have complicated the pay position considerably; goodness knows to what extent the pay authorities will be able to sort it out. I can't hope to have the same success as I had when I moved from M.E..

I have come in for a slight change of employment. I lose my section and am without one for the first time, and I shall be employed on purely operational work. It should be quite a pleasant change. The greatest advantage however is that I drop night duties and come on office hours.

I am not yet one of those who confidently predict that the Germans will be finished by Christmas, but things continue to go well. Here progress is still very laborious. If you could see the *unclear* broken nature of the country you would realise why.

On Sunday we are turning out a unit side to play football against a local Italian team. They are quite good and very fast and will probably beat us.

We are in battle dress now, and none too soon. It gets quite chilly. Like almost everyone here at the moment I have a slight cold. I should have thought that it was already too cold for mosquitoes but they say that the malarial season goes on till November.

I hope that you are both well and fortified for the winter. Will there be any shortage of fuel this year?

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

PASSED BY CENSOR No 4843

222641 Lt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

9 Oct. 44

Dear Ian,

I was very pleased to receive your AMLC of 29 Sept. and to know that you have been successful at K.A. I am writing this to Mentmore as I expect you will have moved on before this reaches you. I have bought a book which I hope to send off very shortly as a memento. I think you should find it quite interesting. One thing I found attractive about it was the quality of the letter type - the Florentine tradition perhaps.

It has been damnably wet the last week and my tent has become a very moist and cheerless place. I am, however, fortunate in having the electric light laid on.

Most of the unit has been telling me that I have jaundice, as during the last few days I have developed a ?healthy lemon colour. However as the other symptoms (notably aversion to food) are absent, I am inclined to attribute the pigmentation to overconscientious indulgence in Mepacrine³⁵.

I should be due for 15/9d from the 3rd Sept. as you say. However I have to claim for it as I can only count 3 years service as an officer by taking it into account ?reclaimable O.R.³⁶ service. You should be well up on these technicalities. I have only just claimed for 1/6d p.d. extra for 3 yrs service. I calculate that my I.T.³⁷ will be at the formidable level of £6 2s per month at least.

One of my colleagues has just assured me that, as I ?reclaim 35 on this new points scheme I shall 'see Burma yet'. However I think I have just about a sporting chance of being spared the pleasure. It is rather shocking to reflect that before I am out of this racket I shall probably have done nearly as much service as if I had joined the army as a regular engagement.

I hear that you might go to an overseas shore station. Haifa or Beirut would be quite acceptable and I can recommend Alex. In fact if you find yourself en route for Ras-el-Tin³⁸ write to me and I will give you the low down. The ward room there always enjoyed an excellent reputation.

Meanwhile keep me posted with any griff [news] you may have.

³⁵ Anti-malarial drug

³⁶ Other Ranks

³⁷ Income Tax?

³⁸ Alexandria's harbour quarter

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

PASSED BY CENSOR No 4843

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

13 Oct 44

Dear Mother,

At the risk of being several days premature I will take this opportunity of wishing you many happy returns of your birthday. I suppose it is unlikely that Ian can get away for the Monday - you will have to bring it forward a day or else spend a rather quiet time.

As I dare say you will have noticed from the heading I have just been appointed A/Capt³⁹ w.e.f. 5th Oct. This is due, as so often, to being on the spot when a vacancy occurs in your particular sort of job.

I don't know whether you are familiar at all with the intricacies of the army rules on the subject of ranks and appointments. Actually an appointment to acting rank is a chancy business as you aren't to substantive⁴⁰ rank if you cease doing the job for which you had the appointment - *viz* if you are sick for a certain time or get posted. After 3 months of acting rank you become temporary: but you are still very liable to revert if posted. You only become substantive in the rank of captain by holding the rank of major for 3 months.

I should imagine that this will add the final touch of confusion necessary to make utter chaos of my pay account.

Here we have had only one fine day out of the last fourteen; all the others have been quite wet.

I am amazed that the 5 army are still managing to make any progress at all. Until you have seen a little of it I think it is impossible to judge the difficulties of large scale troop movements.

I am very fit, although a funny colour (did I tell you that?) and I hope you are just as well.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

³⁹ Acting Captain

⁴⁰ Permanent rank

PASSED BY CENSOR No 4843

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

20 Oct 44

Dear Father,

I had your letter the day before yesterday enclosing the detective story. I must say that thanks to your constant priming I now have quite a good stock of reading material. I also had the pair of socks which Grandma sent to my old address. As it is just about a year since I left 3 Coy 8 LofC⁴¹ I think the APO⁴² did pretty well to get them through so quickly.

It was curious you should remark on the way sound seems to carry in autumn. I have noticed this myself - the air always seems more still during the autumn than at other times of the year.

I am sending you a folder of some reproductions showing some views of the Florentine bridges. I think they are rather pleasant. There is a point of further interest in them now as all these bridges with the exception of the Ponte Vecchio, were very thoroughly blown up by the Germans in order to defend the line of the Arno. I expect you read about it in the papers. They left the Ponte Vecchio but blew up the buildings at both ends of it pretty extensively in order to block the approaches to it. So even that one doesn't retain its original appearance.

After all the rain we have had recently the weather today has been perfect - very clear and warm yet with the moisture of the last two weeks still in the air.

Today we have had the good news of the Philippine landings. I always thought Gen. MacArthur would have a go at them as soon as he could and I am very glad they have got going. Things here go slowly still, and unless conditions elsewhere force a collapse I should think the Germans can put up some sort of defence until about June of next year. However, I hope not.

Best wishes.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

⁴¹ Lines of Communication [unit]

⁴² Army Post Office

PASSED BY CENSOR No 4843

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

21 Oct 44

Dear Mother,

I have just received your letter card saying that you had the kit sent on from M.E. Actually I think you have probably half of it. I think there are two bundles. The stuff I left consisted of - 1 large kit bag and the leather bag with a wash stand and folding chair (which I think you must have got) and my old brown suitcase and another canvas grip. You may find the little chair of some use to you - I know you always liked small chairs - I could never get it right except gingerly and for short periods. The bag you may also be able to use. The workmanship is not good and the fittings are poor, but it is leather of a sort. I bought it in Cairo. The best thing to do, if you can is to get another zip altogether and have it done in place of the existing one. I think the woollen things might also come in quite handy as it is getting chilly now. Most of the socks I think you will find are not in a condition to be worth keeping. There should be an almost brand new battle dress there (I can't remember whether there is an old one as well) which I had specially made for me, with the buttons etc. I should be quite glad of that as well. The boots and other stuff are not worth sending. I am rather surprised that it arrived so successfully. I hardly expected that the glass of the little lamp would arrive intact. It used to be very handy. I don't know if you noticed the waist dimensions of the battle dress. I should think it must look pretty huge and is probably an inch or two too large for me now as I am certain that I have shrunk a bit since I had it made (about February of this year.)

I have got over my cold, which didn't worry me anyhow, and am feeling very fit. I think that, with luck, we shall move into a billet which will be more comfortable.

The newspapers continue to arrive sporadically of course, as the boats come in.

I remember Reginald Roberts⁴³ - or at least I think I can set him out from the other Roberts - tall, dark, fresh complexion and rather a keen musician.

I hope you had a good birthday and are keeping well.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

⁴³ Unknown

PASSED BY CENSOR No 4843

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

1 November 44

Dear Mother,

I had your letter card of 23rd today and was very glad to hear that the lemons arrived safely. I had given up hope for them. I also note that the second bale of kit arrived ex ME. One thing I seem to remember having put in one of those parcels was a pack of playing cards which I had received only a few weeks previously from you. I must have been half witted at the time to do it and have regretted it since many times. If you could retransmit them to me I should be grateful. (In fact 2 packs would be better if they are still easily obtainable! - they aren't here.) One of the reasons for this is that I have been getting quite a few games of bridge recently. Altogether of course, I have played quite a bit since leaving England and now manage a reasonably steady game. And that suggests something else, so I might as well make this quite a brazen request for some odds and ends I could do with.

