



*Bill in at the time of writing in 1944, aged 19*

## Letters from Bill

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These are letters, which my father, Bill Goddard wrote to his old friend Dave Cavell. They were at school together at the Intermediate School in Brighton where Bill had been the Head Boy.

Bill and his brother George, who was 15 months older, were brought up by their Aunt, since their mother had died from complications due to child birth, when Bill was only three weeks old. As a result, his relationship with his cousin Bob was more like that of a brother since they grew up together. Bob was 16 years older than Bill and in 1941 had married Eileen Liversley. They all lived together in a terraced house in Ashdown Road.

Having left school at around 16, Bill worked for Tamplin Breweries in Kemp Town, Brighton. At the time the letters were written in 1943, Bill was 18 and working in Redhill with Southern Railways planning train and staff movements and timetables. As this was during the war, when the railway lines were often bombed and there was a shortage of staff, it was a responsible position.



*Bill in 1940, aged 15*



*George Goddard in 1946*



*Bob and Eileen in 1941*





*Bill returning to Queensferry in 1971*



*9 Ashdown Road, Brighton*

During this time, Bill was expecting to be called up for the Army and was waiting for the buff coloured envelope to be delivered through the post at any moment. After he joined the army, he was posted to Queensferry, an Ordnance Depot about six miles outside of Chester. Here he was dealing with incoming and outgoing freight traffic from this Depot. Many years later, whilst on holiday in 1971, he was delighted to find the Nissan hut where he worked was still standing, although only just!

The letters contain a number of standard army acronym and abbreviations, and where these need some explanation, I have written in italics in the text. All the rest of the text is Bills.



*Calais, 1946*





9 Ashdown Road,  
Brighton 1,  
Sussex.  
Thurs. Mar. 23rd. '43.

Dear Dave,

I think I can safely assume by your present address, that you did eventually arrive at Beverley. How the Hell did you manage it!! and where the Devil is Doncaster anyway? Doubtless you were somewhat bored by the six hour train journey, and can now appreciate exactly how Browne off of travel I have become, having nearly completed two years of it.

When I left you at King's Cross on Thursday, I had a good look round the City. I started off by walking down to St Paul's Cathedral, which I visited for the first time. I had not, since the beginning of the War, been to this part of the City, and was amazed at the devastation. Acres and acres of completely destroyed; the ruins stand



9 Ashdown Road  
Brighton 7  
Sussex  
Tuesday March 23<sup>rd</sup> 1943

14560954 Pte Cavell  
"B" Coy, No 51 Platoon  
No. 8 P.T.C.,  
Victoria Barracks  
Beverley  
East Yorkshire

Dear Dave

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When I left you at King's Cross on Thursday, I had a good look round the city. I started off by walking down to St Paul's Cathedral, which I visited for the first time. I had not, since the beginning of the war, been to this part of the city, and was amazed at the devastation around this area. Acres and acres of building here, are completely destroyed; and in the middle of the ruins stands a Lancaster Bomber, – a remnant from the "Wings for Victory" show, recently held in London. This giant plane looks extremely out of place.

Walking down King William Street, I cast my last '68' grenade through the windows of the "London Assurance" building "Good 'ole AD (?) 1720 – (Boo! Who said that!!) Talking, or rather writing about the "L.A", makes me think of poor old Butch, pining away at Richmond Place! I think I'll walk in there one day, kiss her once or twice, and tell her it's from you. Boy, oh boy, what a thrill!!

The last few days of my holiday were a bit dragging, and in many ways, I was glad to resume work on Monday last. You can image how time does drag now that I am on my own.

By the way, I went up to your place Thursday evening (day you went), and found your mother in rather low spirits; which of course was only natural. She was very relieved however, when I told her that you managed to get a seat in the 9.30 to Kings X. I haven't been out since then, so up till now I haven't seen your letter.

Still no buff envelope arrived yet. I am rather hoping it will come before Easter, so that I can walk out of the office just as the programme for the usual Bank

Holiday "carve-up" arrives. I shall derive much pleasure, picturing in my mind this chap at work who knows all the answers, when the Governor gives him the job with 3 days in which to complete it. Boy, oh boy, what a "B" farce!! The know-all so and so!! (Judging from the previous remarks, you may safely assume that I do not like this individual!)

I am very anxious to see your letter to your Ma and Pa, and find out your opinion of Victoria Barracks. I hope you are not finding it too rough.

I haven't visited Joe's lately, at any rate not since last Saturday evening, (No – not after closing time, you wicked B) and am expecting to see them close down very soon, due to the drop in profits, brought about by the absence of two of the joint's most paying patrons.

Vic came up on Sunday after me; but I had an Aunt down here, whom I had promised to show round, and had to let her down. I get awfully fed up of going to the movies on my own, so I have started to take Eileen with me in future. Went to see "Nine Men" at the Regent – jolly good show – see it if you can. Or perhaps your local cinema is one of the type that are just showing Trader Horn, and Hell's Angels etc. I can quite imagine this being the case, if Beverley really is anything like Lewes.

Things are in a terrible mess at No. 9 just lately. Tonight for instance – bloke painting scullery, couldn't possibly wash, even if I wanted to. Eileen pressing pink panties on the table (which partly accounts for lousy writing), and wireless blaring its guts out. Oh to join the Tank Corps, and get a little piece and quiet!!

Having penned through 5 pages of news, I find I have exhausted my supply, so will cease now; and write again soon.

