

England.  
26 April 1944.  
Wednesday.

My Darling Wife,

Good evening, honey. I did not get any chance to write to you yesterday, but after you read this letter you will readily understand why. I was on a trip to London yesterday, was in London all day, and did not get back to camp until the wee small hours this morning. There was a fair sized group from this camp that went yesterday and we went to London and returned in a group.

Once in London we were on our own. There were five of us from our unit allowed to go yesterday, and I did not know until Monday night that I would be on the list due to go yesterday. Therefore, I had no chance to write to John and arrange for a meeting with him.

The five of us from our unit stayed together until after we had eaten lunch, and then we went in different directions later in the afternoon. Four of us went together for awhile, though, and walked through Hyde Park, went by Buckingham Palace, and then went to Westminster Abbey. We spent over two hours in Westminster Abbey. The overwhelming size of the interior of Westminster Abbey and the complete silence which seems to have been there for years left me almost speechless. It certainly is old, interesting, and amazing. We saw some very famous graves and some interesting monuments. I cannot begin to name them all.

Well, to go back to the time that we ate lunch. We had scrambled eggs (Yes, they were powdered eggs, too), toast, tea or coffee, sweets, some tarts, and some of the fellows had turnovers--the total bill for the five of us was equivalent to about \$1.10. It wasn't particularly a good meal, but we ate rather early and did not want too much to eat.

After the lunch we went through Hyde Park to Buckingham Palace. We saw the Wellington Memorial, Marble Arch, another arch at Hyde Park Corner, and a number of statues that I do not know the names of. One was a statue of a little boy battling with a large fish. Most of the famous places that I saw are pictured in a book that I bought called LONDON SCENE which I will send to you by regular mail in a few days. You can expect it a few weeks after you get this letter, and if you want to make any sense out of the things that I mention, you might refer to the letter and the book together after the book arrives.

At the time we passed Buckingham Palace they were relieving the guard, and we saw a very snappy military guard relief ceremony which was a little different from our own. ~~NOTE~~ Buckingham Palace is not particularly beautiful like our great buildings in Washington, D.C. or even in our state capitals. It is just so old and so famous that it is one of the "must see" buildings in London.

From Buckingham Palace we proceeded to walk up the Mall from Buckingham Palace to the Admiralty Arch passing by part of St. James Park on one side and by the old German Embassy, old Queen Mary's home, and some other famous buildings on the other side. Then we backtracked and went down near 10 Downing Street (the home of Churchill) and down to Westminster Abbey.

After spending over two hours in Westminster Abbey we split up and went in all different directions. I soon found the book of pictures that I mentioned above and decided to see all of the places that I could in what time I had left.

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However, before starting out on my tour of London I went to several stores in an effort to find something to send to you as well as to find something for Mother and Mother C. I found nothing. Then I thought that maybe I would be able to find some Mother's Day cards, but again I found that I was looking for something that I would never find--the English do not even recognize Mother's Day. However, after some searching I did find a fairly decent birthday card to send to my Mother. Her birthday is the 21st of May, so I still have time to send that.

Then my tour began. First, I took a ride on an Underground (Subway) to Picadilly Circus. I looked up the Red Cross there that we had agreed upon as a meeting place for the evening in case we all wanted to go to a show or something. Then I took a bus to London Bridge. I walked across London Bridge and from the bridge I got a good view of Tower Bridge, also. In fact I saw a boat go under Tower Bridge and saw them lower the bridge again for traffic to resume travel. I could also see the Tower of London from London Bridge. London Bridge, like many of the other famous places is not strikingly amazing. It is old and famous, but one would never know it from any other bridge. It is very short and not very high. You can judge the height of the bridge in the picture by comparing it with the little tugs below it. I do not believe that the bridge is any more than a city block long, if that long.

I had an interesting chat with a London business man on London bridge, and he told me a great deal about the sights from the bridge, and I walked down the street with him for a short distance as he told me of some places that I should see and how to get there. I then had some tea and tarts and caught another bus back to Trafalgar Square. I saw Nelson Column, the two fountains in the square, National Gallery, St. Martin's in the Fields, Charing Cross, and a short distance away I saw *The Monument*. While on the bus I passed *St. Paul's Cathedral* twice and also *The Law Courts*.

I also saw the *Victoria Memorial*, and I saw a very good statue of *Lincoln*.

In the book that I am sending you I have made a small pencil check mark by the name of the places that I saw. While on my own personal tour I rode two different Underground systems on five occasions, rode the bus four times, and took a taxi once.

By the time I had done all this it was time to meet the other fellows. Two of them went to shows and two of us decided to look up a high class  
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eating house. We went to the Trocadero Grill Room. It was about like going to the Biltmore in Los Angeles. They had dancing and an orchestra and we ate as we watched the dancing & listened to the music. It was really nice. My buddy had pigeon and I had the "Trocadero Special Mixture" consisting of sausage, spam, mushrooms, french fries, and some other vegetables. We both enjoyed the meal and had a drink of scotch and soda while we sat and enjoyed the music and dancing before having our dessert. The dessert we chose was "chocolate trifle", which is a chocolate ~~pudding~~ pudding on a cake like a piece of short cake. It was very good.

Our bill amounted to a nice sum, but not as much as we thought it might. It was equivalent to about \$6.30 for the two of us — cover charge, dinners, and the drinks. We thought it well worth the money, though, to more or less splurge while in London as we had been saving up and waiting for the London trip.

By the time we had eaten we had about used up our spare time, so we began  
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to walk back to the group meeting place to go back to camp. However, after walking about halfway we decided to take the Underground the rest of the way. We did get back to the meeting place a little early but at least we made sure that we caught our transportation back.

I went to sleep on the way back to camp and got a little much needed sleep. I was quite tired after riding and walking all day.

All in all, I had a very good time. I'll tell you more about it when I come back home.

Now I must wind up this letter for tonight and get ready for bed. There will probably be no chance for me write tomorrow, honey, but I will be thinking of you as always. We have a night duty tomorrow night.

Wish that you could have been with me in London, honey, but I saw it for both of us and will tell you all about it someday.

Goodnight now, my sweetheart. I love you. Write soon & often. (I haven't had a letter from you in 5 days & no mail for 3 days, but got a box of Welbanks candy from Mother today.)

Yours forever,  
Cliff

Pfc Clifton L. Gallup 39570918  
38th MRU(M), Hq ~~XX~~ Corps  
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