- (1) If you can find a reasonably compact and useful book on Contract (I am told there is a very serviceable one of Culbertson's⁴⁴ called the Standard Manual). I should rather like one.
- (2) Another thing I could quite use is a fair sized bottle of Dettol or TCP or something & some cotton wool, if it is possible to pack it successfully.

I am now moved into some quite comfortable billets, which is a very agreeable change. Roast chestnuts are going very strong at the moment - I think they must grow in large quantities hereabouts. However they haven't completely superseded the sunflower seeds which the Italians have been eating earlier on. These have a slightly salty flavour - not too bad.

Not so yellow now & feeling quite healthy still. Hope you are well.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

⁴⁴ Ely Culbertson, American bridge expert

PASSED BY CENSOR No 4843

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

16 Nov 44

Dear Mother

I received your letter card of 5 November about 4 days ago. I do not think that it is worthwhile to send me any more of the clothing you have, as I am not anxious to collect as much kit as I had in Egypt. I still have my OR's greatcoat⁴⁵ and I have recently bought a reasonably warm trench coat as my old one was dropping to pieces.

We have now got hold of some lignite - a sort of low-grade coal fuel - in fairly abundant supply, so that we are able to keep a reasonable fire going in the mess. It has, of course been getting colder, but there has not yet been anything like a heavy frost. It has also been a good deal drier lately.

We have quite a respectable unit soccer team, who managed to be the first army team here to beat the local Italian side. The Italians are quite good, tricky and very fast, but if hustled they panic a bit.

Did you ever receive the parcels containing 4 vols of a guide to Rome, 1 volume in English and the other 3 in Italian? I think they should have found their way home by now.

Do the new rockets cause you much annoyance? They must be quite unpleasant. However I think the Germans will have had it by midsummer 45. At any rate I hope so.

I realise that I am putting on weight again. I shall have to make a serious effort to get some more exercise, as I thought I had got down to something like my correct weight.

You will probably notice a difference now if Ian is unable to get home leave for long periods, as it must have been pleasant to see him frequently. Best wishes.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

⁴⁵ Other Ranks Greatcoat

PASSED BY CENSOR No 4843

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

29 Nov. 44

Dear Mother,

I had your letter card posted 21 Nov. the day before yesterday. I had also heard shortly before from Ian; he said then that he was likely to leave the ship he was with - I conclude that his present duties do not make him a permanent member of any ship's establishment, but that he is likely to gad about a bit from one to the other.

As for this *unclear* leave scheme I don't give a great deal of attention to it at this stage. The numbers to be taken will not be all that large, and the scheme is primarily for fighting troops (you could hardly call an H.Q. Signals a front line unit.) Altogether, although I don't fear the possibility, I shall not be surprised if I qualify for repatriation without getting it. I expect to complete the full term of overseas service anyhow.

I shall be very interested to see the White Paper on Civil Service recruitment; I had read something about plans in this respect but did not know that there was a White Paper.

I think that I have reverted to something like a normal colour now and am feeling quite well, apart from the aftermath of a cold. It is nippy now, but not as cold as it would be in England; no frosts yet.

The BBC is just broadcasting a report of Churchill's speech saying that the war in Europe will very likely last until late spring or early summer of '45. This more or less bears out my own ideas.

I have thought for the last two or three months, that this campaign will last into June if things carry on true to form.

After our success against the Italians at football we arranged a match against a representative team of the Polish Army in Italy. They were a much better team and we were well beaten 5-1. At that I think we did pretty well, we have only a unit ?straight to draw on; moreover the Poles had been playing together as a team for 3 years.

One thing which it is possible to get here if anyone wants one, is a propelling pencil; not outstandingly good ones, but useable.

I hope you are both well.

Yours affectionately,

PASSED BY CENSOR No 4843

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

12th December 1944

Dear Mother,

I have had another Penguin through the other day. It was rather delayed because some idiot had sent it to L of C Signals in spite of a perfectly clear address. The restriction on the use of these letter cards has been lifted, but unlimited supplies are not yet available. I have one or two in hand though. I wrote one the other day to Mrs Ewing⁴⁶. The battle dress has not yet arrived - perhaps it has got caught up with the Xmas mail.

As my pay has been fluctuating rather often recently I am quoting again those since July up to the 23 January 45 then I become due for my legr.⁴⁷ increase.

Date from which issued		20 July*	3 Sep.	5 Oct.	27 Jan. 45
Basic Pay	13/-	14/6	16/9d	19/9d	20/6d
Corps Pay	1/10d	1/10d	1/10d	2/8d	2/8d

*Approx. Mediterranean allowance remains constant at 4/6d p.d.

You can probably get an idea if these are coming through according to plan. Very likely I will check with Cox's & Kings⁴⁸ [*sic*] later. It is a lot of money for the work I am doing now but the income tax begins to get fairly heavy (round about £8 per month I think).

I am expecting to go on leave towards the end of next week for a few days. Not quite the ideal time of year but one can't pick and choose. I should have quite a good time I believe. It will be the first time I have taken leave overseas. I was going to Luxor last winter, but couldn't because of the great malaria epidemic in the upper Nile - now I don't suppose I shall get another chance of getting there.

It's chilly here, but nothing like as cold as the U.K. - traces of hoar frost for the first time yesterday, although the mountains have been snowed up for some time.

Are pipes very scarce at home? This is a briar growing area & the local products are quite good I am told.

⁴⁶ Unknown

⁴⁷ Unclear

⁴⁸ Cox & Kings, agents responsible for paying troops

Hope you are well.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

PASSED BY CENSOR No 4843

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

23rd December 1944

Dear Mother,

I have just received one of your parcels - that which contained the Dettol and cotton wool. I am glad to say it arrived quite undamaged. I should be well equipped for some time now with medical stores. The other has not yet arrived I am afraid. I am told there are large quantities of parcels held up here at various places. They have been coming through steadily for the last week or two. I have also had three Christmas airgraphs from Chorley Wood.

Since yesterday afternoon it has been quite cold, below freezing point. However the weather is very different from English Christmas weather, being dry and sunny - very pleasant really, I know you would like it. I do myself and am feeling very fit. The Italians are feeling it rather, I fancy; of course of course the cold weather is not so good if you haven't enough to eat, and they are also short of warm clothes. I don't know how intensively they celebrate Christmas. Christmas trees (which are, of course, a German custom) they don't go in for. Instead they seem to make nativity scenes for the children, after the fashion of those we sometimes have in churches at Christmas, but in miniature, like Japanese gardens. In some places there are well known examples of these models (I forget what they call them) previously set up. I saw one in Rome which was of the eighteenth century, very elaborate with lots of wax figures in tiny silk clothes.

Things have been rather startling on the western front lately. It looks as though the Americans have stopped quite a racket.

As far as I can make out there has been a great deal of nonsense talked in England by *unclear* people about the Greek situation.

In case this should reach you in time, very best wishes for the New Year.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

PASSED BY CENSOR No 9463

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

5 Jan 45

Dear Mother,

I am afraid I have got a bit behind with my mail and consequently have several acknowledgements to make. The battle dress arrived on Christmas day and the scarf and other odds and ends two days ago. Very opportunely too, for we have had some bitterly cold days. I have had a bit of a move and been very busy the last few days (hence the delay in writing.) I had to swap my leave for the time being.

The letter card which you posted long after the official posting date with the prediction that it would arrive about Christmas time did in fact arrive on the 25th.