Should I get my papers during the next few days, I'll let you know where and when straight away.

All the best for now,

Yours,

Bill

Stop Press  
Love from Mum



9 Ashdown Road  
Brighton 7  
Sussex  
April 4th 1943

14560954 Pte Cavell  
"B" Coy, No 51 Platoon  
No. 8 P.T.C.,  
Victoria Barracks  
Beverley  
East Yorkshire

Dear Dave

I am sorry that I haven't written to you before now; but I've been waiting a chance to get out to your place, and ascertain your opinion of Beverley. This I managed to accomplish last Friday morning, as I was late turn last week. I see from your letters, which your mother very kindly let me read, that the torture administered at your barracks seems to comply with that at Maidstone, from what Charlie told you. My boy, you have my profound sympathy. How tough do you find "P.T." having done none for four years? Doubtless you are finding it as tough as I shall, after sitting at an office desk each day.

Incidentally, speaking of your letters, for Christ's sake, don't write home as you did in your first letter. I can face facts, if you tell me the worst you go through; but your mum was properly upset when she read of the bullying and shoving around you received on the first few days.

How many ruddy inoculations are they giving you anyway? I was under the obviously incorrect impression, that one was only given two doses of the potion. What do they pump into the blood these days? – Brown Ale?

Speaking of Brown Ale (I don't mind if I do) – reminds me to pass comment on the pubs at Beverley, which it seems you have visited once or twice. I suppose these pubs, serve the usual North Country lousy stuff – nothing like Kemp Town I.P.A. you know!!

I expect your mother wrote and told you about last Monday's air raid. You will remember the Astoria Dive Café, and the Redhill Motor works, just beside the Astoria Cinema, – these are no more! Incidentally the London Assurance Offices (incorporated by Royal Charter in A.D. 1720 – local papers please copy), lost some of the front windows – I don't know whether anybody was hurt, or whether it caused "Butch" to mess her panties!!

I am still waiting for my papers – Last week, I had a sudden idea that the Railway Company might be holding on to me until after Easter; so I tackled the governor on this subject, and he told me that this was not so. It would seem, however, that

the Certificate of Occupation which I took to the Registration Offices is doing its stuff.

Next week, I start working 12 hours a day – Think of it – 12 bloody hours!! The object of this is the nearness of the Easter Holidays. This year, the ban on visitors will not be re-imposed, and you can bet that there will be thousands of people travelling to the coastal areas.

Well Dave, tea is about to be laid, so I'll sign off now.

Yours very sincerely

Bill.

PS. Next letter may be delayed a bit, due to overtime commencing Monday, but I'll write as soon as possible.

9 Ashdown Road  
Brighton 7  
Sussex  
Wednesday May 5th 1943

14560954  
Gunner Cavell, D  
"E" Battery, No 12 Squad,  
23<sup>rd</sup> (field) Training REQT., R.A.,  
Newtown  
Montgomeryshire  
North Wales

Dear Dave

Thousands of apologies for the lack of letters during the last fortnight. The reason for this has been the tremendous volume of work during the Easter period at Redhill. It would appear that the Southern Railway Coy., went completely "barmy" over Easter, the holiday being the only Bank Holiday for some time that has been during the finer weather, without the ban on. We, (the blokes at work and yrs truly) have been working twelve hours per day for about two weeks – Sundays inclusive) – so you will possibly forgive me for my silence for so long.

Many important events have transpired since my last letter. The most important, so far as your interests extend, would be the fact that I have received my "Calling-up papers", and I am reporting to the Barracks at Chichester tomorrow (Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> May). Naturally, mother is very upset about this (as mothers are) but I have explained to her that if anyone should be upset about it, it should be me – and I am not at all upset!

This happening rather messed up an arrangement that was being made at work – I will try and divulge it as I got it put to me when I went to work last Wednesday. The Governor told me that there was a possibility of his going to Deepdene (Head Office) in the near future, and I was to assume command at the office with two assistants, (the blokes who have been learning the job, since I started on shift work) – pending my release for the forces.

That last bit – "pending my release for the forces" – I was not too clear about, but assumed it meant that the Railway Coy., would hold on to me until such times as these other chaps had got the "hang" of the job. I was quite prepared to take the position, if it meant that my chief would get a push-up to Head Office. However, when I marched in on Thursday afternoon (on late turn) and presented my "papers" to the chief, it rather messed things up, as it was then too late to apply for my temporary deferment. – Tough luck in some ways, but if I have to go, as obviously I must in due course, I may as well go now, as in 3 months time. The lonely point that annoys me, is that I shan't be home when you get leave, and I



don't see that our leaves will coincide at all. – Sad thought after your last letter re having a “whale” of a time when you come home.

Last Saturday, just after dinner, I went to your home, to say cheerio to your Ma and Gran. Your Pa was awfully decent to me. We went to the Wild Park to see the football, then back to 33 to tea; and to the Brighton Municipal Officers' club near the Pavilion, where we played billiards until twenty to ten. It was really an enjoyable evening for me, and I think you Pa enjoyed himself as well. By the way, did you know your bicycle has been repaired? And didn't I tell you that it was no impossibility?

Well Dave, there's so much left to do and so little time left (its ten pm) that it is really time that I started to get things organised around here. Possibly the next letter will bear the heading PTE Goddard, PB1, Somewhere in England. – who knows?

Cheerio and all the very best (love from mum)

Yrs always sincerely

Bill

PS Please excuse pencil but I have put by pen in “dry dock” for the time being – borrowing mum's for the envelope.

