

CHRISTMAS 1942

Dear Ma and Pops,

Yes, 'it's that man again! I hope this letter finds you both safe and well, in the pink as we used to say. How are you Pops? I guess you will have been busy in the garden during the summer. Plenty to do there, I bet! I can just see the store of vegetables piled up in the wood shed. 'Mind my Bike!' How's the knitting going Ma? Thanks for the socks. It s the best Christmas present you could have sent, as the winters here are very severe, keeping busy with the W.V.S? I hope they appreciate your home cooking. I didn't until it was too late. We could do with some of it around here. Best not to say too much about that, the censors don't like it.

I imagine Ivy will be nearing her time now, and looking forward to the birth of the baby. Please tell her that I'm thinking of her and can't wait to take my new nephew (or niece) to the park. It feels as if it were yesterday when we were all together at Sid and Ivy's wedding, when in fact it is almost two years. A lot has happened since then eh? I pray that we shall all be spared and together again after the war.

Have you heard from Sid lately? I trust that he is safe. Although he is my brother, I feel he has a reckless streak in him and I worry that he may take unnecessary chances. At least the Army hasn't knocked any of the 'cockiness' out of him. Give him my best when next you write.

I'm keeping well enough, and trying to stay on the right side of my German hosts! They work us hard but it could be much worse. God forbid I should end up in a Stalag! At least I'm out in the open air, and cold as it is, it is very healthy! The farm here produces cabbages and potatoes in great quantities without the aid of machinery, so there's plenty of digging to do. Pops.

A few of us got together and cultivated a disused yard into a putting green: not that we have much spare time. We laid turf from the orchard that is now planted with cabbages and made some clubs out of canes and stuff left lying around the farm. Empty cocoa tins make good linings for the holes. Some of our 'hosts' like to join in. but they are soon left to play by themselves!

In the evenings, the concert party takes up most of our time. You should hear my impression of Tommy Handley!

It's Roll Call now, so I have to go. Give my love to everyone. Stay safe. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Your loving son Tommy.

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Dear Tommy.

Thank you for your letter, which we received just before Christmas. You will be happy to hear that you are an uncle! Baby Susan was born on your Birthday, the 27th, and is the prettiest little thing you ever saw and mother and baby are fit and healthy'.

However, I have some unpleasant news that you could well do without, given your circumstances. Your brother Sid was killed in action on xxx (censored) whilst at xxx(cen). Two days after we received the news. Pop suffered a heart attack from which he never recovered.

You can not imagine how sorry I am to be the bearer of such news. I miss them so much. Tommy, But not as much as I miss you. For you are all I have, and I long to have you

home once more. Ivy has been a tower of strength to me, indeed we are propping each other up, and there is plenty to occupy us both at the moment.

As you will see from the address, I am writing from Sid and Ivy's place. The day after Pop's funeral, we lost xxx xxx xxxs xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx(cen) . Luckily I had been staying with Ivy. and had taken a suitcase of clothes with me. Your little dog, Timmy is here with us as well. Poor little thing doesn't understand.

Mrs. Wilson from no.21 was xxx xxx xxx (cen). She is xxx xxx xxx and is xxx too. I've been to see her and she sends you her very best wishes.

Pop understood your fears about Sid but assured me that he (Sid) would be all right; not true as it turned out. He was amused when you told us about your golf course and your antics with the Concert Party. I've been meaning to knit a jumper and more socks for you, but somehow haven't managed it yet. But I will, I promise!

I'm sorry for all the gloom, son, and will try and write a more cheerful letter soon. Take care of yourself Tommy and God go with you.

Ma.

J.T.Kay