I have had the copy of the white paper on Civil Service recruitment (also another copy which Ian sent to me.) The proposals certainly seem very reasonable. The army has just produced a scheme (ACI 1426/44) for the training of Civil affairs staff Officers for the military administration of Far Eastern territories with the possibility of post war employment under the colonial office. I mean to have a look at it in detail although these far flung schemes have their disadvantages.

I had a letter yesterday from Dr Ewing. He hasn't succeeded in getting his book published.

We had a good Christmas and did very well in the food line. I hope you did have something a bit extra.

Have you fully recovered from your cold? You should have done by now, I hope.

Best wishes.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

PASSED BY CENSOR No 4843

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

17 Jan 45

Dear Grandma [Susan],

I was very pleased to get your parcel with the socks a couple of days ago. I am afraid they did not arrive quite in time for Christmas but they were very welcome anyhow. Christmas mail was rather erratic - it usually is.

We have had coldish weather although not up to English standards; most days I find I can walk in comfort without an overcoat. In fact this weather suits me well and I feel very fit.

We are very comfortable here in a villa on one of those little hills grown with olives and cypresses. On clear days you can look across the valley and see the sun shining on the snow of the mountains on the other side.

I had a Christmas card from Ian but haven't heard from him since. He seems to enjoy himself pretty well, I must say.

I suppose there is a chance I may get home for leave now during the next eighteen months. At the moment however only those with over 3 yrs 8 months are getting it, so at that rate I've still some way to go. However in many ways I could hardly improve on my current situation.

I hear Christmas went off well in spite of being rather an austerity affair still.

I hope you are keeping well. Best wishes to everybody,

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

PASSED BY CENSOR No 4843

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
15 HQ Signals
CMF

22 Jan 45

Dear Mother,

The chief reason for writing this surface letter is to send you the enclosure, which I think you will find interesting. The service sheet explains itself. I thought it a very good effort to get it organised, and enjoyed it thoroughly. Of course the choir had been built up on rather limited resources of talent; in particular the woman's section was rather ?lame, but that was unavoidable. I think the leading spirit in organising it was the resident chaplain of the local English community. (An appreciable sprinkling before the war in these parts.)

The last couple of days have been marked by the news of the Russian triple offensive⁴⁹. It has certainly been spectacular, and I should think that if the Russians are able to keep up its speed and weight, it is the one factor in the present which might bring a very rapid ?break in Germany.

Rumours have appeared from several sources recently that the Germans might pull out of Italy altogether. I don't know if they will, but I have no doubt they could very well do with twenty seven divisions (some of which are the last they have) in other sectors just now.

I shall have another shot at taking some leave during the next week or two. Work has dropped off again now and things are dead quiet as far as I am concerned. The only snag is that in my present job I am rather tied to the office even when there is nothing to do, and that is very tiresome.

I was surprised that Ian has been home again. He'd has certainly been very fortunate. Did I tell you about Admiral Mountbatten's speech? He said that in the Far East signals personnel were so short that they could not be released for repatriation after the normal 4 1/2 yrs.

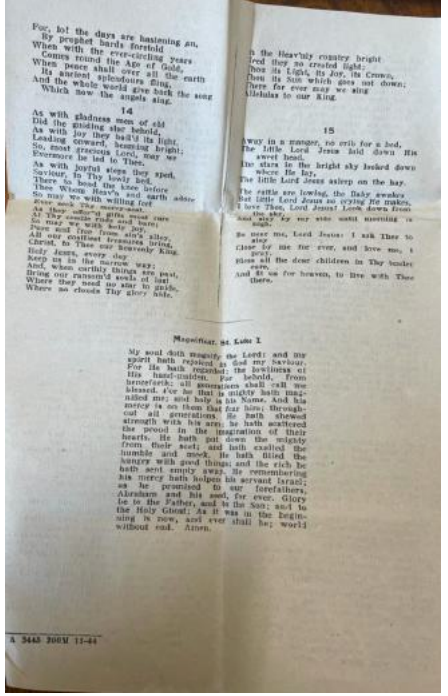
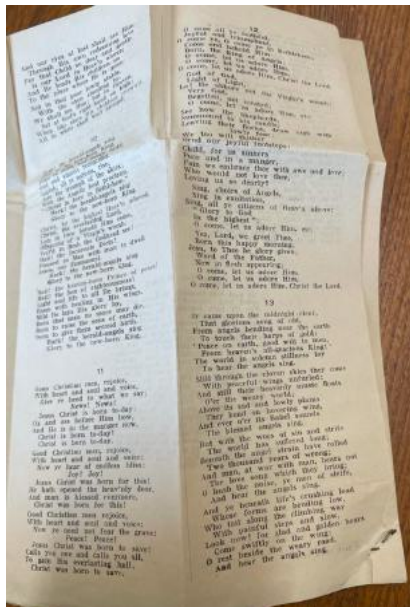
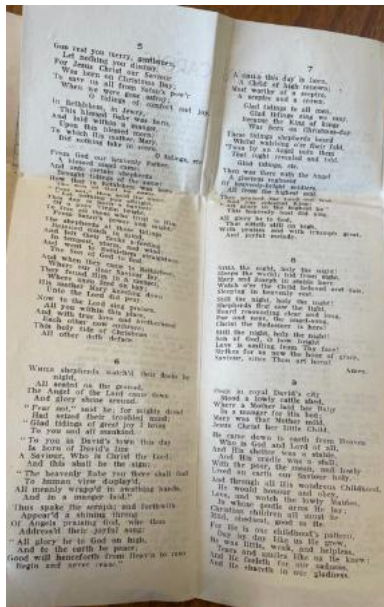
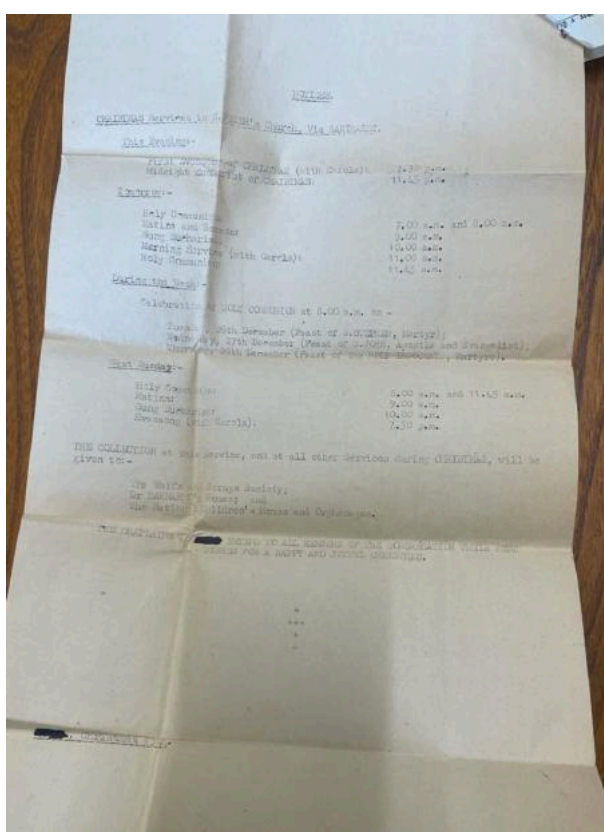
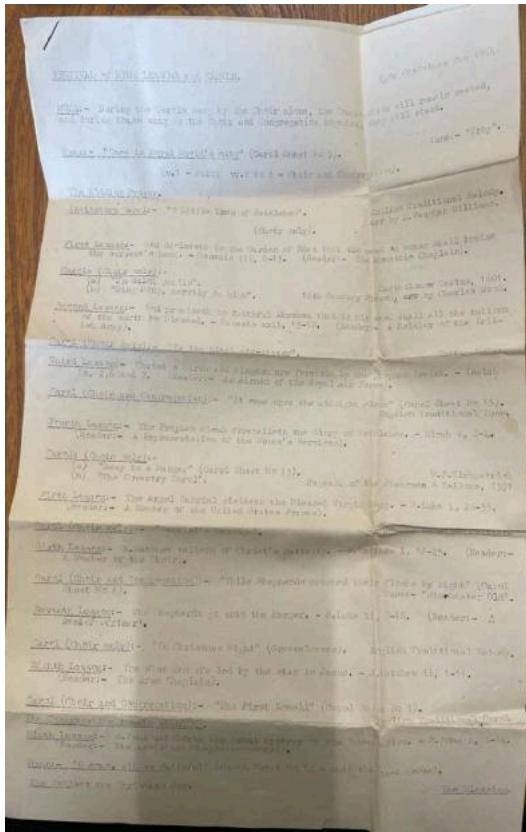
I hope you are both keeping fit. Best wishes.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

[Enclosed - see photographs]

⁴⁹ The so called Vistula Oder offensive, taking back German held territory



PASSED BY CENSOR No 4843

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

7 Feb 45

Dear Mother,

After a really alarmingly bad spell of mail I have received the letter cards during the last week.