Bill

13364564 PTE Goddard, W,  
2 Squad, 4 Coy  
10<sup>th</sup> PTC  
The Barracks  
Chichester  
Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> May 1943

Dear Dave

Now we've more or less settled down; that is as settled as the army will let us be these days, I find myself with 5 mins to spare in which to write to you.

Chichester, I think will be the nearest town to home, which has a PTC, (*Personnel Transit Centre*) and I was very fortunate in coming here. The day we arrived, it was pouring with rain like bloody hell! And up to today it has continued to rain steadily each day.

You are of course familiar with the procedure at PTC's by now. We've had 2 inoculations, dental treatment, been interviewed by the Personnel Selection Offices and generally speaking have done most of the mucking about. The daily ritual here is much the same as I expect it has been at Beverley. Reveille at 6.00am, wash & shave, breakfast at 7.00am, first parade at 8.00am and square bashing etc until 12.30 pm. Dinner then, and more square bashing in the afternoon until 5.00 pm. The rest of the day is then ours, but up until today, we've not been allowed into town.

Most of the NCO's (*Non Commissioned Officers*) here are of the bullying type, especially the Corporals and Lance Jacks. Our squad is the only one with two sergeants, and no other NCO's in charge, and we're very fortunate as they're both extremely decent fellows.

It is very interesting to note that all the fellows in our squad are ex Railway blokes, representing all the Railway Companies including the underground, and it appears that by far the majority of us will eventually be sent into the Royal Engineers.

When I went to see the Personnel Selection Officer, I expressed this preference, but he didn't seem too interested, and asked me a lot of damn silly questions, which meant nothing to me.

Did you find that PT shocked you a bit? It does me, after sitting in an office chair for 3 years. Most of our PT is much the same as that administered by Palmer at the Inter, but we do it all outdoors.

Our billets are or rather were once private homes with a drive outside. They're not bad places to look at and are not at all bad inside. The cook house is at

another group of billets about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile away and makes a good march in the early morning.

I hope Dave, that you are not finding the Artillery training too tough. I expect you find it a bit of a strain, but I hope you don't rough it too much.

I have found out that it is possible for me to get to Brighton once in 3 weeks on Sunday. If you do get leave whilst I am still here, will you let me know, and I will get home to see you.

Well I must go now Dave as we are parading at 22.30hrs (how precise) for a lesson in night operations.

Cheerio Dave

All the best

Yrs

Bill

PS Please excuse pencil and bad writing but pen is at home and I am writing this lying on my belly on my bunk.



13364564 Spr. Goddard, W  
Hut 17  
Movement Control  
(TT&D) Bn, RE  
Weaversdown Camp  
Longmoor  
Hants

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> June 1943

D G Cavell Esq  
33 The Crescent  
Moulscoomb  
Brighton 7  
Sussex

Dear Dave

This letter as promised is mainly to convey the new address to you and won't be very long, as I have given you all the latest news.

Well I got back safely, and in time last Friday, after two of the most enjoyable days I have spent for a long while, and it is rather rough having to separate from you again. Today we have been to Petersfield, down by the river and have had a nice afternoon's sleep, which is about the only sensible thing to do on a day as hot as today.

I have read the notice board today and I am still not on a course next week. My fatigue, according to the detail is at the officer's mess, which I understand is very cushy. We have all our meals there, and this means that if the officers have roast chicken – so do we! Boy, oh boy ! I hope they have some this week!

Well Dave, as I said, this is only just a short note, as there's no additional news, so I'll close now.

All the best

Yrs always

Bill

PS Remember me to your Pa and Ma

PPS. Have one in Joe's for me please

13364564 Spr. Goddard, W  
Hut 17  
Movement Control  
(TT&D) Bn, RE  
Weaversdown Camp  
Longmoor  
Hants

18<sup>th</sup> July 1943

14560954 Gunner Cavell, D,  
Depot Battery  
23<sup>rd</sup> (field) 2ng Regt RA  
Newtown  
Montgomeryshire  
North Wales

Dear Dave

How is it that we both dodge Church Parade, and spend the time writing letters? So far I've not been caught, and I've some very good excuses up my sleeve, in case any awkward questions are asked.

It also seems by your letter, that you spend Saturday mornings, in much the same way as I do. Last night I went out on the "beer" with some of the lads, and we managed to have a good time (even on N.A.A.F.I. beer!) (*Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes*).

Now – getting down to the main point of interest in your epistle! What do you mean by writing to me and asking me of all people, for advice on females! What the hell! If you've any sense at all, you will stick to this "piece of goods", if she's anything like the glamorous creature your letter conjures up in my mind. You're honestly the lucky dog, having a woman to go about with whilst on leave. How about the address for when I get my 7 days?

I can appreciate your point about not being bashful, after going about with June for some time. Doubtless your previous experience came in useful. I trust you will write to her and see her when you are home again. Don't let the side down 'ole' man! Incidentally did you visit June's house when home? I am hoping that you will keep in touch with me in these matters and let me have the latest news. Remember, I don't make any charge for fatherly (or other) advice! (Local paper please copy).

I hope you manage to start an MT course, if it's what you want. I've already done a 3<sup>rd</sup> of my course, and finish on 30<sup>th</sup> July. Then – 7 whole weeks of glorious leave!

I had a line from home, saying that George is now at Blackpool, and has a Draft Number, so it seems he may be going at any time.

