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31 Oct. 41.

Dearest Mother,

Thank you for the telegram which I received in time for my birthday, and which made that day much brighter. I also received a telegram from Marjorie. It is good to know that you are thinking of me, as I do of you.

Well, it is now 24 years ago since your second son saw, (as the phrase has it, although I must say I can't remember) the light of day, and I should thank you, because they have been a happy 24 years with a very nice family, whom I would not change. I not only drew lucky with my parents, but the said parents were kind enough to supply me with some grand brothers and sisters.

Does the 24 years seem a long time to you. There was a War on then. You and the mothers of your generation have had a poor time of it but you have done bravely in it all. Never mind, we will make it up to you if we can. Twenty-four years. I was thinking about them today. Portsmouth, where I was born, and where Auntie Harty lived. That is one happy memory. And Bury, Tidworth, Todmorden, and Newbury. Birthdays in so many places. Childhood years in the Army - Tidworth, where Marjorie slept under horses and Frank sang Felix. Bury, where Harry pushed me off the pyramids to bounce on my nut, and where we trotted to St. Stephens to school. Todmorden, where we wore out jerseys at Roomfield and kicked boots off our feet at the Secondary School - growing larger every year. Those were the years when we were all together - a harassing time for you (do you remember how we were all washed and put to bed in turn at the Drill Hall - I used to hate having my knees washed, I remember.) Then when we began to be grown up and to leave home - Harry to the Air Force, Myrtle to Manchester, Frank to the Air Force. They were good days and they make good memories, and I am grateful to you for them. It is sad that there must be unhappiness as well as happiness, and you have had your full share of that, too. But love can strengthen one in sad times, and you and Dad have the love of those of us who are left to you. And it cannot be changed. Birth and Death, laughter and tears, play and hard work, go on through the years. And I would have you as you are, happy in the good days, and brave on the bad. Because that is the way to live.

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I spent the birthday quietly. When I got to my office I found that my lecture blackboard had been made into a large birthday card. I had my photograph taken against it and also with my so far only truck, which I am usually driving (to the danger). I went to the pictures in the evening, to see George Formby in "Spare a Copper" which is good.

Another anniversary coming off very soon is my second year in the Army. Can you remember my setting off from Spring Bank to go to Leeds. Seems a long time ago, i'faith.

I am very busy just now, including learning to speak Urdu, or Hindustani. Tell Dad that I can now say Idhar so juldi, and the others of his favourite expressions. In fact, he and I can hold converse in the language - that I come home.

I have had no letters for a very long time now. Still, no-one else seems to have had any so it is probably defective postal service or sunken letters or something. In the last batch I had was one from the T.C. and one from Mr. Chorlton. Apparently Raymond Horsfall is now in the R.A.F. Apart from that there does not appear to be much news from the old place, except that everyone is busy or in the process of being called up.

My dog got distemper very badly and I had to have him destroyed.

I have written to Marjorie thanking her for her telegram, and welcoming her into the Army.

I enclose a few snaps I have taken here. I took one of Jerry Kay and sent it to him. I got a letter back in which he wished to be remembered to Dad and yourself - Mrs. Kay also.

There is not a great deal to do here. Apart from work, I and my neighbours spend most evenings sitting in with the wireless and rather lazily doing work from our respective Units or Companies. The weather is quite cold now, especially in the early mornings and evenings, so that we can have a fire.

On looking back at my past letters I seem to have been complaining of some injury or other every week, so I hasten to say that my eye has healed up, my hand is now completely healed from the scar, and my cold is better.

I have some very good people in my Unit - they are all Southerners, which is a change from the Lancs. We get along alright together.

Well, supper is calling, and I must push off. Please give my regards to all the folks I know in Newbury, including Mrs. Preston, Jackie, etc. All my love to Dad, Gran, Kathleen Mary, the Aunts, Uncles, and Cousins. And all my love to you from your loving son,

Conrad

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