I was not surprised to hear that Ian had news of a move. I have not heard from him for some time, but will try to drop him a note (to Mentmore for redirection).

You seem to have been very much in the news for colds this winter. I do hope they have finished for good now.

Here the weather has taken a most striking turn for the better. It is no exaggeration to say that the last three days have been like an English June, being warm and sunny. I hastily shed my heavy sweater for a light one and it is just delightful to go out in battle dress without coat. I really believe it will last.

The battle dress fits quite well apart from being too large round the waist. (I must have shrunk a good deal in the last year.)

The start of finer weather has made me wish that I had a camera. I think it should be possible to send out my little Ensign [camera] in its leather case as it is very small. There is only this difficulty - films, which are pretty hopeless here. One of the London camera shops (I think Wallace Heaton) had a scheme for sending 1/2 dozen roll films to people serving overseas. If this is still working, I think it would be worth sending out the camera by registered post and ordering half a dozen films. If all this is practicable I should like, with the camera, the filter holder, cable release and the little green Burroughs Wellcome diary. However don't worry about all this if there is any difficulty.

I hope you are really fit again now.

Best wishes.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

PASSED BY CENSOR No 4843

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

17 Feb 45

Dear Mother,

I have just completed six days leave, and came back to find two letter cards (4th and 12th Feb) waiting for me, as well as a Penguin. I found it a very pleasant break. I stayed in a leave hotel, a very civilised establishment, good food and a purely nominal messing charge of 1/6d p.d. Of course a lot of the peace time attractions of the place are gone; statues removed and frescoes bricked up for protection but the time spent in sightseeing was by no means wasted. Incidentally the Italians did really make a good job of protecting national monuments etc: it is about the only thing that appears to have been thoroughly or efficiently done.

I am sorry that you have seen rainy rotten weather, it really seems that the bad weather is over, here. The farmers are getting out in the fields, ploughing between the olives and preparing the vine trellises.

I shall keep a look out for the letter and the bridge book. I have always stuck to the orthodox forcing two convention, as do most people (although we have a couple who play the Beasley system, in which all bids are conventional on a points basis), but I feel that I need to have a better grasp of bidding on the 3-4 level.

It is very extraordinary that my letter card asking for the little camera should cross with one of yours suggesting that I might feel the want of one.

I am keeping very fit; I hope you have finished with colds for the year.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

PASSED BY CENSOR No 4843

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

23 Feb 45

Dear Father,

I received your surface letter with the photo a few days ago (dated 21 Jan). I thought it quite a good photo, but the expression was rather uncharacteristic being rather too severe. I was very glad to get it. I should like one of you as well, if you could get one taken.

The newspapers and surface mail arrive pretty regularly; of course they bunch a little. However a good deal of surface mail is going by air nowadays.

It really looks like the winter is over here; I can't say for certain, because it is my first here. However buds are breaking everywhere, the weather is warm and sunny with mild snaps of frost. There has been nothing worth calling a winter by English standards. Forsythia has been in bloom for some time now but I have not seen much else in the way of early flowers; no winter aconite or snowdrops for instance.

As you say, I have done over two and a half years overseas now. I think it is a fair assumption that 18 months will see me just about en route, all being well. At the moment Python⁵⁰ is running about a couple of months ahead of schedule, and it should quicken if anything. The European war should be pretty dead in 18 months from now. That would some time in the autumn of 1946, so I should miss getting back to catch the lime trees in bloom. It isn't difficult to visualise the tree now although I have seen more olives and cypresses than lime trees for some time.

I have been to the films today to see 'It Happened Tomorrow'. Rather slight but quite good fun. I have also seen a reasonable film lately, 'Dragon Seed' from Pearl Buck's book.

I hope you are both very well and looking forward to the summer (quite a cheerful summer *unclear* for a change.)

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

⁵⁰ Python was the name given to the period of leave that length of service overseas entitled people to

PASSED BY CENSOR No 7672

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

8 March [45]

Dear Mother,

I received your letter card of 25th Feb. about four days ago. The news is quite light again; I think my last years estimate of midsummer 1945 for the end of the European war may not be far out.

There has been a publication here of present provisional holiday in this theatre for drafts to India and SEAC. This suggests that I shall miss it. Of course there is never anything certain, and Signals are reputedly in great need there. However it would seem more natural to move people back from here to BLA⁵¹ and from there to SEAC.

If you do go to the Far East you are to get 28 days leave in the U.K. first. Incidentally there has been a certain amount of bad feeling here over supposedly preferential treatment of troops in BLA, because they are supposed to get leave in U.K. after only six months service overseas, and because individuals who have had 28 days leave from here have found themselves excluded from canteens and other amenities which were reserved for personnel from the Western Front. I don't know how much there is in it, but I think that the authorities in U.K. should take it seriously, as troops overseas are very sensitive to that sort of thing, which soon becomes magnified into a major grievance.

I had not forgotten the pipe, but shortly after mentioning it had moved from the principal pipe manufacturing area. Julie's belt is quite *unclear*. They make things here out of a sort of raffia, table mats, belts, bags etc. Nothing startling but the designs are quite pretty. I sent Mollie and Julie a little belt.

Have you any address for Ian yet? I suppose it is best for me to write via you.

Hope you are well.

Yours affectionately

J A Hudson

⁵¹ British Liberation Army

PASSED BY CENSOR No 7672

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

22 March [45]

Dear Father,

I received the bridge book about five days ago, and the Penguin 'Fountains of Sand'⁵² yesterday. Prior to these two there has been a slump for a week or so in sea mail. Both look entertaining, and I hope that the former should polish up my game a little. We have one steady four here which we try to assemble once a week, and usually produces a keen and *unclear* evening's play. Apart from this we occasionally get a scratch game.

As regards the converter for the camera, I am unfortunately not acquainted with this particular bit of apparatus. I rather imagine it is to convert it to hold cassettes for 35mm film (neg. size 24x36mm.) This film is, I believe, still available. I think I had best leave it to you. If it looks quite a practical and useful device it is possibly worth buying even at the present heavy prices if the film is available in good quantity.

I am supposed to be playing tennis tomorrow, but have some forebodings about the apparatus. (I am told that the balls are not so good as the rubber⁵³ is beginning to wear a bit thin now.) It is almost three years since I touched a racquet.

I am sorry to hear that you have had a cold again. Still, the weather should be improving now. Here it is quite delightful. I expect you are hoping to be less busy in the coming year. I have had very little work for a very long time now. There are many other people here in the same boat.

Don't bother about the little Italian dictionary, as I have since acquired another here.

I had a letter card yesterday from Ian from his ?draft address.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

⁵² Fountains in the Sand by Norman Douglas, Penguin 1944

⁵³ Unknown why underlined

PASSED BY CENSOR No 7672

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

17 April [45]

Dear Father,

I have had two letters through from you under the new provisions - one of 4th arrived on 9th, and yesterday I had one posted on 12th. I think that is very good.