I have joined the RE (*Royal Engineers*) Old Comrades Association (Christ knows why!!) and went to one of their “do’s” last Thursday. Smashing show – hot band! (local talent only). Lots of smutty cracks and good grub. Can you imagine an RSM doing a jig around a stage waggling the forefinger of his right hand? Neither could I, till I saw him at the show on Thursday!! Our RSM is game for anything, especially when off duty; and even on duty he’s quite pleasant. T’other day, a friend and myself were walking through the camp, during the NAAFI morning break, when aforesaid RSM ambles by on bike. (*Regimental Sargent Major*) He smiled, waved an arm, and cried “Hi fellows!” – Gee, what a guy!! I think most of the chaps would follow him to hell. (Most of them will go there anyway!)

Went to a “leg” show in camp last night. Long time since I saw 36 inches of naked leg, which made it more enjoyable. There’s tons of entertainment in camp – something different every night.

Well Dave, just off to win a few pints on the NAAFI dartboard, so will buzz off now.

All the best you (\*!!\*\*!)

Yours very sincerely

Bill

PS. Heading on paper entirely out of order. Flogged from a chap in the hut!!



9 Ashdown Road  
Brighton 7  
Sussex

August 5th 1943

Dear Dave

A few lines penned to you from home, whilst in the middle of a 7 days leave. Came home last Saturday (31<sup>st</sup> July), and have to be back next Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> Aug by midnight. When I do get back, I shall probably only be there 2 or 3 days before posting having finished my course, so I would advise you not to answer this until I let you have the new address, or find myself still at home (?) for longer than I thought – in which case I'll let you know where I am, and what I am doing.

The course I have just mentioned was of 3 weeks duration, and very concentrated – still I managed to pass, with 89% which satisfied me. What concerns me now, is where and when I shall get posted. It seems there are unlimited places to which one may be sent. For example – Glasgow, Cardiff, Southampton, London Docks etc etc. I'm hoping I shall get either London or Southampton, but who know?

I have been very fortunate in having Bob home on leave during my leave. He is going back today, so I shall be going to Redhill this afternoon to see the chaps.

By the way, Bob got the enclosed lanyards from somewhere, thinking I may use them, so I'm sending them to you as they're white – doubtless you will find good use for same.

Have you heard from the girl you met at the Ice Rink yet? I was rather hoping that you could give me her address, in case I felt like doing some night ops!

Well Dave, it's early dinner today, so that I can get the 1.9 to Redhill, so I will dry up now, and have some dinner.

Will write again as soon as I know where I shall be.

Yours, always sincerely

Bill

13364564 PTE Goddard, W,  
No 1 MC Group RE  
C.O.Do.  
Queensferry  
Near Chester  
North Wales  
Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> September 1943

Dear Dave

I am terribly sorry for something going "screwy" in our correspondence, which I think is due to the fact that I wrote to you when I arrived here, and gave the letter to a fellow in our hut to post, and I can now assume that he let me down badly by failing to do so. I have naturally been awaiting a reply, but have now come to the conclusion that you have nothing to reply to, so I will tell you of events which have come to pass, since my last letter to you.

When I went back off leave to Weaversdown Camp, I was only there for a weekend before being posted here – near to Chester. I left there at 7.40am, and arrived here at 7.00pm, so I had first to report to the Headquarters in Chester. I had a fairly good journey up on the 11.55am from Euston, which only stopped at Watford Junction and Nuneaton to Crewe, where I had to change. I had only one grumble, and that was lumping all my kit around, which of course couldn't be avoided.

This place where I am now, is an Ordnance Depot, and a very large place. I am in the R.T.O., (*Rail Transport Office?*) which is outside of the main camp gates – a fairly small close little building, in which there are the RTO (a Captain) a Sergeant, a clerk (yours truly) and a Corporal in charge of 3 checkers. We are really one small happy family, as the Captain is a smashing chap, and never throws his weight about. Another good factor is that we don't do any parades, P.T. or in fact any regimentation whatsoever. Although we only get one day off each week, and that is no specified date. I for example, work from 9am till 5pm. Office hours what!

The Corporal whom I mentioned is a Jock, and boy! can he carry his liquor? I have been out with him once or twice of an evening, and have managed to bring both of us home in one piece. Let me advise you Dave, keep off mixing double whiskies with half pints. It's a costly business, and usually leaves you with a glorious thick head in the morning.

Of an evening, if I don't go out, I usually slip out of camp, over to the office – have a quiet read, and have supper there. You see, instead of going to the cookhouse, we draw rations and take them over to the office and have a brew up. One day last week, one of the chaps managed to buy the cook over with a couple of woodbines, and brought back 5 gammon rashers which I cooked in my mess tin over the fire. We usually manage to scrounge something worth while of an evening.

I can't divulge much about the job Dave, except that unlike the usual RTO, we deal with the wagons coming in here and the special freight trains going out. It's an interesting job, the only difficulty I am finding is the lack of knowledge of the district, but I am gradually learning the lay-out of things. I have just realised that I'm not far from you; a matter of 50 miles or so, and I was thinking that perhaps you could meet me one day, somewhere like Shrewsbury which is half way between us. Think it over Dave, and let me know what you think will you?

I had a wonderful 7 days leave, and I was sorry that you were not home, to "knock around" with. By the way, when you write home will you remember me to your folks, and will you explain that I wrote to you, and that you never have received the letter, for I asked you in the last letter if you would apologise to your Ma and Pa, for my not seeing them when I was at home. You see, as Bob was home, I had been knocking round with him all week, and when I went to your place on the Saturday, it was my last day and your Ma & Pa were at Horsham for the day, so of course I did not see them.

How are your affairs with your multitude of women these days? I hope you are keeping up correspondence with Judy, and that everything is ok. If and when we are home on leave together, I would like you to introduce me to her, as I am very interested to see this latest masterpiece!

Things have been happening fast at home. George is now definitely at someplace overseas, worst luck, and Bob has written to say that his "mob" is being formed into commandoes! which will undoubtedly displease him. I was wondering today if you have heard where Dennis is, and how he is faring. I hope he is still OK, and managing to find life bearable.

And how's yourself Dave. It seems ages since I heard from you, and I am anxious to know how you are getting along. Did you find the white lanyards useful which I sent you – I hope you did.

Well Dave, that's about all, and I close now by giving you "uncle" Reg's address – as you requested.

MR RC Goddard  
41 Richmond Road  
Brighton 7  
Sussex

All the best Dave

Yours always sincerely

Bill

PS. All at home, including Bob and Eileen, wish to be remembered to you



13364564 Spr Goddard, W,  
No 1 MC Group RE  
C.O.D. Queensferry  
Near Chester  
North Wales  
Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> October 1943  
Precisely 2115hrs

14560954 Gnr. Cavelle  
B.H.Q.  
81<sup>st</sup> Battery  
9<sup>th</sup> Medium Regt R.A.  
The White House  
High Road East  
Felixstowe  
Suffolk

Dear Dave

You old sod!! I had begun to think that you had quietly passed away and had been unobtrusely buried without anyone knowing!! Glad to hear that you are however, still alive and kicking.

Actually I thought when I wrote to you last, that you would probably move to some remote part of the globe whilst my letter was on the way, so I was not surprised when I heard that you had arrived in Daventry. I had forgotten that you were due for leave and was really surprised to hear that you had been home.

So rather sad that you've had to leave Newtown, as it's so comparatively near to Chester and as I believe I suggested in my letter to you, I was hoping that we could meet somewhere handy on our days off. Your moving has rather knocked this on the head, but I suppose it can't be helped.

I forget now, whether I have described this place, and the type of work I am engaged in. Queensferry, is an Ordnance Depot about six miles outside of Chester on the Chester to Hollyhead line – not a massive place, but extremely busy, and as much as the RTO staff of seven can cope with. Doubtless, when I mention the letters RTO, you immediately think of the type of RTO on a railway station. Allow me to correct your thoughts, for we here deal with incoming and outgoing freight traffic from this Depot. Your truly is the clerk here, and although the main work constitutes sitting inside the office, it is surprising the jobs I have done –

anything from clerking to shoving point levers over outside the office, and on one occasion, just for a bit of fun, driving the small depot engine along the sidings outside.

The job itself is extremely interesting, and although entirely different to the civvy job, I enjoy working here. My hours are, or at least are supposed to be, from 8.30am until 5.30pm, but most nights just lately, I have been working until 10 or 11pm clearing up. This has been due to the terrific volume of traffic dispatched, but we are slackening off now and I'm getting a bit more time off.

We get a day off once a week, which I usually spend in Chester, which is a large place with plenty of amusements (and pubs!). Incidentally we have a Scots Corporal here and I've spent some pretty evenings with him, and on one or two occasions have "blacked-out" completely. I've no idea how, on some occasions we've reached home, but up to now, we've always managed it. May I give you a tip? Never, – I repeat never mix whisky with beer if you expect to rise early the next morning, because you won't get up – I know! – By heaven what a head I've had the following morning!

The night that it was announced that the Italians had packed in, Jimmie (the Scot) and I determined to celebrate in Chester, which we did. How we staggered home, I've yet to discover, but we did and got to bed ok. I can vaguely remember holding on to the side of my bank as it traversed the roof and sides of the Nissan hut!!

Incidentally there is a motorcycle on charge to our office, which we are all supposed to be able to drive. After a few attempts, I managed to start it, and have since ridden it at 35mph up the road outside the office, and into the main road for a short distance. They're wonderful things to ride – when you come to a hill you just shove open the throttle and sail up at a steady 30mph! – No pedaling!! Soon I hope to go to the District Office at Chester and pass the test for my driving license. I'll let you know what happens.

I see from your letter, that you are dashing around the country a bit, that's why I am sending this letter to 33 The Crescent, and asking for it to be forwarded.

It seems to me, Dave, that you are cultivating a "way" with the gentle sex. Glad to see that you had a good time with Judy whilst home on leave. Did you behave yourself? (Any chance of the address for me when I go home on the 29<sup>th</sup> – next Friday?)

So far the only women I've met up with come from a nearby town called Shotton, of which it is said the percentage of virginity is precisely nil, so one has to be careful. I don't seem to be so lucky with the fair sex as you, perhaps it's because I'm not so straightforward as you in my approach. How about a few correspondence courses Dave?

So you know that George is in India? No doubt Mother told you when you visited her. We've had a letter from him in which he says he's with other Brighton chaps, and has just recently visited Bombay. Shouldn't mind being with him. How about you Dave?

I was pleased that you visited home and spent so long with mum. When I go home, I am looking forward to seeing your Ma & Pa and learning all the latest news, especially in regard to Den with whom I seem to have lost touch as regards his whereabouts.

Well Dave, I must away to bed now, so goodnight and all the best.