I am very sorry to hear that you have been on the sick list, and hope that you make a really good recovery. The weather should be getting pleasant now. Here I think we are enjoying the best time of the year. The weather is just what we should call perfect English summer weather. Also there are masses of flowers. Almonds and cherries were making a fine show a week or two ago, now it is chiefly wisteria and lilacs. There are also other flowering shrubs and lots of tulips, lilies and iris. The roads are beginning to get very dirty already, so that it is unpleasant to walk on a road with any traffic on it.

I have had one or two games of tennis; all being very mixed as regards players and also equipment. However it's better than nothing.

I am glad you liked the pipe - it's very difficult to judge when you don't smoke yourself.

I see that provision for postal voting has just been made; at any rate the general order covering the procedure has been issued.

I have just completed 2 yr. 9 months overseas service (it counts from date of embarkation which was July 13th). The LIAP⁵⁴ (that is the 1 months UK leave scheme) is rather a fiasco. At the present rate it would take about 30 years to give this unit leave. It's really in the nature of a lucky dip. Very few people will ever get it.

I hope you are well when you get this. I continue to keep very fit.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

⁵⁴ Leave in addition to Python

PASSED BY CENSOR No 7672

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

23 April [45]

Dear Mother

I had your first full letter via the air service two days ago.

Things are moving here now as well as on other fronts and there is a certain amount of flapping going on so I don't expect much spare time for the next few days.

My release group number is 35. Until recently I had the idea that it was 31 but I found recently on checking that that was too optimistic. However, V.E. as they call it is beginning to look a bit nearer.

There is a witticism current here that B.L.A. stands for Burma Looms Ahead.

Did you notice whether I was given an increment of 9d. p.d. from 23 Jan 45? It should have come through.

I hope you have both recovered completely from the winter's crop of colds by now.

I ran into F ?D Milne the other day. (He was classical exhibitor in my year.) He is now a captain in a S/L battery⁵⁵. I have had no other news of acquaintances recently.

I also had one Penguin posted the end of March. Have seen 'Henry V' and 'For Whom the Bell Tolls', the former I thought first class, the latter disappointing.

Hope you are well.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

⁵⁵ Possibly searchlight battery

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

4 May 45

Dear Mother,

I enclose a couple of photos. I have also sent off an enlargement of the company group. The printing of the other is not good & I hope to get a better copy later.

Hope you are both well.

Yours affectionately

J A Hudson

[Note accompanying photograph:]

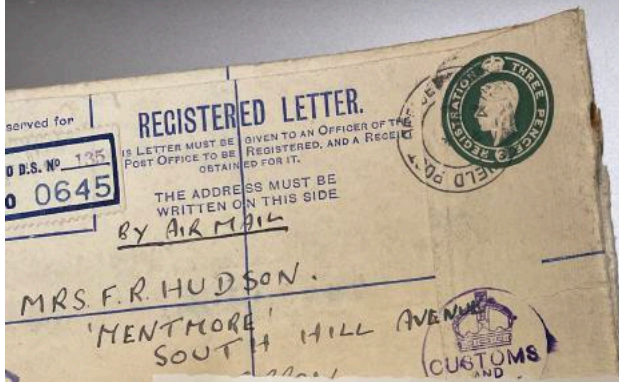
Standing L-R

Capt. T.S.Wragg (Unit Wireless Officer)
Capt. J.D.Lunn (Unit Lines Officer)
Capt. J.A.Hudson (Senior Signalmaster)
Capt. J.D.Rollings (Telephone Traffic Officer)

Seated L-R

Maj. G.C.Smith (O.C.2 Coy)
Maj. A.C.Crocsdale (O.C. 1 Coy)
Capt. A.N. Montguire (ADST.)
Lt. Col. V.Mitchell (C.O.)
Maj. A.R.Mabin (2. i/c)
Maj. Clarke (O.C.4 Coy)
Maj. H.A.Hayward (O.C.3 Coy)
Maj.W.Bennett (Chief Cipher Officer)

[Reverse of photograph] "COMMAND GP 15 HQ SIGNALS" [J.A. Hudson rear, third from left]



222 641 C.P.T. -
H.B. SUNDAY
3 Cor. C.M.R.

4 May 65

Dear Sir,

I have a couple of photos. I have also sent off a longer one of the company group. The printing of the letter is to good & I hope to get a letter copy later.

Hope you are well sell.

Yours faithfully,

J. Asher



222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

11 May 45

Dear Mother,

I had your letter of 7th May yesterday; the day before an old surface letter of 27 March. It must have been about the last of the old dispensation.

Before I go any further, I will clear up a couple of your queries. The ten pounds credit BENNETT is in order; - a cheque I cashed for a chap getting married & consequently needing cash. As regards the duty free labels, I knew about those, but have been rather chary of them in the past as using them always seemed tantamount to inviting pilfering, particularly as you can't use them on registered parcels. However as they are evidently tightening up on these things, I shall probably use them in the future.

We have just gone into K.D., a pleasant change, as it was beginning to get pretty sticky.

Of course there is a great deal of uncertainty now as to our future activities. There is no reason now for the continuance of this headquarters in its present form.

I expect we shall start getting some changes now in a matter of weeks. I don't think, however, that there is much risk of being sent to the Far East without getting 28 days leave in the U.K. first.

What are you expecting to manage in the way of holidays this year? You should try to get away; a lot of the restrictions on travelling should be gone soon and make it easier.

I had almost forgotten that since my last letter VE day has come and gone. It roused no interest in me at all. Best wishes to both of you.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

12 May 45

Dear Father,

I was very sorry to hear that you have had to knock off the tennis for a bit. However you will probably feel better for a really long rest. I hope you need to get a decent holiday in somewhere.

Just now there is a great deal of uncertainty here and everybody is on the lookout for information. the two queries being

- what groups will be released and when? and
- what will happen to this unit?

The first, of course, doesn't concern me very immediately, but the second does. I dare say Churchill will say something about release on Sunday.

Efforts have been made the last few days to get us to volunteer for the Far East. However in most cases people would have to waive Python or release rights to go there and they have had a very meagre catch.

Of course, a speech which Grigg⁵⁶ once made has been interpreted as a near promise to bring Python down to three years after the defeat of Germany. I don't know if that will actually come to pass.

The fireflies are back again in full force, and make the pleasant little garden of our villa very much active at night.

Don't go and work too hard now that you are back at the office again. Best wishes.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

⁵⁶ Sir James Grigg, Secretary of State for War

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

24 May 45

Dear Father,

A good deal has happened since last I wrote to you. I think the most impressive sign of reappearing normality in England, was hearing Howard Marshall's⁵⁷ commentary on the unofficial test match⁵⁸ at Lord's. I should very much like to have seen it. In particular I was interested in the good performance of Robertson⁵⁹ who of course had made his debut as an opening bat for Middlesex just before the war. He showed considerable promise then.

I hope we shall get some cricket in time, unfortunately the army rather underestimates cricket for recreation & elects to play football all the year round. A few days ago I saw the English touring [football] team give a good beating to a 5 Army eleven. As it was virtually an international side it was only to be expected. The 5 Army side was also almost entirely composed of English professionals with the exception of three Brazilians in the forward line. These were completely eclipsed, but nevertheless got a good write up in the papers. The political ?motive is all-pervading here.

I have also had my postal voting form today, & hope to send it in tomorrow. Churchill seems to have achieved a tactical advantage over the Labour party by offering them the choice of continued participation or an early election⁶⁰.

I think that something amounting to resentment has been caused by the announcement of ration cuts in U.K. In spite of previous warnings, it makes the fruits of victory seem rather overrated. I hope it doesn't last very long.