Hope to hear from you soon

Yrs always

Bill

PS. In future don't apologise for using shorthand notebook paper – This is torn from an Army Service Book!



13364564 Spr Goddard, W,  
A Coy (RE) 40 RHU  
46 Camp  
Bourley Road  
Aldershot  
6<sup>th</sup> May 1944

14560954 Cadet Cavelle D  
C2894 15B Seatoon, C.Coy,  
4<sup>th</sup> Royal Berkshire Regiment  
148 Pre Oct Ing Est  
RMC  
Camberley  
Surrey

Dear Dave

As you will see by above address, I have at last been “turfed out” of Wales and have landed at a place comparatively near home. The first information I had of this move, was when the ‘phone rang in the office and I answered and was informed that I must undergo an immediate “fit for overseas” exam”. But first Dave, before I go any further, let me bring you up to date with my activities at Queensferry.

I don’t think I told you in my last letter which incidentally I must confess, must have been written ages ago, that I did eventually manage to secure a licence for motorcycling. I had to go to Chester where we (there were two of us being tested) were escorted by an MP Sergeant, (*Military Police*) each on our own bikes, some 20 or 30 miles around Chester encountering every type of roundabout, crossroad and sharp turns in existence. Fortunately I was riding a 500 BSA and was of course thoroughly familiar the gears etc, having learned on a BSA, so I had no difficulty at all in passing out. My friend however, was very nervous and inclined to be stiff armed, if you know what I mean. He was driving a 350cc Matchless and although of course the controls are the same, it was fitted with a sprung throttle, so that whenever he released his grip from the throttle to make a hand sign, the bike would slow down with a jerk and sometimes stall. I had many good runs whilst at the “Ferry”, which I find I miss very much just now.

On hearing that I was to undergo this medical exam (a week last Thursday, the 27<sup>th</sup>), I visited the MO (*Medical Officer*) in the camp who after, for no apparent reason, thumping my chest and asking me to cough, refused to pass me as fit due to a slight defect of the left ear. Of course this caused a sensation when I informed the Administration Officer at Chester. He put in a call to War Office who in turn notified Gen. Eisenhower (?). After some delay a shrill ring on the telephone – Spr Goddard to proceed to Chester to have ear “unbanged!!” Gen. Eisenhower can’t wait!! Yours truly jumped on the BSA and tootled into Chester.

Eventually I was pronounced fit, after much prodding and poking in the ear and dashed back and packed up my stuff.

I left on the first train in the morning, very regretfully as I had enjoyed myself at Queensferry. I managed to get in contact with Pop, on the 'phone at Waterloo Station and I told him I was going on draft, thinking I might not be able to get home again, before pushing off. On arrival at Farnham we were conveyed by a truck to the most god forsaken spot right in the middle of Rushmoor and found that we were about to begin life under canvass. Having been settled for quite a bit now though, I'm finding life quite pleasant and spend my time as Assistant Store Man in the QM Stores (*Quarter Master*). Just how long we are here for no-one knows and apart from the fact that we are attached to the 21<sup>st</sup> I can't tell you much Dave, for in fact I don't know myself.

I had nearly forgotten to tell you that I was home last Weds. I managed to leave here at 5.30pm and arrived home at about 8.45pm (Tues eve). I did not have to leave until 7.00pm, to get back in time. Altogether I spent a good day and am now looking forward to my next day off, which I shall probably be enjoying when you receive this. Wednesday morning I went to your place, forgetting that your mother works in the morning, so went (by bus of course) to your Pa's office and had a pleasant chat with him and procured your address. I hope you are successful in your efforts to obtain a commission Dave, although I am sorry that you cannot get me in the Artillery as you wished.

Well Dave, that seems to be all the news so I'll cease my babble and get in the ole' chariot!

Let's know what your doing one of these days Dave,

All the best for now. Keep a "stout heart"

Always your sincere pal,

Bill.

PS. Who's this Jean or was it Joyce mentioned in your last letter home??

ON ACTIVE SERVICE

No. 14593536  
Rank: Sapper  
Goddard. W  
Q Movements,  
108 Town Major BLA

31<sup>st</sup> July 1944

14560954 Officer Cadet Cavelle D  
B Coy  
164 Infantry O.C.T.U.,  
Barmouth  
N. Wales

Dear Dave

It is a long time since I last wrote to you and I offer my apologies. I haven't known your whereabouts for some considerable time now and it only occurred to my feeble brain a short while ago, to write to your mam and obtain your present address.

It probably doesn't come as a surprise to you to learn that I have been over here in France for some considerable time; in fact I arrived very early on in the proceedings. Before coming over, I was moved around England quite a bit. From Aldershot to Bordon; Bordon to Gillingham; Gillingham to Gravesend Barracks and two places more, the location of which I won't disclose. At Gravesend, when it became obvious that we would be leaving the country very shortly, we had one or two very good evenings in the town. Unfortunately we were not at any of these places long enough to settle down or receive answers to letters written and I estimate that somewhere in a dark corner of APO, (*Army Post Office?*) there are about 40 letters addressed to me, as I had none since leaving Aldershot, until I had been over here for about 4 weeks. We were not, of course allowed passes home from Gravesend, which was in effect one of those "sealed" camps, where at intervals of three hours, one had to return to Barracks and report to the Guard room.

The town in which we are billeted here is a typical French provincial town, whose trade in happier days was obviously derived from holidaymakers and tourists. It is only a small place with a very small population and is more or less centralised around the church. We are fortunate enough to be billeted in requisitioned houses fitted with every modern "inconvenience" which keep off at least 50% of the rain and bad weather. Occasionally it is necessary for me to move from my usual position on the floor, for one of two reasons:- (a) to prevent being swept away by water seeping through the roof, (b) to prevent hair from

being blown off by gale wind coming through a shell hole in the wall and passing through the room to make an exit where the windows should be!!

The grub situation has been pretty good up to now. We have been on "Compo" rations since landing and have just switched to Bulk rations. "Compo" stuff is of course, all tinned and although good in quality, is somewhat lacking in variety. One did not concern one's self with keeping a calendar, as one could judge the day by the menu., eg. – Monday – steak & kid. Tues. meat & veg etc; etc; but at last we are receiving fresh food, such as bread & meat, which is a great relief. I have already sacrificed one large molar to the army's biscuit and have discovered that the best way to befriend a Frenchman is to offer him an English cigarette and the best way to insult him, to throw an army biscuit to his dog!!

Cigarettes are issued at the rate of 50 per week and it is possible to obtain another 75 per week from the Naafi stores, which are drawn. Yes, Naafi stuff is procurable, but the staff have not yet arrived, so the stores are drawn and "sold" by the unit concerned.

Take a tour around the "town" with me and you will see many strange sights. The small shops which are still open only offer you cheese or goats milk, a few local views or a couple of overcoat buttons and suchlike, and what cafés are still managing to survive, and out of bounds to troops. Upon arrival at the local "wash point" you will see me immersed in soap suds, up to the elbow, engaged in a fierce battle with the weekly washing. The "wash point" is a square cemented pond, into which a running stream pours somewhat cloudy water, of a doubtful origin, but armed with a stout scrubbing brush and a large portion of soap, one may at least remove the outer crust of dirt & dust. Of course there is an alternative and that is to boil the clothes, which I tried once, and only once. Dave – never, I repeat, never boil an army shirt in with white clothes, it doesn't pay!!

Le Quatorze de Juillet (Bastille Day) – (pause whilst I replace English French dictionary) was the scene of great jubilation amongst the local population. A service was held outside the church after which the Mayor thanked the Town Commandant; the Town Commandant thanked the Mayor, in fact everyone thanked everyone else, and a detachment of white blanco (sorry Royal Marines) presented arms, but as nobody wanted them, they put them away again and everyone went away to celebrate over a glass or two of Vichy water. One very amusing sight was an army truck, the driver of which had chalked upon it in common with all the army trucks running round, "Vive la France! Vive L'Angleterre" and with a tremendous flourish, finished up with "Vive Tottenham Hotspur!"

Well Dave, that nonsense covers the experiences, which I am allowed to relate. I would like nothing better than to tell you all that has happened and exactly where I am, but no can do.

How are you getting on with your OCTU Course (*Officer Cadet Training Unit*) these days? I hope you find time to relax a bit now and again, and will stick it through to the finish. May I take this chance of wishing you every success.

There is not very much home news to tell you. Bob is somewhere down Chichester way, and still manages to pop home now and again. It was lucky for him that "D" day fell whilst he was in hospital, as I don't envy the job done in his particular department.

Brv. George is having as good a time as possible in India and according to a letter I've just received, is about to set off on "hill leave".

Presumably Den is still in MEF? (*Middle East Forces?*) I doubt very much whether I shall know him when I see him again and hope it won't be long before he comes back.

Well look after yourself, you old \*\*\*\*\*!!\*\*, and may we meet again soon

All the best,

Yours,

Bill

PS. Anything resembling common sense in this letter is purely coincidental.



13364564 Spr Goddard, W,  
34 Movement Control  
B.L.A.

17<sup>th</sup> November 1944

14560954 Gunner Cavelle D.  
Squad D.5. A Battery  
4<sup>th</sup> F.T. Regiment R.A.  
Larkhill  
Salisbury  
Wiltshire  
England

Dear Dave

Before you faint upon receiving a letter from me after such a short time, please let me commence this epistle with a few explanations.

I have written you twice since I asked your mother to forward the lengthy letter, which I wrote about three weeks ago, but the whole issue seems to have gone astray due to your change of address. I did receive your letter some two weeks ago – the one in which you spoke about visiting “Joe’s place”, whilst on leave and one of my missing letters is the reply to yours. Today, I received a letter from you mother, which enables me to write to your new address.

I was surprised to learn, and in a way somewhat pleased to read that you had thrown in the proverbial towel and had left the OCTU (*Officer Cadet Training Unit*). I would have hated the thought of you going to Far Eastern quarters; for that is the only thing I associate OCTU’s with nowadays. It may seem rather a crazy outlook to you, but that’s how it has always struck me.

I am still “messaging about” out here and getting awfully annoyed about it at times. Inactivity has always been my greatest enemy and just lately I have been face to face with it for considerable periods. When we first arrived I was perhaps a little too optimistic about the job, for I am finding – to quote the song – “time is on my hands”, and it makes me feel somewhat self-conscious about my part in the conflict. However I have hopes of moving soon and I hope to find myself in a more satisfying job.

From the entertainment point of view, life isn’t so bad. We have, in the town, two cinemas, which escaped the bombardment more or less unscathed, which have been requisitioned by the Army Film Unit authorities, and there have been some really good films showing. Of course, the stocks at the cafés are low and corresponding prices high, but if one knows the right people it is possible to obtain small quantities of cherry brandy, cognac and other good brands of wines.