I heard from Ian the other day. He seemed quite cheerful, said work [in the Navy] was rather hum-drum. Hope you are well.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

⁵⁷ BBC journalist and commentator

⁵⁸ The first of a 5 match series played between England and Australia May - August 1945, so called 'victory tests'

⁵⁹ Jack Robertson scored 84

⁶⁰ Which took place from the 5th June, with counting completed 26th June, with a landslide victory to Clement Atlee's Labour party.

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

31 May 45

Dear Mother

As you may (or may not) have heard, censorship regulations have been relaxed in this theatre to permit the disclosure of locations and movements. Consequently I am going to indulge in recapitulating my movements since I left England in rather more detail than in the past. I should be interested in how far they correspond with your surmises.

I sailed in the 'Empress of Japan'⁶¹ from the Clyde on 13th July 42. We first sighted land off the Azores, called in at Freetown⁶², but without getting off, and just had a couple of days ashore in Cape Town. We again called in at Aden, but without going ashore, and disembarked at Port Taofik (Suez) on 1st September. Thence by train to the signals depot at Maadi near Cairo. After a week or two there I went to join 3 Coy 8 L of C who were forming up at Sidi Bishr (nr Alexandria.) Everyone was then getting ready for the Alamein push and we were preparing to take over communications in the rear of 8 Army as they went forward as far as the Libyan frontier, when another unit took over. Of course things went off as planned and we moved into Marsa Matruh on 13th November. The next year I spent entirely in this area between Matruh and the frontier, partly in Matruh and partly in [Fort] Capuzzo. During this time one or two courses took me to Cairo and I was able to see a bit of Cairo and Alex. In Nov 43 I was posted to 1 Coy in Alex. and spent a month or two there during which I made my only trip into Palestine, spending a fortnight a course near Gaza and getting in a weekend at Tel Aviv. Unfortunately I couldn't get to Jerusalem.

It was about the end of February that my posting to CMF came through. I sailed from Port Said in a Polish ship, the [MS] Batory⁶³ and landed, after quite a short trip at Taranto. Thence to the depot at Nola [Naples]. A short stay there and then onto my present unit. We were then in the Royal Palace at



61

62 Sierra Leone



63

Caserta with HQ. Allied Armies in Italy. This was in April [1944] and the [Monte] Cassino attack was brewing up. In June we march into Rome where we worked very hard for two of the next months of the year. (The summer is very hot and oppressive in Rome.) The next move was in October to Siena, Where we stayed until coming into Florence at the beginning of this year. At the moment I am in Verona in the middle of another move, and it is pouring with rain.

On VE day, incidentally, I had the odd experience of flying up to visit our liaison detachment with Vietinghoff's⁶⁴ H.Q. It was rather odd to stroll about streets full of armed German troops and S.S. men, all looking very smart and regimental, and not in the least down at heel, and all judiciously saluting (Nazi style then, but since abolished.) The Germans appeared to have been living in considerable style and having a pretty good time.

Northern Italy is still full of Germans streaming down to ?cafes and concentration areas⁶⁵. There are even small parties in single vehicles making their own way.

I went out the other night to Sirmione on Lake Garda. (see Tennyson's translation of Catullus on the subject⁶⁶. Catullus, of course, lived in Verona.) It is a delightful spot; you seem to be out in the middle of the lake with mountains really all the way round.

I have been quite busy setting up here for the last few days (here it is now 4th June). Verona unfortunately has been very badly damaged (key to the Brenner Pass⁶⁷.) It must have been a very pleasant little town, although not as interesting as Florence or Siena.

I hope I shall get a chance of looking in at Venice.

Best wishes; I hope you are both well.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

[Enclosed, a 12/- postal order counterfoil made out to R A Appleton at Saffron Walden post office. Unclear jotting to reverse]

⁶⁴ Heinrich Gottfried Otto Richard von Vietinghoff, Wehrmacht General and from March 1945 supreme German commander in Italy. It was his representative Karl Wolff who on 2nd May 1945 signed the German surrender in Italy, at the Royal Palace in Caserta.

⁶⁵ Areas in which troops gathered prior to action, or presumably in this case, mass movement.

Row us out from Desenzano, to your Sirmione row!
So they rowed, and there we landed—'O venusta Sirmio!'—
There to me through all the groves of olive in the summer glow.
There beneath the Roman ruin where the purple flowers grow.
Came that 'Ave atque Vale' of the Poet's hopeless woe.
Tenderest of Roman poets nineteen-hundred years ago.
'Frater Ave atque Vale'—as we wandered to and fro
Gazing at the Lydian laughter of the Garda lake below
Sweet Catullus's all-but-island, olive-silvery Sirmio!

⁶⁶

⁶⁷ The main mountain pass connecting Italy and Austria

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

9 June 45

Dear Father,

I had your letter of June 3rd today. This afternoon I have been scanning some of the literature recently issued by the army on Civil Service recruitment. The basic document on the army side appears to be ACI 629/45 (I imagine you have access to ACI.) The information supplied in this ACI is amplified in two Civil Service pamphlets, CSC1 and CSC2 both dated June 45.

On the whole, there is little information in them which was not available in the White Paper. However I notice that it is expected that examinations are expected to start about six months after the cessation of hostilities in Europe; that candidates qualifying in the written examination will probably be called to London for interview and other tests; and that two attempts are permitted. Applications are solicited immediately, and a preference can be expressed for an early or late examination.

I propose to send in my application as soon as possible; in fact when I can get the appropriate forms.

I do not think I should have much to gain by asking for a late examination; I might as well take an early one; if I pass, well and good, if I don't I know how I stand and can take a little time before a second shot.

Specimen papers are available (CSC18). These are available via stationary office (4d) or military channels (free). However, as the *unclear* ducts are apt to be clogged, I should be grateful if you could mail me this document. Possibly CSC3 might also be useful. I am writing on the assumption that you will probably see these pamphlets. If there are any points which you consider important I should be very glad if you could let me know.

The position about the voting is as follows. The procedure is to complete two labels giving your military address and post them off in an envelope on the back of which is a request for a ballot form and the declaration of the address under which you are registered as a voter.

You receive a ballot form by post, complete it, and it goes back by air mail.

I managed to get up to Lake Garda again last night to swim. Very pleasant. I find the climate here very trying, worse than Egypt. It goes to about 95 in the shade by day, but is rather humid and oppressive, and doesn't cool off much at night, making it very difficult to sleep. Rome was just the same last summer.

We have been having tremendous quantities of cherries, also some strawberries, and the last few days have also seen good quantities of peaches appear. I believe this part of Italy is noted for peaches.

I should be less than surprised if my present job in this unit packs up soon and I get on the move again. Apparently Python is now down to four years, but you can then start a second term anywhere.

I hope you manage to fix yourself up something in the way of summer holidays.

I think that is all for now; I will keep you in the picture as regards developments here.

Hope you are both well.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
15 HQ Signals
CMF

10 July 45

Dear Father,

I received yesterday copies of CSC 3 and CSC 11 which I had put in for; (that is, detailed regulations and application forms; the specimen papers are not available yet.) The following points strike me on reading the documents.

1. The obligation to name as 'referees' two responsible persons well acquainted with the applicant in private life, and not connected with his school or college. ? Who.
2. That apart from the Home Civil Service admin. class, vacancies in the following sections are open to be filled from candidates for the same examination. (There is an order of preference to be expressed.

- (a) Northern Ireland C.S. Admin. class
- (b) Clerkships in the House of Commons.
- (c) L.C.C. Mayor Establishment.
- (d) Senior branch of the Foreign Service.

(a) does not appear to differ materially from the home Civil Service; (b) I know nothing about, but it appears that only a very few vacancies are involved. (c) appears too be rather less attractive than the other classes.

3. The question of expressing choice of departments. I don't know what you think about that. I am rather attracted by one involving a certain amount of work overseas (e.g. Dominions Office)

I shall not be sending in the application for a week or so. The success or otherwise of this whole venture would make some rather substantial changes. I enclose a copy of the first two paragraphs of the order relating to this course. It is still very much in the air. I am going off the day after tomorrow for interview which is on the 15th & 16th. However, well informed gossip says that there is little chance of being released for it even if accepted.

I also enclose a snap taken last autumn of my last section.

Very hot again today. This place stokes up for a few days, then has a violent thunderstorm with torrential rain, a few cool days, and starts again.

I shall probably write next when I have some information about my immediate prospects, which are at present unsettled.

I hope you are well.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

[Reverse of photograph reads] 35. Tele - 02. Sen, SIENA. OCT 44

[J A Hudson seated in second row back, fifth from left.]



222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

19 July [45]

Dear Father,

I think the Arab venture⁶⁸ is definitely off. Results are not officially published yet, but I am virtually certain that I shall not be accepted; chiefly I think, for not being able to show a single minded devotion for the Arabs and for M.E.

I received your letter posted 9th July on returning from my interview (I got back this morning). I am glad you were able to use the proxy vote - I knew of course that I had cut it rather fine, so I did not post it in the unit box, but went down to the A.P.O.⁶⁹ This probably accounts for the quicker transit (I actually posted it on 1st). My postal ballot never appeared; I don't know why, as I filled in the form very carefully.

I have also had the specimen papers. They seem pretty fair examples of what I should have expected. Now I have an idea of the general lines I think I could very profitably do a bit of work. The arithmetic should be all right, but I can no doubt do with practice - perhaps you could send me one of the later Ballard books⁷⁰, which is back at school; hopefully with answers. But it is the general paper which I think most punching up is needed, and I shall try to get some books to read. One book which I already have and which might be useful is Halevy's History of the English People. The Pelican version used to be on the left hand side of the third shelf over the mantelpiece in my room. Could you send it me?

I flew down to Salerno for this interview, but came back by road, staying at Perugia one night. It is a very lovely town. Also called in at Assisi to see the church and tomb of St. Francis.

Best wishes.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

⁶⁸ Presumably the post-war British Army presence in the Middle East in a time which would lead to the establishment of the state of Israel

⁶⁹ Army Post Office

⁷⁰ Arithmetic textbooks

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

22 July [45]

Dear Mother,

Hotter than ever these last two days. It's far too hot to get into bed at nights. I just lie on top of it in a thin suit of pyjamas. Even so I woke up at 6 o'clock this morning with the pillow quite wet with sweat. They say it's an exceptionally hot summer. August, I am afraid, will be worse.

When I was sorting out my list for the Salerno jaunt I sent off one large parcel of kit. Apart from one book, it contained two shirts and a pair of shorts and my old raincoat. All are almost finished, but I thought there might be some use for them while things are still short.

The prominent pipe that you commented on in the photograph was my stove chimney. I shudder at the thought of it in the present heat, but at the beginning of the year we used to huddle over smelly dusty little stoves which burned this horrible lignite. I think you are probably right in saying that I am the youngest of the group; although there cannot be more than a year or two between myself and Johnny Sims, the lines officer.

Whilst on this recent jaunt I ran into both Geoff Sands and Jerry Reynolds in Naples. The former, who has been a liaison officer in Greece, has volunteered for the Far East and is probably now on his way home for leave. He said he would long to see you some time during it. Jerry Reynolds was also waiting to go home, but on Python. I discerned that Geoff Sands had actually been in the same convoy as myself out to Mideast.

I am afraid that the picture books of the Florentine galleries are relics of more fortunate times. While I was there the galleries were still closed, pictures stowed away and frescoes walled up.

Best wishes.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

24 July [45]

Dear Father,

This s just a very short note to wish you a happy birthday. I suppose it will be a rather quiet stay-at-home birthday again.

Have you got anything more definite fixed about your holiday yet? I imagine the conventional holiday areas will be pretty packed this year, so perhaps one of the less famous inland country districts would be the best guess.

Someone with a thermometer has found that the temperature ranges from 85 in the shade (at 8 o'clock in the morning) to just over 100. I don't believe it drops much below 80 in the 24 hours. It's certainly very enervating.

I am looking forward with some excitement to the election results. I haven't heard yet just when or how they will be announced.

I hope you are continuing to feel better.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
3 Coy 15 HQ Signals
CMF

3rd August [45]

Dear Mother

I had your letter posted on 30th July yesterday, which is pretty good going. (The two envelopes with election results had arrived two days previously.)

I am at present waiting for transport to take me to 2 G.H.Q. Signals. This means AFHQ in the Palace at Caserta⁷¹, where AAI⁷² was when I first joined this unit. In a way I am sorry that it means work of scarcely the same sort as I had been doing here only more of it. I had rather looked forward to a change. As against that, it is a good thing to get settled somewhere definitely; and I am fortunate in being able to keep my rank, as quite a few people in the unit are liable to drop. You retain temporary rank for 61 days after termination of the appointment conveying the rank, or until appointed to a vacancy in a lower rank, whichever is earlier.

It also makes my prospects of U.K. leave uncertain again. If I had been left in this unit, or rather if this unit were remaining, I should have been due for the next ELP⁷³ party after one leaving tomorrow. In a new unit and a new district I don't know how I shall stand. I rather think that S. Italy is still under the LIAP and not LLP⁷⁴ (overland).

I don't quite see how they propose to apply this particular class B case, and should not give it much attention. I don't think I should be due for class A release before Christmas 46.

I should send the first one or two volumes of Halevy by air, and let the subsequent ones follow by surface mail. I don't suppose the Ballard is much use unless it is vol. IV or V.

The weather has cooled a lot the last few days and is now quite pleasant. I hope it lasts.

I hope you manage to fix up your holiday dates satisfactorily. It would be a great pity not to get away.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

⁷¹ Site of the German surrender of the war in Italy, signed 25th April 1945

⁷² Allied Armies in Italy [HQ]

⁷³ Meaning unknown - some kind of leave?

⁷⁴ Meaning unknown - some leave system?

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
2 GHQ Signals
CMF

6 Aug [45]

Dear Mother

From receipt of this letter please address all mail for me to

2 G.H.Q. Signals
CMF.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
2 GHQ Signals
CMF

6 August [45]

Dear Mother

I received today your letter with the 'Times' cutting on release of arts students, so I am writing this to enlarge on the position as I see it.

(1.) I think it would be worth accepting. (Class 'B' is of course optional.) As the release seems to envisage starting in the current academic year, I think my residence at Oxford would not last appreciably longer than continual military service until class 'A' release. I don't think the financial obstacles would be too serious; it would mean a spell of very hard work. I don't think it would disqualify from the Civil Service reconstruction examinations; naturally the effect it could have here could be a thing to verify as this release scheme cannot have been contemplated by the C.S.C. in making their plans.

(2.) There is no question of taking action as far as I can see, as the initiative in making selections rests entirely with the university authorities.

(3.) A factor which makes me disinclined to the scheme is the reluctance of the military authorities to release signals personnel. I can't assess the importance of this as I don't know the policy in this respect. I do know that Major Gen. Nalder, the Chief Signal Officer AFHQ⁷⁵ has sent out a letter stating that in view of the shortage of Signals Officers he feels bound to oppose their transfer to other employment even though this causes hardship to individuals. This is aimed primarily at stopping transfers to other arms of the service in which vacancies are now appearing (eg educational jobs.) As I say I don't know how this would apply; it can't affect class 'A' releases, but might affect class 'B' as these are less categorical and more conditional. But there would be this opposition; quite likely at the theatre commander level, and (I fancy) might particularly apply once I have got settled in this new job.