By the way, an excellent cure for coughs and or colds is a mixture of black coffee and cognac. Try it sometime, but don't overdo it!

As you probably know from the letters from home, a short time ago I was in Ostend. May I suggest a post-war visit? It's a marvellous place and the reception given us as the first British Troops in the town was magnificent. Nearly everyone speaks at least a small amount of English, although it was forbidden to do so during the German occupation. Incidentally, I have a smashing bayonet, which I procured there. It's about 2½ feet long and just the job for "remote control" toasting!

I am looking forward to hearing from you Dave. Just a couple of lines are more than welcome if you are busy and haven't a great deal of time.

Possibly you have read in the paper that we over here are going to be granted 48 hours leave in Paris. Actually the list is out so far as I am concerned, and I find that I am quite near to the top. I have, of course, already prepared a huge list of places I want to visit and to achieve all that I want to, will mean a great deal of dashing around.

Did you ever see the report in the paper concerning the "artificial" harbour built at Arromanches in Normandy? I hope so, as I was working on it for a long time and the account in the paper was extremely precise.

Well Dave, coupled with the fact that the lights keep going out, and I've nothing more to add for the time being, I'll cease and temporarily hold my peace.

All the best old boy, look 'ar'ter yerself" and don't sup too many No 1 Brown's until I see you again.

Your very sincere, somewhat rheumatic and totally incapable pal,

Bill

PS. Love to – who was it now? Oh yes! – Joyce.

PPS. Just received a 29 'pager' from George, who sends his best regards.

13364564 Spr Goddard, W,  
34 Movement Control  
B.L.A.

1<sup>st</sup> December 1944

14560954 Gunner Cavelle D.  
Squad D.5. A Battery  
4<sup>th</sup> F.T. Regiment R.A.  
Larkhill  
Salisbury  
Wiltshire  
England

Dear Dave

Before you burn this letter, out of indignation toward the shocking writing, please allow me to make a hasty apology. The fact is that I have just covered some 300 yds with my pen over three other letters and find that my 'clutch' is beginning to slip a little, due to wear.

Enough of the foolery! I was extremely delighted to receive your letter dated 25 Nov and to read that apart from a dose of anti-bachelor-itis (?) you are all in one piece and not suffering the effects of cold, rheumatism, homesickness or gout! In future, however, please do not apologise for the length of time in between letters, Dave, as I fully understand your position equally as well, as I am sure you appreciate mine. However, I shall make every endeavour to correspond more frequently in the future and to H--- with anything else, which I have to do.

Doubtless you got the impression that I am a bit 'brownd off', from my last epistle. Please forgive that. It was merely a spasm, which cannot be avoided over here, and on the whole I am having good fun and making the most of life.

In view of the fact that the large and lengthy masterpiece (?) has gone astray, I would like to repeat it, but unfortunately I haven't the necessary amount of time at my disposal just now Dave. Please forgive me, but I will find time to tell you about it in the near future.

I shall be looking forward to seeing you soon (?!?) Seriously though Dave, there is quite a possibility of our meeting. Can't expound my theory of course, but I will watch out for you. I sincerely hope that it will be the 21AG and not out east. The amount of rumours concerning the Far East are widespread and mostly originating from fellows who are confident of getting de-mobbed on cessation of hostilities in the west. I can produce a particularly potent brand of 'fire water' with which we could not only paint the town red, but also set in of fire by breathing on the nearest house wall. This evil concoction is known as "Whisky Dan!". Don't ask me why! I had a few rounds t' other night and drew the

conclusion that the great Nobel has left undiscovered something much more powerful than any of his explosives!

As yet I haven't had my 48hrs in Paris, but as I am next on the list I should manage it before Christmas. Of course I'll let you know in the smallest detail when where and what etc. As I believe I told you in my last letter, I have a huge list of places, which I want to visit, including the Notre Dame Cathedral. I particularly want to see if Chas Laughton is still hiding up there in the belfry!

Believe it or not I'm glad to hear that you are 'progressing favourably' with Joyce. As for the Ardent Bachelor's Institution, – I hereby announce its termination, forthwith, heretofore etc. Hereinafter it shall be known as the "Anti ABI" ! Headquarters – Mrs Maitlands!

Seriously (again!), I hope you will have luck in your venture, Dave and that you will look me up occasionally at my bachelor flat some time in the post war days!

You will probably be surprised to learn that Bob and Eileen are now proud mother and father (not respectively!). On 24<sup>th</sup> Nov a daughter was born and according to reports, mother and child are progressing favourably. In view of the fact that Bob and I have always been more like brothers than cousins, I almost consider myself an uncle. Incidentally, both Bob and Eileen, and for that matter, everyone at home wish you all the very best. Only yesterday I wrote to George and conveyed your solicitations. He has just spent his leave period at Darjeeling and has written me a 24 page account. He made enquiries about you, Dave, and ask me to forward his best regards.

When I came over here, I thought I had seen the last of NAAFI, but no – a canteen has opened up in the town. It is really amusing to see the difficulties inside, for the girls are all local French girls and cannot speak on word of English. In a way this has advantages for I can now give vent to my usual feeling about queues and NAAFI tea etc, without bringing down the wrath of the girls upon me!

Well Dave old chap, that's all for now as I've a date with a coffee and cognac.

All the best, and look after yourself.

Yours, totally incapably

Bill

PS Love to Joyce.