Yours affectionately

J A Hudson

[Sense of much of this letter unclear without context]

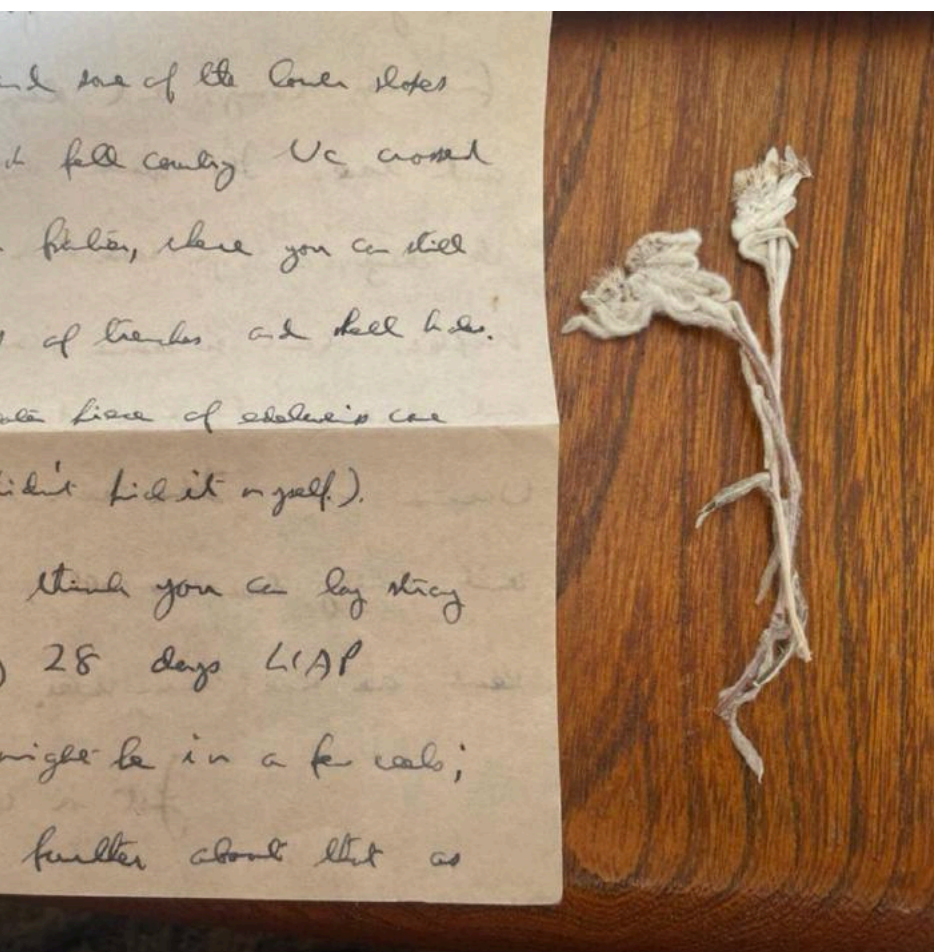
⁷⁵ Allied Forces HQ

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
2 GHQ Signals
CMF

12 August 1945

Dear Mother

I actually arrived here three days ago. The trip took three days, by road, bumping down all the way in the back of a five ton lorry. It's quite depressing to watch the change as you leave Rome and approach Naples. Each successive village is dustier and dirtier. However Caserta is cooler than Verona was. There were two others from the unit coming down as well, and there is at least one more coming later.



Just a week ago we had a large organised party as a final fling before coming down here; the chief feature was a jeep trip through some of the hills just N.E. of Verona. We got up to a height of about 5,000 ft by a hairpin road - you could just get jeeps up in four wheel drive. The air up there is most delightful, and some of the lower slopes not unlike English fell country. We crossed the 1914 Austrian frontier, where you could still see the opposing lines of trenches and shell holes.

The rather moth eaten piece of Edelweiss came from up there. (I didn't pick it myself.)

I think you can lay strong odds on my getting 28 days LIAP before Xmas. It might be in a few weeks; I

won't say anything further about that as there are some complications and uncertainties involved which would take too long to explain in detail; I don't know how the resulting skulduggery will turn out.

Now that I have a reasonably stable address again I shall send in my Civil Service application form tomorrow.

I suppose we may regard the Japanese war as over now. The news was really more of a damp squib than the German armistice. I don't think that an observer would have seen any excitement amongst the troops at all. One A.T.S.⁷⁶ girl absented herself from Signals Office duty on account of it and is coming up on a charge tomorrow morning.

It is quite amusing nowadays to read the Italian newspapers. Nearly all are socialist (of the thirty or forty odd parties) and were very bucked by the Labour Party's success in England. One that I read gave great prominence to a description of the scene in the Commons on the formal opening of parliament. (If you remember, the Conservatives sang 'for he's a jolly good fellow' when Churchill came in and the government benches retaliated with the 'Red Flag'!) The Italian report, however, gave an unduly sinister and dramatic flavour to the whole affair by referring to the former air as 'a traditional song of the monarchical regime'. Of course the republican movement is very strong here.

I went to an amateur performance of 'The Gondoliers' yesterday night. Some performers hadn't really got the voices, but it was well produced and a very enjoyable show.

I had a brief note from Ian about a week ago, very brief.

I think that's all for now. If I get the LIAP tied up I'll let you know at once.

Best wishes.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

⁷⁶ Auxiliary Territorial Service

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
2 GHQ Signals
CMF

15 August [45]

Dear Mother

Today is VJ day and I think I can now give you more information about my movements. I am to leave Caserta station at 0745 on 20th. From then I shall probably be home in a week. The actual trip takes about 48 hours from here to Milan, and about 24 from there to Calais. I imagine there is a possibility of spending a day or so in Milan transit camp. This is as near cast iron as it reasonably can be.

Naturally it won't be worth sending any mail to this address. I'll drop you another line before I leave, and (if possible) from Milan.

So - I'll be seeing you.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
2 GHQ Signals
CMF

19 August 45

Dear Mother

This should be my final letter from this address. I have my movement order and other papers, and am due to report to R.T.O.⁷⁷ at Caserta station at 0745 tomorrow morning. This should actually land me up in U.K. about 26th or 27th. It's a pity I can't quite make it for my birthday which will probably be spent in transit. I should get a chance to look at Milan cathedral I hope. I never managed to see Milan while I was in the north, which was a pity.

I have played one or two more games of tennis here. The court is quite good but hard on the feet (concrete). At the most half of the rackets are broken. The first time I played a really appalling game; the worst ever I should think. Subsequently however I have recovered a bit.

Well I don't think there is any more news at the moment. Hope you are both well.

Yours affectionately,

J A Hudson

⁷⁷ Railway Transport Officer

222641 Capt. J.A. Hudson
2 GHQ Signals
CMF

19 August 45

Dear Mother

I have just received your redirected letter re class B release dated 4th August, so I am writing this addition to the enclosed letter card [*see above*] which I had already finished and sealed. I don't think there is a great deal to add to my previous letter on the subject, as the pro forma and covering letter do not really add to our information on the subject. It was obviously to be expected that the University would take such steps. Of course this leave of mine should be very effective from the point of view of being on the spot.

Two points occur to me. The first, a minor one, that my army address in the questionnaire will need correction.

The second is a possible complication if I should be selected. The normal way of dealing with class B releases as far as I know, is for a signal to be sent to the individual's unit via army channels, asking if he wishes to accept. This would presumably have to be done during the coming month. I should actually be on leave from the unit in U.K. and this might cause a hitch. However, that can wait a bit.

Otherwise, I think I put all that I could in my last AMLC⁷⁸. The end of the war may ease the shortage of Signals officers I referred to, but I should not bank on this happening very quickly.

However, in the next few days I should be able to discuss this with you fully; and perhaps manage a bit of discreet enquiry.

J A Hudson

⁷⁸ Air Mail Letter Card presumably

